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The Eros of Alcibiades

One morning in the Spring of 415 BC, Athens awoke to find all the Herms in the city mutilated. These statues that stood at crossroads and in front of houses had been cut about the face and also, Aristophanes hints (*Lys.* 1093–94), castrated. This act of impiety caused much consternation: it was taken as a grave omen for the expedition that was about to sail for Sicily and also, Thucydides says, as part of “a conspiracy plotting revolution and the overthrow of the democracy” (6.27.3). The mutilation of the Herms is a critical moment in Athenian politics, with far-reaching consequences for both the Sicilian expedition and the war against Sparta.¹ Thucydides describes in some detail the panic that ensued and how suspicion came to rest on the general Alcibiades. The demos recalled Alcibiades from the war-front to face charges; as a result, Thucydides suggests, they brought on defeat in Sicily and ultimately ruined the city.

In the midst of this important discussion, though, Thucydides makes a rather strange and sudden digression. The mood in Athens after the mutilation of the Herms was one of frenzied suspicion, he says,

ἐπιστάμενος γὰρ ὁ δῆμος ἀκοῇ τὴν Πεισιστράτου καὶ τῶν παίδων τυραννίδα χαλεπὴν τελευτῶσαν γενομένην καὶ προσέτι οὐδ’ ὅφ’ ἑαυτῶν καὶ Ἀρμοδίου καταλυθεῖσαν, ἀλλ’ ὑπὸ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων, ἐφοβεῖτο αἰεὶ καὶ πάντα ὑπόπτως ἐλάμβανεν.

(6.53.3)

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1. On the mutilation of the Herms, see further And. 1; Plut. *Alc.* 18.5–23; D.S. 13.2.3–4; Osborne 1985:64–67; Dover 1970:264–88; de Romilly 1995:101–104; Hatzfeld 1951:158–95; MacDowell 1962:192–93; Marr 1971:337–38; Furley 1996, esp. 13–30. Since Thucydides himself says that no one knew at the time or discovered subsequently who had actually committed the crime (6.60.2), I will not myself attempt to answer that question.

For the demos had heard about the tyranny of Pisistratus and his sons and how harsh it became toward the end. They also knew that the tyranny had not been ended by themselves and Harmodius, but by the Spartans. They were thus always afraid and approached everything with suspicion.

This launches a detailed excursus on the legendary tyrannicide. The story was well known: Hipparchus, one of the sons of the tyrant Pisistratus, had tried to seduce the young nobleman Harmodius and, failing in this attempt, had insulted him. In revenge, Harmodius and his lover Aristogeiton assassinated Hipparchus, an act hailed as the death of tyranny and the birth of democracy.

This digression is puzzling: why at this important juncture in his narrative does Thucydides turn aside to recount this familiar story? Why does he juxtapose the mutilation of the Herms and the tyrannicide, two seemingly unrelated events? Many scholars have argued convincingly that the tyrannicide digression reflects upon the contemporary situation in Athens, illustrating the daring of the Athenian character, democratic anxiety about tyranny, the often flawed nature of democratic decision-making, and the conditions under which governments are (as that of Athens will soon be) overthrown.² Reasonable though these historical explanations of the digression are, there is still perhaps room for further examination. The digression is remarkably long and detailed—so much so that it is more of an interruption than an explanation of contemporary affairs. Moreover, the motivations Thucydides himself offers for it are uncharacteristically vague. The tyrannicide story is first introduced (in the passage quoted above, 6.53.3) to explain Athenian paranoia after the mutilation of the Herms. A sentence later it becomes proof that “the Athenians are no more able than anyone else to speak accurately about their own tyrants and their history” (6.54.1). By the end of the digression, Thucydides says only that the demos “had this in mind and recalled the stories they knew about it” as they prosecuted the conspirators (6.60.1). The length and complexity of the digression, the lack of a clear motivation for it, and the odd flow of ideas within it all invite us to look for a deeper connection. What do Herms have to do with tyrants? And why should Alcibiades be connected with either?

This paper explores further the nuances of this difficult passage and argues that one latent bond between its two narratives is sex. This may seem a perverse, or even perverted reading, but sex is a current that runs deeply through

2. See, e.g., Taylor 1981:161–75; Forde 1989:33–57; Palmer 1982:106–109, 114–15; Momigliano 1971; Pearson 1949; Münch 1935; Parry 1972. Others have explained the digression as an inconsistency between different compositional layers (Schwartz 1919:180–86; Hirsch 1926:139; Zeigler 1928:58–59; Jacoby 1949:158 n.47; Fitzgerald 1957:278–80) or have attributed it to, as Dover puts it, “the temptation before which all historians and commentators are by their very nature weak, the temptation to correct historical error wherever they find it, regardless of its relevance to their immediate purposes” (Dover 1970:329; cf. Lang 1954:398–99; Thuc. 1.20). On the digression, see further Dover 1970:317–29 (esp. 325–29); Allison 1997:182–86; Diesner 1959; Connor 1977:107–109, 1987:178–80; Ridley 1981:27–28; Hunter 1974; Rawlings 1981:100–17; Jacoby 1949:158–64.

both narratives.³ The tyrannicide not only inaugurated the democracy, but also enshrined within democratic discourse a specific mode of male sexuality. Harmodius and Aristogeiton were lovers as well as tyrant-slayers, and their love, I will argue, provided the model for a democratic eros that defined the Athenian citizen as socially autonomous and sexually dominant. The Herms, as Jack Winkler argued, were a physical representation of this democratic male subject: their rigid stances and lack of differentiation symbolized the notional equality and individual freedom of all citizens in the democracy; their erect phalloi represented the sexual dominance that was one marker of citizenship in Athens.⁴ The vandalism of these statues, then, was an assault on the democracy at once sexual and political, a challenge to both the masculinity and the political power of the demos. Both the tyrannicide and the mutilation of the Herms speak to an eroticized politics of democracy; the former founds an erotic and political order which the latter then threatens to overthrow.

At the intersection of these two events is Alcibiades. The wild man of Athenian politics, Alcibiades became a prime suspect in the mutilation, Thucydides says, because of his “undemocratic lawlessness” (οὐ δημοτικὴν παρανομίαν, 6.28.2). Although Alcibiades was never explicitly charged in the mutilation, he was accused of profaning the Eleusinian Mysteries (by parodying the sacred rites at private parties) and when Athenian suspicion conflated the two events, he took the fall for both.⁵ Regardless of what he may actually have done (and that is a quagmire into which this paper will not enter), the extravagances of Alcibiades’ lifestyle seemed to bespeak tyrannical aspirations and provided fuel

3. Several scholars have suggested eros as the link between the two narratives here, but for the most part that eros is treated metaphorically, as “a kind of erotically charged daring,” as Forde puts it (1989:35). See Forde 1989:33–37; Allison 1997:182–86; Cornford 1965 [1907]:207–10; Connor 1987:178–79. Cf. Connor 1992 [1971]:99–108, 140–41 on eros in political discourse.

4. Winkler 1990a:35–36.

5. For the possibility that Alcibiades was one of Thucydides’ sources, see Brunt 1952; Delebecque 1965; Bloedow 1973:80–86. Thucydides refuses to pass judgment on Alcibiades’ actual involvement in either event (6.27–29). After the mutilation of the Herms, information is brought about the mutilation of other statues and parodies of the Mysteries by drunken young men, among whom Alcibiades is named. His enemies seize upon this opportunity, magnifying the antidemocratic implications of the mutilation and charging Alcibiades upon the evidence of his undemocratic lifestyle (6.28.2). Later, the Athenians also accept this conflation of the mutilation and the parodies as part of “the same plan and conspiracy committed by Alcibiades against the demos” (6.61.1). Thus Alcibiades was associated with the mutilation by implication only, and, indeed, it seems unlikely that he would be involved in a plot that was taken to be aimed against the Sicilian Expedition, of which he was the main proponent: cf. Plu. *Alc.* 19.1, 20.3, 22.3–4; And. 1.11–16; Isoc. 16.6–7; Lys. 14.41–42; Dem. 21.147; D.S. 13.5. Perhaps we need to distinguish between the private political machinations behind these accusations, on the one hand, and the need to satisfy public outrage, on the other; many individuals were sacrificed to the former (see the prosopographical lists in Dover 1970:276–82); for the latter, a more prominent scapegoat was needed, and, as Thucydides says, Alcibiades’ lifestyle made him a logical target. On Alcibiades’ involvement, see further Ellis 1989:58–62; Dover 1970:264–88; Nussbaum 1986:171 n.17; MacDowell 1962:192–93; Bloedow 1973:15–17; Palmer 1982:112–15; de Romilly 1995:101–23; McGregor 1965:34–36; Marr 1971:328; Westlake 1968:221–22.

for his enemies' attempts to implicate him in the mutilation and its presumed "conspiracy to overthrow the democracy."

Among the extravagances that got him branded lawless and undemocratic, pride of place goes to his sex life. The beloved of Socrates, the lover of the demos, a man of almost irresistible charm, Alcibiades is one of the most explicitly sexualized figures in fifth-century politics. Plutarch (*Alc.* 16.1–2) tells us he carried a shield emblazoned with a thunder-bearing Eros, and that is something of the role he played in Athens: eros and power are never far apart with him.⁶ But what is his eros? While the love of Harmodius and Aristogeiton is familiar to students of ancient Athens—a manly lover and his young beloved—the sexuality of Alcibiades is all over the map: he is now lover, now beloved, a sexually aggressive youth, a sexually passive adult. While Harmodius and Aristogeiton's love ends tyranny in Athens, Alcibiades' bizarre eros makes him into a virtual tyrant and blurs the lines (so firmly established in the tyrannicide myth) between democracy and tyranny.

This paper explores the interplay of erotics and politics in Thucydides' juxtaposition of the tyrannicide legend and the mutilation of the Herms. In these two episodes we see a tension between two modes of eros—a legitimate, democratic eros and an illegitimate, tyrannical eros. These two, the "good" eros and the "bad," should be segregable—one should be able to distinguish them in theory and practice—but in Thucydides' yoking of the two scenes, I argue, we find a collapsing of the legitimate and illegitimate, a convergence that calls into doubt the sexuality of the democracy and its male citizens. This same blurring of legitimate and illegitimate eros surrounds the figure of Alcibiades, a character who transgresses both the political and sexual boundaries that define the Athenian democracy and whose very existence poses a challenge to Athenian manhood. The narrative crux in Thucydides will thus turn out to be part of a larger crisis in the erotic politics of the democracy. I will pursue the nature and consequences of this crisis in Plutarch's *Life of Alcibiades*, where it appears in its broadest and most unsettling dimensions, and then will turn briefly at the end of the paper to Plato's *Symposium*, a text that offers one possible—though extreme—resolution to the problem.

In speaking of a "crisis" in the erotic politics of the democracy, I am not suggesting the mutilation of the Herms as a momentary tremor in an edifice otherwise rock-solid. I am proposing instead that this event symbolizes in a particularly vivid manner a more pervasive and persistent instability in the sexuality of classical Athens. Since the publication of Dover's *Greek Homosexuality* and Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, much excellent work has been done in uncovering and explicating Athenian sexual norms and the "protocols" of desire: the distinction between active partner and passive, for example, and between the sexually

6. Strauss calls him "Eros personified" (1993:152) and offers an interesting reading of the shield (149–50).

dominant Athenian citizen and the socially inferior objects of his desire.⁷ The analysis of such norms (by Halperin, Winkler, and others) has made for many important insights, and has rescued the study of sexuality from the realm of pure empiricism, allowing it to be approached as a symbolic system with an internal logic (and politics or ideology) of its own.

But within this system of sexual norms and protocols, what is the place of the “paranormal,” of *paranomia*? In the study of ancient Greek sexuality, the aberrant or perverse is often treated as the “exception that proves the rule”—a temporary transgression that ultimately (by its very illegitimacy) serves to resecure the boundaries it crosses—or as an example of Foucault’s “perverse implantation,” the idea that power does not prohibit but in fact incites and proliferates perversions as objects, surfaces of operation, and hence supports for its ever more penetrating and wide-reaching control.⁸ Either way, perversity is generally seen as fully contained by the norms it apparently challenges, and ancient sexuality as a game played strictly by the “rules.”⁹

Alcibiades invites us to rethink the relation between sexual norms and their transgression in ancient Athens, for the very essence of Alcibiades’ character

7. Halperin speaks of “the proper phallogocentric protocols” (1990b:23) and “the strict norm of paederastic protocols” (1997:49) and gives as his own focus of inquiry “Greek canons of sexual propriety” (1990b:36n). Winkler also starts from the idea of sexual “protocols” (1990b:4–5), but goes on to try “to see through and beyond social prescriptions ... to that usually unspoken fund of knowledge about their application, their bending, their observance ‘in the breach,’ and the hidden agendas they sometimes concealed” (45, cf. 5–8). Cf. Dover 1978:60–109; Foucault 1985; Winkler 1990a; Halperin 1990a, 1990b. Cohen 1991:171–202 criticizes these scholars, but also from the standpoint of laws and norms. See further the reviews and critiques by Poster 1986, Lefkowitz 1985, Golden 1991, Richlin 1991, Cohen 1992, Thornton 1991, Hexter 1991, and Hubbard 1998.

8. Foucault 1978:36–49: “The implantation of perversions is an instrument-effect: it is through the isolation, intensification, and consolidation of peripheral sexualities that the relations of power to sex and pleasure branched out and multiplied, measured the body, and penetrated modes of conduct” (48). Black 1998, in his perceptive critique of the *History of Sexuality*, identifies in Foucault an aversion to psychoanalysis that led him to try to analyze the discourse of sexuality independent of the imaginary and phantasmatic dimension of sex.

9. So, for example, Winkler views the *kinaidos* as a “scare-image” that helped reaffirm and enforce the ideal of citizen masculinity (1990b:46). Similarly, Halperin 1990a examines female prostitution as a perverse implantation of the Athenian democracy, a quasi-institutional prop to the phallicism of the democratic citizen (13–16); likewise, male prostitutes, excluded from political life and subject to legal sanction, “embody all the social liabilities from which the citizen himself, by virtue of being a citizen, had been freed” (18). Although both recognize that some individuals—whether through choice or necessity—occupied these ideologically abjected positions, those positions always remain in a relation of strict subordination to Athenian laws, norms, and ideals. Challenges to this methodological emphasis on norms have largely come from the study of sexual practice, starting with Winkler’s anthropological approach, which stresses the limitations in practice on the enforcement of and compliance with erotic protocols (e.g. 1990b:45–70). Thornton 1991 in his critique of the “constructivist” view of ancient sexuality (personified by Foucault, Halperin, and Winkler) objects to (among other things) its “disregard of both the potential autonomy of individual subjects and their power of choice and spontaneity” (186; cf. 1997). Davidson 1997 likewise aims to complicate and correct modern schemata of ancient sexuality by bringing to bear the infinite permutations of practice (and ancient discussions of it).

for the ancient authors who described him was *paranomia*, abnormality, transgression, illegitimacy, perversion. What was the relation between Alcibiades' *paranomia* and the *nomoi* that he transgressed? Was Alcibiades a mere anomaly, an isolated exception to Athenian sexual norms who, by his very singularity, renaturalized the normative and reaffirmed its force and necessity? There is good ancient tradition for viewing him in this way, as we shall see, and up to a certain point it is surely valid to see Alcibiades' flirtations with the tyrannical, the feminine, and the foreign—all marked as *paranomia*—as clarifying the boundaries that defined the average Athenian citizen. As the general Archestratus was said to have commented, Greece could only bear one Alcibiades (Plut. *Alc.* 16.8). And yet, perhaps the relation between *nomoi* and *paranomia* was not quite so straightforward, for the demos loved Alcibiades, and loved him, it seems, precisely for his transgressiveness. If Alcibiades is no more than a "perverse implantation"—product of and support to sexual norms—what of the perverse desire he aroused?

Judith Butler offers a model that will help us to escape the reductive alternatives of normativity or transgression, of obeying the "rules" of sex or breaking them. Drawing upon Foucault's notion of the productivity of power, she argues that power, by virtue of its fertility, can produce consequences that it did not foresee, that exceed or even distort its original intent.¹⁰ Sexual norms are regulatory ideals materialized over time through compelled performances: one has no choice but to comply with them if one is to live as a legitimate and intelligible subject.¹¹ However, because these normativizing ideals are themselves generative (of practices, of subjects, of desires) they can generate discontinuities and contradictions; and because they are impossible to comply with fully (so that, for example, one could never obey all the contradictory and excessive injunctions to masculinity or femininity), they open a space for miscompliance, performances that not only fail to live up to their demands but actually displace or contest those demands.¹² Perversity, within Butler's terms, is generated by norms and defined in relation to them, but not, for that reason, completely determined by them.

Desire is a case in point. Foucault argued that prohibition creates desire: to that extent desire is merely a construct of—even a modality of—power. But in Butler's rereading, not only does prohibition generate desire, but it may generate a desire that it did not anticipate and one that exceeds its grounding taboo.¹³ Desire is thus an effect of the norms that govern it, but always exists in a productive (rather than submissive) relation to those norms. This productive interaction allows us to move beyond the either-or logic of norms and their transgression to a logic of both-and, in which perversion is both generated and constrained by norms *and* exceeds and challenges them. Pursuing this logic, we can see Alcibiades as an

10. Butler 1990:42, 93; 1993:10, 94–95, 122; 1997:18.

11. Butler 1990:139–41; 1993:1–2, 13–15, 94–95, 232.

12. Butler 1990:141–45; 1993:121–37, 231–39.

13. Butler 1993:97–99; 1997:55–61, 101–103.

anomaly who reaffirms the sexual and political norms he transgresses, and at the same time view the desire he inspires as a displacement of those same norms. This does not mean that the norms cease to exist—far from it—but that within their very working a space may be opened for *paranoia*. In this space, those objects that should (within the “protocols” of sex) be most despised can become invested with desire, a desire which, if revealed, queers not only erotic norms but also the political and sexual subject who defines himself by them.

The eros of Alcibiades, I will suggest, is such a case. Alcibiades was a site of intense investment of fantasy and desire in the fifth century: the demos loved him and he loved them, and this was a love, as we shall see, not easily assimilable to the generally accepted model of sexuality. What was the nature of Athens’ investment in—or love for—Alcibiades? What relation did it bear to the sort of fantasies dramatized by the mutilation of the Herms? And—a question always to be held in the foreground—what was the politics of this love? If being an Athenian meant being sexually dominant, what did it mean *politically* to love an Alcibiades or to be loved by him? If Athenian sexuality was not quite so moderate and self-mastering as ancient authors liked to claim (and modern scholars like to believe), then how are we to re-envision the subject of this sexuality: what sort of democratic citizen is characterized by such a perverse desire?¹⁴

Let us return, then, to Thucydides and look more closely at the erotics of the two narratives he juxtaposes, the mutilation of the Herms and the tyrannicide. The Harmodius and Aristogeiton story gives us a familiar version—one might even say the “authorized version”—of love between Athenian men, and inserts that love into the very foundation myth of the democracy. Aristogeiton is the adult lover of the noble young Harmodius. Their relationship is sexual and pederastic; the tyrannicides are never coevals, never “just friends.” While homosexual relations between an older man and a younger man had a long tradition in Greece, this myth makes such relations a defining feature of the Athenian character, as Athenian as hating a tyrant. Moreover, in this story an erotics that had largely been the preserve of the elite is figured as coterminous with democracy: it is figured as a quintessentially *democratic* erotics.

This inaugural eros is familiar in its basic lineaments: an older gentleman (the erastes, or lover) pursues a young man (the eromenos, beloved); the boy submits with a show of reluctance to the attentions of his older lover and in return receives an education in civics, learning all the things a well-bred Athenian man needs to know. This sort of homosexual relationship was seen as beneficial—even essential—to the democracy, constituting a form of social education and

14. The eros of Alcibiades is part of a larger eroticism of political relations in Athens. One may think, in particular, of Pericles’ injunction to the Athenians to “become lovers of the city” (Thuc. 2.43.1) and of the vulgar parody of the trope in Aristophanes’ *Knights*. I am treating this topic (and many of the issues raised in this paper) in detail in a work in progress on the erotics of democracy in classical Athens.

guaranteeing cultural continuity. "Right Argument" in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (961–83) gets rather overheated as he describes the decorous and delightful boys whose seduction made Athens great. Phaedrus also waxes lyrical upon this theme in Plato's *Symposium* when he pictures an army of lovers and beloveds, a productive, happy polity composed entirely of erastai and eromenoi (178e3–179b3). Harmodius and Aristogeiton are the prototype for this socially productive erotics: Aeschines offers them as an example of *dikaïos erôs*, "just love" (1.136), and as proof of the boons such love brings the city (1.132–40).

And it is the democratic city in particular that reaps the rewards of this eros: the tyrannicidal lovers were honored in cult in the fifth century as the liberators—practically the founders—of the democracy.¹⁵ Fifth-century drinking songs toasted them for killing the tyrants and making Athens *isonomos*, egalitarian. Pausanias in Plato's *Symposium* even goes so far as to suggest that the pederastic relationship is essentially democratic, and that is why it was not practiced in monarchical Persia: "The truth of this was experienced by our tyrants in Athens," he says. "It was the love of Aristogeiton and the *philia* of Harmodius that destroyed their power" (182c4–7).¹⁶ The statues of the tyrannicides that stood in the agora also allude to this foundational democratic eros: a beardless Harmodius and bearded Aristogeiton stand, weapons in hand, ready to strike down the tyrant; beneath them were probably inscribed the telling words: πατρίδα γέν ἐθέτεν, "they established the fatherland."¹⁷

Now, it has been argued that the pederastic homosexuality enshrined in this myth was in practice largely an elite affair, and the extent to which it describes the sex life of "the average Athenian" is the subject of much debate.¹⁸ It is true that the literary sources for this eros are mostly elite and that they situate it within a leisured lifestyle of palaestrai and symposia.¹⁹ Indeed, it seems to have been one component of the Athenian caricature of a comically outdated and

15. On the tradition of Harmodius and Aristogeiton as "founders of the democracy" see Thomas 1989:238–82; Ehrenberg 1956; Fornara 1970:159–70; Fehr 1984; Raaflaub (forthcoming). See also Dem. 19.280, 20.159–62; Ar. *Knights* 786–87; Hdt. 6.109.3. On the public cult of the tyrannicides, see Brunnsåker 1971:120–21; Taylor 1981 ch. 1; Podlecki 1966:129; Fornara 1970:155–59. Harmodius and Aristogeiton were included in sacrifices for the war dead (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 58.1; Hyperides 6.39), and their descendants enjoyed the privileges of *sitêsis*, *atelia*, and *prohedria* (IG I² 77.5; Dem. 19.280, 20.29, 20.159–62; Din. 1.101; Isaeus 5.46–47).

16. Cf. Xen. *Hieron* 1.29–38 on the incompatibility of tyranny and pederasty.

17. The detail of the statues' facial hair, while it does not necessarily denote a pederastic relation, does emphasize the age difference between the two men (Fehr 1984:17); ancient viewers would surely have known—especially with this famous couple—what this implied. See Stewart 1997:73: "these bronzes now actively invited [the eroticized glance] by vigorously promoting the homoerotic relationship that sustained it." On the statue group, see further Brunnsåker 1971:33–164; Taylor 1981 ch. 2; Fehr 1984; Hölscher 1998:158–60. Hölscher calls it "the first truly political monument in Greece" (1998:158).

18. Halperin 1986, 1990a:4; Dover 1978:149–50; Bremmer 1990; Thornton 1997:193–212; Hubbard 1998; Fisher 1998.

19. In Aeschines (1.132), the general who defends homosexual pederasty is pictured strutting into court "as if into the *palaistra* or for a pleasant pastime."

implicitly anti-democratic elitism, if we are to judge by Aristophanes' boy-crazed "Right Argument," Pausanias' self-serving claims in the *Symposium*, or the crusty old general in Aeschines' *Against Timarchus*.²⁰ But in fact this last text shows just how important this brand of eros was to the demos, as well as to the elite: while his opponent, the general, will laud Harmodius and Aristogeiton's as a specifically elite sort of love, Aeschines—in a move that he hopes will appeal to his democratic jury—will take them as a paradigm for a democratic eros that is *sôphrôn* and *dikaïos* (136–40).²¹ Similarly, the tyrannicide skolia, those staples of the upper-class symposium, are sung by the distinctly non-aristocratic old men in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (631–35) as they try to save the Acropolis from the "tyranny" of the women. These democratic heroes clearly belonged not only to the elite, but to the entire demos, and thus it seems that their love, regardless of who actually practiced it, was part of the sexual ideology of the democracy as a whole. Thucydides, after all, introduced his narrative of the tyrannicide by situating it within public opinion and oral tradition (ἐπιστάμενος γὰρ ὁ δῆμος ἄχοῃ, 6.53.3).²² The statue-group, too, with its iconographic distinction between erastes and eromenos, was part of that same tradition, as Andrew Stewart has argued; it "not only placed the homoerotic bond at the core of Athenian political freedom, but asserted that it and the manly virtues (*aretai*) of courage, boldness and self-sacrifice that it generated were the only guarantors of that freedom's continued existence."²³

20. Cf. Ar. *Wasps* 1023–28; *Knights* 1384–87. Hubbard 1998 argues that class resentment was the basis for a broad condemnation of pederasty on the part of the average Athenian, who viewed it as part of a generally suspect elite lifestyle. While I agree with his emphasis on the class dynamics surrounding pederasty, I believe that identification (with the misrecognition it entailed) was as strong a force as resentment in the relations between mass and elite. For a similar approach, see Fisher 1998; Fehr 1984: 27–33.

21. Aeschines claims this love for democracy by articulating it to the distinction between free citizen and slave (138) and by bringing it within the wise purview of *nomos* and Athens' original *nomothetai* (138–40). Cf. the later law against naming slaves Harmodius or Aristogeiton (Aul. Gel. 9.2.10; Lib. *Decl.* 1.1.71). In fact, the elite general and Aeschines are unanimous in their view of *dikaïos erôs*, and the general himself extends this eros to the demos in his assumption that the members of the jury, too, pray that their sons may be beautiful (1.133–34). See Fisher 1998:100–101.

22. One might object that Thucydides' polemic implies that the erotic motivations of the act were not part of the popular tradition about the tyrannicides in the fifth century; the foregrounding of the erotic element in fourth-century sources, however, surely just represents an increased emphasis on a theme that was always present, if latent, within the tradition. Moreover, Thucydides does not say that the Athenians were ignorant of the tyrannicides' erotic motives, but merely implies that they did not give these personal motives sufficient attention. Thomas 1989:242–51 analyzes the fifth-century traditions both popular and scholarly concerning the tyrannicide. Cf. Jacoby 1949, Lang 1954, Fornara 1968, Fitzgerald 1957, Podlecki 1966. On the dissemination of elite values and ideals within the democracy, see Ober 1989:259–70; Fisher 1998. For Fehr (1984:27–33), the tyrannicide statues and myth represent a broader investment of the demos in elite activities and values; he argues that as models of citizen discipline and patrons of *isonomia*, Harmodius and Aristogeiton appealed to the interests of both demos and elite (34–50).

23. Stewart 1997:73. He further suggests that in looking at these statues and reading their inscription, the viewer was drawn to identify, both erotically and politically, with the figures, and

How did this sort of love—associated as it seems to have been with the elite—become so central to the Athenian democratic imagination? An odd detail in Thucydides perhaps helps to explain the dynamics of identification at work here: “Harmodius was illustrious in the prime of his youth; Aristogeiton, a citizen and man of middling social status, possessed him as his lover (γενομένου δὲ Ἀρμοδίου ὥρα ἡλικίας λαμπροῦ Ἀριστογείτων ἀνὴρ τῶν ἀστῶν, μέσος πολίτης, ἐραστὴς ὧν εἶχεν αὐτόν, 6.54.2). The passage not only emphasizes the age difference between the two men (Aristogeiton is an ἀνὴρ and Harmodius ὥρα ἡλικίας) but also hints at a class difference. While Herodotus makes both men members of the elite clan of Gephyraioi (5.57), in Thucydides’ account, Harmodius is clearly well born: he is *lampros* (an adjective common for the aristocracy²⁴) and belongs to that social class whose daughters were basket-bearers in the Panathenaia; Aristogeiton, on the other hand, is characterized as a “middling citizen.”²⁵ Why does Thucydides go out of his way to draw attention to Aristogeiton’s middling social status—especially in contrast to his aristocratic young beloved?

As a *mesos politês*, an average Athenian, Aristogeiton becomes a representative of all the *astoi*, a figure with whom all citizens, regardless of status, could identify. There is perhaps corroboration for this in the opening lines of Thucydides’ digression: the demos knew “that the tyranny had not been ended by themselves and Harmodius, but by the Spartans” (6.53.3). In the popular tradition, the Athenian demos takes the place of Aristogeiton, fighting at Harmodius’ side to end the tyranny.²⁶ The representation of Aristogeiton as a middling citizen offers an easy conduit for the imaginative identification (one characterized, to be sure, by a good dose of idealization and wish-fulfillment) of the democratic demos as a whole with this foundational narrative.²⁷ Through this identification, the demos

thus himself to become a tyrannicide. Hölscher notes that the statue group commemorates not a successful act, but a “political attitude” (1998:160).

24. *Lampros* does not always carry class connotations; its basic meaning when used of individuals is “brilliant, illustrious, splendid.” Here (modified by ὥρα ἡλικίας) it clearly also refers to Harmodius’ physical magnificence (his “youthful bloom,” as LSJ take it, III.1). Perhaps we should not separate the two denotations entirely, however, as physical and social preeminence often went hand-in-hand for the Greeks (as in the case of *kalos*: beautiful, but also socially elevated). In this passage there seems to be a double contrast (between youth and adulthood and between an illustrious and an average social position) in which the adjective *lampros* does double duty.

25. Morris 1996 argues for the importance of the “middling citizen” and the “middling tradition” in the development of the Athenian democracy. See Lavelle 1986:320 and n.7; Rawlings 1981:103–104 (who sees the term here as a “social slur”).

26. Cf. skolion 894 (PMG), addressed to Harmodius: one wonders whether there were also songs addressed to Aristogeiton. Cf. Ar. *Eccl.* 682–83. Contrast Ar. *Lys.* 631–35, where the old men are going to make their tyrannicidal stand next to Aristogeiton. Nick Fisher points out to me that the Harmodius song may have been perceived as a relatively democratic skolion, contrasted (at Ar. *Wasps* 1223–30 and fr. 444 K-A) to the Admetus song, with its emphasis on *philia* between *hetairoi*.

27. Of course, the demos did play an important role in the revolution that followed the assassination (Ober 1996:32–52) and in this sense earned the right to identify themselves with the tyrannicides.

imagine themselves as both an erotic and a political elite, the lovers of pretty aristocratic boys and the slayers of tyrants.²⁸

In this way, the tyrannicide narrative, a story about an elite love affair, provides a model for a particularly democratic mode of sexuality: every Athenian could be an Aristogeiton. The norm of adult male sexuality in Athens, as so many recent studies have shown us, was active, aggressive, dominant, and phallic; passivity was associated with foreigners, women, slaves, and children—non-citizens.²⁹ Homosexual relations between two adult men were treated with derision and disgust, as they required one man to play the passive role, and an Athenian citizen who submitted willingly to penetration risked charges of prostitution and the loss of citizen privileges.³⁰ The pederastic relation, with its clear distinction between active erastes and passive eromenos, fits logically into this correlation between sexual dominance and democratic citizenship.³¹ Pederasty, then, no matter what the social status of its actual practitioners, becomes a neat metaphor for democratic sexuality. Through this homosexual relationship, the whole Athenian demos can be imagined as a polity of erastai: elite, active, and sexually potent, penetrating as they desired a variety of eromenoi—boys, women, slaves, foreigners. The eros of Harmodius and Aristogeiton thus not only founds the democracy, but also constitutes the democratic citizen as a lover, an Aristogeiton.³²

This idealized self-image is embodied in the Herm, as Winkler argued.³³ In their upright poses and self-similarity, these statues represent the autonomy and

28. Thucydides suggests a class politics surrounding the mutilation of the Herms as well: so eager are the Athenians to prosecute these crimes that they condemn *hoi khrêstoi* on the evidence of *hoi ponêroi* (Thuc. 6.53.2). The following sentence introduces the tyrannicide digression. If we take the *gar* of that sentence (“for the demos knew...”) closely with this sentence, then the digression must be seen in the context of this social inversion: Thucydides seems to be suggesting that in their excessive fear of tyranny, the Athenians prosecuted many “useful” elites, just as the tyrannicides killed a generally beneficent ruler (Thuc. 6.54) in their zeal. Taylor 1981:161–75 advances this interpretation; cf. Rawlings 1981:101–17.

29. Dover 1978; Foucault 1985; Keuls 1985; Halperin 1990b:29–38, 1990a, 1997; Winkler 1990b:39–40, 45–70.

30. It was the attempt on the part of one who had prostituted himself to address the assembly that incurred loss of citizenship, but see Halperin 1986:68 n.17: a boy who sought out sexual passivity risked inquiry into his motives. Cf. Dover 1978:103–109; Keuls 1985:291–98; Halperin 1990a; Cohen 1991:171–202. Hubbard 1998 has recently argued against this rigid dichotomy between active and passive; cf. Poster 1986:212–14.

31. The generalization of this mode of eros to the demos as a whole is signalled by the fact that it was prohibited to slaves: slaves were banned from the *palaistra*, and a slave who acted as erastes to a free boy was subject to public whipping (Aes. 1.138–39; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 152d, 751b, *Solon* 1.6). See Golden 1984 on the ways in which pederasty differentiated citizens from slaves.

32. Pericles draws upon this same tradition when in his Funeral Oration he urges the citizens to “become lovers of the city” (Thuc. 2.43.1). One might think of this “legitimate eros” as itself a perverse investment on the part of the demos: why should a democrat dream of being an aristocratic lover to an aristocratic beloved? Why should an elite love that is at best irrelevant and at worst antithetical to democracy be figured as the essence of democratic sexuality?

33. Winkler 1990a:35–36. Cf. Osborne 1985; Halperin 1990a:16–17. On Herms: Lullies 1931, Crome 1935–1936, Devambez 1968, Goldman 1942.

isonomia of each citizen in the democracy; with their aggressive phallicism, they embody the idealized masculinity of the Athenian citizen. Like the Harmodius and Aristogeiton myth, the Herms seem to have had their origins in the Pisis-tratid tyranny: archaeological evidence supports the literary tradition that has Hipparchus erect the first Herms.³⁴ But even as the elite love of the tyrannicides became a model for the sexuality of the democratic city, so, too, the tyrant's marker was adopted by the democracy (as Winkler, Halperin, and Osborne emphasize³⁵) and became the symbol of the "masculine egalitarianism that accompanied the consolidation of democracy at Athens."³⁶ In this sense, the Herms are isomorphic to the tyrannicides: both take as their starting point tyrannical power (inflected in both cases through tyrannical sexuality), but distribute that power, including the sexual power, to the demos at large. The Herms thus can be seen as another victory for the democratic citizen and his democratic sexuality. Stationed throughout the city, the Herms symbolize, memorialize, and perpetuate the legitimate and beneficial eros of the tyrannicides and grant each individual citizen a share in it.

Given this significance, the mutilation of the Herms becomes a serious attack on both the sexual and the political autonomy of the demos.³⁷ In the sexual register it is a castration; in the political, a potential act of tyranny. But the political and erotic here are inseparable: since the Athenian citizen is, virtually by definition, sexually dominant, castration is political disenfranchisement.³⁸ If these Hipparchan monuments come to represent the democratic eros of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, then their mutilation suggests the incursion or recursion of a Hipparchan eros. The lust and sexual license of tyrants was a common trope in the Athenian imagination of tyranny: absolute and unbridled political power

34. Plato *Hipparchus* (to which I return below) is the locus classicus. Harpocration (s.v. *Hermiai*) says old comedy also attributed them to Hipparchus. Osborne (1985:47–51) finds this a plausible origin; cf. Shapiro 1989:125–32.

35. Winkler 1990a:36 and n.21; Halperin 1990a:17; Osborne 1985:64–66. McGlew 1993 argues for the demos' appropriation of the power of the tyrant: see especially ch. 6.

36. Halperin 1990a:17. This is not to say, of course, that this was the only significance of the Herms, nor even that it would be the primary association in every context. On the heterogeneity of the Herms' significance (religious, political, semiotic), see Osborne 1985.

37. Osborne 1985:66: "It is undeniable that the mutilators chose as their target objects whose destruction was most certain to unman the Athenians and render them impotent."

38. There is debate as to whether the Herms were actually castrated. Thucydides says only that they were "cut about the faces" (περιεκόπησαν τὰ πρόσωπα, 6.27.1; cf. Plut. *Alc.* 18.6: ἀχρωτηριασθέντων τὰ πρόσωπα), but Ar. *Lys.* 1093–94 suggests that it was their phalloi that were cut off. Dover attempts to reconcile the two accounts: "the natural explanation is that the mutilators damaged the face of every herm and the phallos where there was one to damage" (1970:288–89). For my purposes, it matters little whether the Herms were literally castrated or not: if we accept the Herms as a symbolic representation of Athenian masculinity, then their mutilation (wherever aimed) in itself represents a castration of the civic body. If the phalloi were an object of attack, though, Thucydides' failure to mention that would then become significant, a displacement from the phallus to the face, and the first of many gestures of denial surrounding the event. Osborne comments that targeting the faces made the vandalization a self-mutilation, as "the face of the herm was the face of every Athenian" (1985:65).

was thought to have its natural end in total sexual power.³⁹ Aristotle's version of the tyrannicide scene figures three tyrannical protagonists: the legitimate ruler Hippias, the amorous and self-indulgent Hipparchus, and the violent, hubristic Thettalus (who in his version is the one who comes on to Harmodius). In dividing up the roles in this way, Aristotle trifurcates the dangerous combination of power, sexuality, and violence that was associated with tyranny in the Athenian mind.⁴⁰ Tyrants were imagined to have not only the will but also the way to take whomever they wanted, even another man's boyfriend.

In this way, the tyrant becomes the sole *erastes*, monopolizing the sexual power that in the democracy should belong equally to all Athenian men. And if the tyrant becomes the city's only *erastes*, he transforms the entire *demos*—youth and adult alike—into potential *eromenoi*. In Aristotle, the tyrant Thettalus, when his advances are rebuffed, insults Harmodius, calling him *malakos*, a pansy (*Ath. Pol.* 18.2).⁴¹ Legitimate pederasty is here drawn under the stigma of illegitimate sexuality, as the tyrant's lust transforms a good Athenian boy into that lowliest of creatures, the *kinaidos*, the shameful personification of passivity.⁴² It is precisely this same logic that brands the mutilation of the Herms the act of a tyrannical conspiracy: some Hipparchus has unmanned the *demos* and reclaimed the democratic phallus as his own. Politically the tyrant is the only master over a population of slaves; sexually he is the only *erastes* in a city full of *eromenoi*.

The sexuality of tyrants was thus represented as antithetical to that of the democratic citizen, a polarity witnessed throughout the literature on tyrants, but especially clear in the Harmodius and Aristogeiton legend. Through this polarity, the citizen is defined in contrast to the tyrant as moderate and self-controlled, a man who enjoys fully what belongs to him but does not seek to appropriate what does not. Looked at differently, though, the tyrant is not so much the citizen's opposite as the logical limit of his own position inasmuch as every citizen was (if only potentially) a tyrant over his sexual subordinates.⁴³ The tyrant's violent and transgressive sexuality is, from this perspective, merely an extreme version

39. Hdt. 3.80; Eur. *Suppl.* 452–54; Xen. *Hieron* 1.26, 8.6; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 18.1–2, *Pol.* 5.8.9–12; Isoc. 2.29–31, 3.36–44.

40. Cf. Thuc. 1.20.1–2. At Thuc. 6.54.3, Aristogeiton fears the *dunamis* of Hipparchus, lest he take Harmodius by force (βίᾱ): eros, power, and violence are united. But notice that this is all just Aristogeiton's fear (φοβηθείς) and it is qualified by the introductory description of Aristogeiton as ὁ δὲ ἐρωτικῶς περιαλγῆσας (cf. 6.59.1): thus although many tyrants no doubt did abuse their power, the violent eros of the tyrant was, above all, a product of the *democratic imagination*.

41. The insult Hipparchus pays Harmodius by barring his sister from the Panathenaia is closely related: it says that Harmodius is not man enough to have kept his sister pure nor now to protect his family honor. See Lavelle 1986.

42. On the *kinaidos*, see Winkler 1990b:45–70; Gleason 1990; Richlin 1993. Davidson 1997:167–82 argues convincingly for a broader semantic range for the word.

43. Foucault 1985:80–85; cf. McGlew 1993:187–90. Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias* presents tyranny as a desirable extreme of citizen *eleutheria* (491e5–492c8). On Athens as a *tyrannos polis*, see Connor 1977; Hunter 1974; Raaflaub 1984 and forthcoming; Tuplin 1985.

of the dominating and aggressive sexuality of the Athenian citizen, and the logical boundary between the two (as Alcibiades' constant crossing of it will illustrate) could be a fine one. But given the tyrant's role in Athenian ideology—a detested and feared figure, whose actions define the norms of citizen behavior—it is a boundary that must be rigorously policed. The citizen, for all that he may in theory have autocratic power over his subordinates, should not exercise his power tyrannically.⁴⁴ The tyrannicide legend was one way of policing this border; it dramatized vividly the distinction between a tyrant's lust and a citizen's sexual autonomy, setting the two in eternal opposition, the tyrant's eros a constant threat to the citizen, the citizen's eros by nature tyrannicidal.

Thucydides' two narratives, then, seem to hinge upon a distinction between two erotic modes: on the one hand, a good democratic eros, the eros of Harmodius and Aristogeiton and of the Herms, an eros that puts each citizen of the democracy socially and sexually "on top"; and on the other hand, a tyrannical eros, the eros of Hipparchus and the Hermokopidai, a monopoly on sexual and political power that renders the demos passive, penetrable, castrated. We are now in a position to answer the initial question: why for Thucydides does the mutilation evoke the tyrannicide? The two events play out a conflict between these two erotic and political orders, though with differing outcomes: in the mutilation, tyrannical eros threatens democratic; in the tyrannicide legend, democratic eros slays tyrannical. The mutilation of the Herms confronts the demos with a sexual and political trauma that evokes a similar past trauma under the Pisistratid tyranny.⁴⁵ In this way, the digression on the tyrannicide functions as a defensive gesture against the threat of civic castration: Thucydides seeks to assuage the anxiety of the present by recourse to a tale from the past. In this defensive fantasy, the demos, rather than being "cut about" by tyrannical conspirators, instead straps on its sword and heroically penetrates and kills the tyrant.⁴⁶

44. Foucault differentiates between the "vicious tyrant," "incapable of mastering his own passions and ... therefore always prone to abuse his power and to do violence (*hubrizein*) to his subjects," and the "positive image of the leader who was capable of exercising a strict control over himself in the authority he exercised over others" (1985:81). One should be a good tyrant, not a bad one.

45. Momigliano 1971:32: "il ricordo della tirannide costituiva un trauma permanente nella coscienza collettiva degli Ateniesi." McGlew 1993:155 suggests that the tyrannicide myth was a way for the Athenians to deny their own passivity in the face of tyranny by presenting themselves as their own liberators and thus laying claim to the power formerly held by tyrants. Taylor 1981 ch. 6 and Brunnsåker 1971:123 note the prominence of the tyrannicide legend in the years between 422 and 411 when the fear of tyranny was particularly strong.

46. The mutilation is surrounded and in part obscured by multiple deflections in Thucydides' text, all of which could be seen as defenses against the idea of castration. The Herms are, first, "cut about the face," not castrated per se. When information is brought forward, it is not about the Herms but about the defacement of other, less significant statues (6.28.1); attention is from there diverted to Alcibiades and his lifestyle (6.28.2). Indeed, one could see the deflection of public attention from the Herms to Alcibiades' other transgressions as Athens' (historical) equivalent to Thucydides' (textual) digression on the tyrannicides. It is as if the mutilation of the Herms cannot be faced head-on.

But the problems go deeper. Thucydides juxtaposes the mutilation and the tyrannicide, tyrannical eros and democratic, but is unable to maintain the polarity between them. First of all, in his account, Harmodius and Aristogeiton do not in fact overthrow the tyranny, and Thucydides introduces the story by pointing this out: the demos was suspicious after the mutilation of the Herms because they “knew that the tyranny had not been ended by themselves and Harmodius, but by the Spartans” (6.53.3). Motivated not by democratic sentiment but (Thucydides emphasizes) by personal animus, the lovers make a mess of the whole deal: their first attack (aimed against the reigning tyrant Hippias) fails, and they kill his brother Hipparchus by default. Moreover, far from ending the tyranny with their abortive attempt, the lovers exacerbate it, turning Hippias, who had previously been a fair and legitimate ruler, into a harsh and suspicious dictator.⁴⁷ Thucydides sums up:

Τοιούτῳ μὲν τρόπῳ δι’ ἐρωτικὴν λύπην ἢ τε ἀρχὴ τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς καὶ ἡ ἀλόγιστος τόλμα ἐκ τοῦ παραχρῆμα περιδεοῦς Ἀρμόδιῳ καὶ Ἀριστογεῖτονι ἐγένετο. τοῖς δ’ Ἀθηναίοις χαλεπωτέρα μετὰ τοῦτο ἡ τυραννὶς κατέστη.

(6.59.1–2)

In this way, the conspiracy originated in a lover’s grievance, and the reckless daring of Harmodius and Aristogeiton came about through momentary panic. But for the Athenians the tyranny became more oppressive after this.

This is hardly a resounding endorsement of the lovers and the love that were supposed to have freed Athens from tyranny.

Drinking songs, a state cult, the statues in the agora—all celebrated Harmodius and Aristogeiton as lovers and tyrannicides. Thucydides explicitly takes issue with this popular tradition, emphasizing their erotic motives, but denying their political significance and reducing the whole thing to a sordid affair among amorous noblemen. In his account, the tyrannicides’ eros harms rather than helps the polis; it inaugurates not democracy, but tyranny. The beneficial democratic eros of Harmodius and Aristogeiton has started to blur with the selfish and autocratic eros of Hipparchus: a tyrannicide that exacerbates tyranny no longer seems quite so distinct from a mutilation that presages tyranny; in both, the demos is the loser in the sex-games of the elite.

Thucydides’ juxtaposition of these events, rather than offering us a positive democratic eros to place over against a castrating tyrannical eros, instead reveals

47. Thucydides takes a remarkably favorable view of the Pisistratid rule. These tyrants had lowered taxes, beautified the city, fought successful wars, and sacrificed at the temples. They had ruled according to the laws with *aretê* and *sunesis*, and even Hipparchus, the unwelcome suitor, exercised power without *phthonos* (6.54.5–6). Cf. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 16.7–10, 18.1, and on the deterioration of the tyranny after Hipparchus’ death, Hdt. 5.62.2, 6.123.2; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 19.1.

the inadequacy of *dikaïos erôs*: it cannot guarantee *isonomia*. Instead of a pristine origin and secure foundation for democratic masculinity, the tyrannicide becomes the story of a *demos* seduced by tyranny, unable to defend itself from attack, a population of castrated Herms. Aristogeiton, that model of noble and freedom-loving virility, now becomes a lover who is unable to protect his beloved and a tyrannicide who fails to end the tyranny.⁴⁸ Democratic eros is shown to be fragile not only in this present crisis, but even in its most glorious moment, its very moment of origin. And the heir to this legacy, the democratic citizen, becomes like its failed founder, the ineffectual Aristogeiton, always already castrated.

No wonder that Thucydides is unable to spell out the connection between the mutilation and the tyrannicide, for in that repressed association lies a story that dispels the optimistic vision of an inviolable citizen body and invulnerable citizen masculinity, the very vision that the tyrannicide legend promises, but fails, to secure. Told from the vantage point of the mutilation, Thucydides' version of the tyrannicide only serves to mutilate the Herms, those icons of democratic masculinity, all over again. Perhaps, given Thucydides' ambivalence toward his native city and his often critical stance towards its democracy, we should not expect from him a resuscitation of a threatened democratic masculinity. But to the extent that Thucydides presents the memory of the tyrannicide as a popular response to the mutilation, the text's failure to preserve Athenian masculinity at its origin—whether that failure be attributed to unwillingness or inability—becomes Athens' own. The historian's juxtaposition of these two narratives, then, is more than a mere stylistic problem; it signals a deeper crisis in the erotic economy of the democracy and its subjects, a loss of faith in the very ideal of citizen sexuality.

In this light, the entire Sicilian Expedition—itself driven by desire (Thuc. 6.24)—becomes a failed test of democratic masculinity. Nicias had urged the old men of Athens not to be ashamed lest they seem soft (*malakos*) if they vote against the Sicilian Expedition; “do not, like the young men, become lovers of what is distant” (δυσέρωτας εἶναι τῶν ἀπόντων, 6.13.1). In an inversion of the normal protocols of pederasty, the young men have become lovers (and bad lovers at that, *duserôtas*) and the older men flaccid. The young men are tyrants—the empire is like a tyranny (2.63.2, 3.37.2)—lusting after new pleasures and taking whatever they desire; meanwhile, the older men, those who oppose the war, become a humiliated Harmodius, taunted by these tyrants with *malakia*, softness.⁴⁹

48. Indeed, in retrospect Aristogeiton seems to have been inadequate for the job from the start, and inadequate precisely inasmuch as he is a *mesos politês*: suffering from his love and fearful lest Hipparchus seduce Harmodius by force, he straightaway “plotted, in so far as the influence he held allowed, the dissolution of the tyranny” (ἐπιβουλεύει εὐθὺς ὡς ἀπὸ τῆς ὑπαρχούσης ἀξιώσεως κατάλυσιν τῇ τυραννίδι, 6.54.3). Rawlings 1981:103–106 reads the entire digression as an indictment of Aristogeiton along class lines, and ties this to the class inversions that frame the digression at 6.53.2 and 6.60.2 (cf. 6.27–28).

49. This erotic language is closely tied to the theme of the Athenian empire as a tyranny; the empire is figured as driven by the same insatiable desire that characterizes tyrannical sexuality. On

The mutilation thus needs to be seen within the context of this larger problematization of the erotics of Athenian policy and the politics of citizen masculinity. This event, dramatic though it is, merely brings into sharp relief a problem that was latent all along, revealing with especial clarity the vulnerability and instability—indeed, the fictionality—of the sexually dominant, politically autonomous Athenian citizen. The real crime in the mutilation of the Herms was that it showed not only that this myth of Athenian masculinity was as fragile—as *malakos*—as its material representation, but also that it always had been so, even as it struck the blow that founded the democracy. It shows that the normative sexuality of the democratic citizen was no more than an ideal: put under pressure, this ideal fails to hold—and the demos itself recognizes that (“for the demos knew...”). The discourse of citizen sexuality in Athens encompassed not only the valiant and masterful lover but also the failed lover: the man who succumbed to tyrants, the man who submitted to assault. And this *malakos*, this castrated Herm, is not merely some monitory bogeyman, an unthinkable Other to the self-secure Athenian citizen, a figure whose very existence is reassuring in its otherness. Instead, it is a part of himself, something always potential inside him, a failure inculcated by the impossible demands of masculinity. The castration of the Herms, then, is not a temporary inversion of the “true” erotic economy of Athens, but instead the irruption of an instability always implicit within it.

The norms of sexuality in Athens generated a realm of *dikaïos erôs* and an ideal of masculinity emblemized by the tyrannicides and Herms. At the same time, though, these same norms also produced a region of illegitimacy and its denizens: lustful tyrants, “soft” tyrannicides, castrated Herms. These latter are repudiated as aberrations, perversions alien to citizen sexuality, and this repudiation is what grounds the legitimate sexuality of the democratic citizen. But the border between the two can never be secure: it is threatened not only by extraordinary incursions like the mutilation of the Herms but also by the existence of those creatures that live along it, creatures whose illegitimacy calls into question the legitimacy of the Athenian citizen, even as it supports the latter.⁵⁰

Such a one was Alcibiades. An aggressive eromenos, a passive adult, a demagogue with the lifestyle of a tyrant, a Greek man with affinities for the female and the foreign, Alcibiades transgresses all the boundaries that bolstered Athenian masculinity; he queers not only the good eros of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, but

this theme, see Aristophanes' *Birds* (performed at about this time); Arrowsmith 1973; Connor 1977; Raaflaub 1984 and forthcoming; Tuplin 1985; Hunter 1974.

50. Butler 1993 theorizes the complex relations of dependency and subversion between the subject and the object. “This zone of uninhabitability will constitute the defining limit of the subject’s domain; it will constitute that site of dreaded identification against which—and by virtue of which—the domain of the subject will circumscribe its own claim to autonomy and to life. ... And yet, this disavowed abjection will threaten to expose the self-grounding presumptions of the sexed subject, grounded as that subject is in a repudiation whose consequences it cannot fully control” (3; cf. 8, 111–19).

the very distinction between good and bad eros.⁵¹ And yet the demos loved him. Why was this character—who threatened every norm of democratic masculinity—embraced (albeit with ambivalence) by the Athenian demos? What sort of desire did he embody or inspire? What was the eros of Alcibiades—his love and the love for him?

Paranomia is the watch-word of his life and character.⁵² First, Alcibiades was in his youth a sexually aggressive eromenos. In the *Symposium*, Alcibiades tells of his youthful attempt to seduce Socrates. In his account—tongue in cheek and directed at a very specific audience—Alcibiades becomes more like the erastes, and Socrates his eromenos. This role reversal continues in his later life: Alcibiades continues to be a love-object into his adulthood.⁵³ The philosophical tradition has a neat solution for this: the true lover, says Socrates in Plato's *Alcibiades* (131c), loves the soul, not the body of his beloved and this is why Socrates, alone of Alcibiades' admirers, continues to hang on even after Alcibiades has started to lose the bloom of youth. This moralization is an attempt to legitimate Alcibiades' sex appeal by leeching it of its sex, and yet the fact remains that Alcibiades was attractive to adult men in a way that adult men were not supposed to be. "Alcibiades melted every disposition and captivated every nature with the charm of his day-to-day company and conversation. Even for those who feared and envied him, being with him face to face afforded pleasure and a good time" (Plut. *Alc.* 24.5).⁵⁴

As an adult eromenos, Alcibiades plays into all the associations that passivity held in the Greek mind—foreignness, femininity, even tyranny. Plutarch notes that one of Alcibiades' greatest talents in his "hunt after men" (θηρὰς ἀνθρώπων,

51. Alcibiades' habit of occupying all possible positions—sexual and political—is neatly symbolized in the tradition of his Olympic victory, where he took first, second, and fourth place in the chariot races (Plut. *Alc.* 11; Thuc. 6.16.2; Isoc. 16.34; and see the epinician written by Euripides for the occasion, quoted in Plut. *Alc.* 11.3 and discussed by Bowra 1960).

52. Thuc. 6.15.4, 28.2; Plut. *Alc.* 16.2; Ps.-And. 4.10. Thucydides characterizes Alcibiades' *paranomia* as *kata to sôma*, physical, personal, or perhaps more specifically, sexual (15.4), and as *ou dêmotikê* (6.28.2): his oddness is at once sexy and undemocratic.

53. Cf. the opening of Plato's *Protagoras*, where a friend notes to Socrates that his eromenos Alcibiades is growing a beard: he is now a *kalos anêr*. But Plutarch comments that Alcibiades' beauty flowered as much in adulthood as in his youth on account of his physical excellence and good character (δὲ εὐφυΐαν καὶ ἀρετὴν τοῦ σώματος, *Alc.* 1.5). de Romilly (1995:3) remarks that "Alcibiades n'a jamais été vieux." On the stigma against an over-eager eromenos, see Pl. *Symp.* 182a1–3, 184a2–185b5; Xen. *Symp.* 8.18–9; Dover 1978:81–91; Halperin 1986, 1990a:6, 1990b:130; Cohen 1991:195–202. The emphasis on this stigma has recently come under question: DeVries 1997, McNiven 1995.

54. ταῖς δὲ καθ' ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ συσχολάζειν καὶ συνδιαιτᾶσθαι χάρισιν οὐδὲν ἦν ἀτεγκτον ἦθος οὐδὲ φύσις ἀνάλωτος, ἀλλὰ καὶ (τοῖς) δεδιόσι καὶ φθονοῦσιν ὅμως τὸ συγγενέσθαι καὶ προσιδεῖν ἐκείνον ἡδονὴν τινα καὶ φιλοφροσύνην παρεῖχε. There is, of course, good reason to doubt the trustworthiness of Plutarch as a historical source for fifth-century events, and his gossip anecdotal should no doubt be taken with a large grain of salt. But the issue here is not what Alcibiades actually did, but the sorts of things that were attributed to him, and for this Plutarch is an excellent source, providing a repository for popular fantasies about Alcibiades going back to the fifth century and corresponding closely with those in our fifth-century sources.

Alc. 23.4) was his ability to make his own habits mirror those of the people he was among and in this way to charm and seduce them. In Sparta, he “sought favor with the people and bewitched them by his Spartan lifestyle” (τοὺς πολλοὺς τότ’ ἐδῆμαγώγει καὶ κατεγοήτευε τῇ διαίτῃ λακωνίζων, *Plut. Alc.* 23.3). The “magic” he exerts is not merely political but personal and sexual; the very next anecdote Plutarch relates has Alcibiades seducing the Spartan king’s wife and fathering a child by her (*Alc.* 23.7): his adoption of Spartanness is so alluring to the Spartans that he is even able to insinuate himself into their royal line. Likewise, in Persia, Tissaphernes is so beguiled by Alcibiades’ *kharis* that he even names his garden resort after him, something that Persian potentates usually do for their wives.⁵⁵

Not only seductive, Alcibiades’ changeability also associates him with femininity. It is women, in the Greek mind, who are able to change their appearance at will and hide under an artificial exterior a dubious essence.⁵⁶ Plutarch ends his discussion of Alcibiades’ transformations with a quote from tragedy comparing Alcibiades to Helen, the quintessentially changeable woman (*Alc.* 23.6). In his lifestyle, too, Alcibiades is effeminate: the comic poets joked that he wore women’s robes and spoke with a lisp of charming persuasiveness.⁵⁷ Plutarch tells an anecdote about a wrestling match in which the young Alcibiades bit his opponent: this unsportsmanlike conduct his opponent called the behavior of a girl; Alcibiades responded that it was rather the act of a lion (*Alc.* 2.2–3). Around Alcibiades, such distinctions collapse: is he a girl or a lion?

His effeminacy is also implicated with tyranny: the purple robes he wears are both feminine finery and tyrannical wealth (*Plut. Alc.* 16.1).⁵⁸ While many of Alcibiades’ political ventures might justly be considered to show a tyrannical contempt for the laws of the city (initiating private negotiations with Athens’ enemies, for example), it was his lifestyle more than his politics per se that opened him to charges of aiming at tyranny.⁵⁹ *Philotimia*, the thirst for honor that leads

55. *Plut. Alc.* 24.5; *Plato Alc.* 123b3–c3. On Alcibiades abroad, see further *Thuc.* 6.88–93, 8.6–17, 45–48.

56. Plutarch (*Alc.* 23.5) says that Alcibiades did not change his whole character but merely put on a *skhêma* and *plasma* suitable to his surroundings: there is clearly some anxiety here about questions of essence and appearance. On artificiality and femininity, see Bergren 1983, Zeitlin 1996:361–63, 375–416.

57. *Plut. Alc.* 1.6–8; cf. 16.1, 39; *Ar. Wasps* 44–46; Archippos fr. 48 (K–A). His son, in imitation of him, held his neck at a slant (κλασασυγχενεύεται, *Alc.* 1.4), which is listed as one sure sign of a *kinaidos* (*Arist. Physiognomics* 808a12–13).

58. Plutarch, in his chapter on Alcibiades’ personal life (*Alc.* 16), yokes luxuriousness (*truphê, poluteleia*), effeminacy (*thêlutês*), and erotic hybris (*peri erôtas hubrismata*), a typical combination in the Athenian imagination of tyranny. On luxury, effeminacy, and tyranny, see *Plato Rep.* 579b3–c2; Bushnell 1990:20–25; Schmitt-Pantel 1979; Griffith 1995:84–85; Kurke 1992. On Alcibiades’ tyrannical leanings, see further *Thuc.* 6.15.4, 6.28.2; *Plut. Alc.* 16.2, 16.7; *Isoc.* 16.38; *Plato. Alc.* 105c; *Ps.-And.* 4.16, 23–24, 27–28; *Forde* 1989:92–94, 184–87; *Seager* 1967; *Palmer* 1982:121–24. *Ps.-Andocides* says that Alcibiades had the words of a demagogue and the deeds of a tyrant (4.27).

59. *Plut. Alc.* 16.2; *Thuc.* 6.15.4.

aristocrats to use their wealth for the good of the city, is a passion with Alcibiades, and drives him to extravagances that evoke tyranny: horsebreeding, lavish houses, Olympic victories.⁶⁰ In his speech in support of the Sicilian Expedition, he unabashedly argues for the public benefits derived from his quest for personal honor (Thuc. 6.16); his opponent Nicias interprets such *megalosunê* differently: Alcibiades wants to glorify himself and raise money for his extravagant pleasures at the public expense (Thuc. 6.12.2). The Athenians, too, Thucydides says, saw tyrannical aspirations in such extravagance and personal *paranoia*, and it was largely for this reason that they turned against him in 415.⁶¹ And if his effeminate, luxurious, and hubristic life marked him as *paranomos* and potentially tyrannical, no less disturbing to his elite rivals was his influence with the demos and, especially, with the army: why would a man of his status court the masses unless he were aiming at a populist tyranny?⁶²

Particularly ominous to both his elite rivals and the people were his *hybrismata* against other citizens: he was reported to have struck a rival *khôrêgos*, to have imprisoned a famous painter in his house and forced him to paint it, to have won his Olympic victories in a chariot stolen from a fellow Athenian.⁶³ Not only is *hybris* in itself associated with tyranny, but Alcibiades' *hybrismata*, like those of the legendary tyrants, often took a sexual cast.⁶⁴ Plutarch and Andocides tell stories about his disgraceful treatment of his many erastai, and about the countless women, slave and free, he had debauched; when his long-suffering wife tried to sue for divorce, he abducted her from the archon's office and carried her through the streets.⁶⁵ He was even rumored to have had sex with his mother, sister, and

60. Plut. *Alc.* 2.1, 11, 16.4–5; Isoc. 16.32–34; Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.12–14; Thuc. 6.15. Plutarch (16.4) suggests that *philotimia* was a euphemism with which the Athenians excused Alcibiades' serious *hamartêmata*, and indeed many of the actions that Plutarch attributes to *philotimia*, Ps.-Andocides sees as a profound insult to democracy (see, e.g., the anecdote about Alcibiades' kidnapping of Agatharchus, Plut. *Alc.* 16.5; Ps.-And. 4.17). On *philotimia*, see Whitehead 1983.

61. Thuc. 6.15.4. On the ambiguity of this passage, see Forde 1989:76–77; Peremans 1956. So, too, Plutarch comments that the *endoxoi* feared the *paranoia* of his life as tyrannical and untraditional, *Alc.* 16.2. On Alcibiades' first speech in Thucydides 6 and its negotiation of *megaloprepeia*, see Forde 1989:78–95; Kurke 1991:171–77 (who points out how closely it skirts tyranny, 176).

62. Thuc. 6.28.2; Isoc. 16.38. On this strategy for tyranny, see Arist. *Pol.* 1310b15–17; Andrewes 1956:100–15.

63. Ps.-And. 4 documents these at length. Cf. Plut. *Alc.* 4.4–5.5, 7–8, 12, 16; Dem. 21.143–51; Lys. 14.30, 37, 41; Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.12 (τῶν ἐν τῇ δημοκρατίᾳ πάντων ἀκρατέστατός τε καὶ ὑβριστότατος). Ps.-Andocides' *Against Alcibiades* (4) is almost certainly spurious, but is probably fifth or fourth century: Dover 1970:287; Raubitschek 1948; Burn 1954; Furley 1989.

64. On tyranny and *hybris*, see, for example, Soph. *OT* 873; McGlew 1993:52–86. Aristotle (*Pol.* 1310b1–1313a18) makes sexual *hybris* a defining feature of tyranny. Demosthenes (21.143, 170) makes both Alcibiades and Harmodius and Aristogeiton stand as proof of his thesis that Athens will not tolerate *hybris*.

65. Plut. *Alc.* 8.4–5. Ps.-And. (4.15) asks: how will a man who treats his own family thus way treat his fellow citizens? But Plutarch excuses Alcibiades' behavior, hypothesizing that the divorce law was designed for this purpose (*Alc.* 8.6; cf. Russell 1995:198–200). On Alcibiades' *hybris* toward his erastai, see Plut. *Alc.* 4.4–5 and on his sexual *hybris* more generally, Plut. *Alc.* 8.4; Fisher 1992:87–88, 97–98, 148–49, 458–66; Littman 1970. Pherecydes fr. 155 sums up Alcibiades'

daughter—a sexual aberration often associated with tyrants.⁶⁶ In this combination of tyrannical license and sexual violence, Alcibiades recalls Hipparchus, and the sort of political and sexual autocracy that was supposedly banished from Athens with the tyrannicide.

All of these themes—passivity, extravagance, femininity, foreignness, and tyranny—come together in Alcibiades' death. Plutarch narrates the scene (*Alc.* 39), which takes place in a village in Phrygia where Alcibiades was living with his hetaira Timandra. One night Alcibiades had a dream that he was wearing his mistress' clothes and that she was making up his face; others say his dream was that his head was being cut off and his body burnt. Soon after, his enemies attacked, burnt down his house, and killed him. His dream came true when Timandra wrapped his body in her own clothes and buried him lavishly (λαμπρῶς καὶ φιλοτιμῶς, 39.7).⁶⁷ This version of his death is a parodic replay of his life: the extravagance, effeminacy, luxury, and foreignness that had characterized him become in the end obscene and pathetic. If his life played with the boundaries that contain Athenian masculinity, his death turns him into that other he flirted with: a foreign woman. But Plutarch also gives an alternate account, in which it is not his Persian or Spartan enemies who kill him but the brothers of a noble girl he had debauched. It is typical of Alcibiades that politics and sexuality cannot be segregated even in his death: he dies first as a general, then as a libertine. In this latter version, Alcibiades truly becomes Hipparchus, assassinated by Harmodius and Aristogeiton for a sexual insult. And if in this story he is Hipparchus, in the other version of the death, he is himself the Herms he was accused of mutilating: he dreams of his own beheading.

This humiliating death should be warning enough as to the threat a figure like Alcibiades posed to Athenian manhood. A man who plays the woman, a democratic citizen who plays the tyrant, an adult who plays the eromenos—Alcibiades' very existence calls into question the categories and distinctions upon which Athenian citizenship was grounded. Things get worse, though, for the demos itself is implicated in Alcibiades' bad erotics. While the Athenian elite loathed him and feared his tyrannical excess (*Plut. Alc.* 16.2), the demos, despite everything—or perhaps because of it—loved him. They “long for him and hate him and want to have him,” as Aristophanes puts it (ποθεῖ μὲν, ἐχθαίρει δέ, βούλεται δ' ἔχειν, *Frogs* 1425). He is the lion they raise in their house (*Frogs*

paradoxical combination of effeminacy and sexual aggression: οὐκ ὦν ἀνὴρ γὰρ Ἀλκιβιάδης, ὡς δοκεῖ, ἀνὴρ ἀπασῶν τῶν γυναικῶν ἐστὶ νῦν. For similar sentiments, see *Ath.* 12.535a-b (quoting Eupolis) and *D.L.* 4.49 (quoting Bion); cf. Davidson 1997:165–66; Moorton 1988.

66. *Ath.* 5.220c; cf. 12.535a; *Lysias* 14.28, 41. On tyrannical incest, see *Hdt.* 3.31; *Soph. OT*; *D.L.* 1.96; Gernet 1981; Vernant 1982.

67. Even the hetaira's name, Timandra, speaks to Alcibiades' problems with *timê* and *andreia*. Another foreign woman figures prominently in Plato's *Alcibiades*: there Socrates introduces Artaxerxes' mother to instruct Alcibiades in achieving his true potential as a ruler (123–24). Nussbaum 1986:177 draws a further parallel between Timandra and Diotima. On Alcibiades' death, see Littman 1970:269, Perrin 1906.

1431–32). Aristophanes' quote from Aeschylus speaks to the combination of *kharis* and *biaiotês*, the effeminate luxury and aristocratic *hybris* that characterize Alcibiades.⁶⁸ And if his lion *êthos* makes the demos hate him, it also makes them love him. Seduced by his liturgies and munificence toward the city, by his glorious ancestry, his powerful eloquence, his physical vigor and beauty, and his courage and experience in war (Plutarch says, *Alc.* 16.4), the Athenians forgave him everything, attributing to youth and ambition (παιδιὰς καὶ φιλοτιμίας) precisely those acts that his rivals, *hoi endoxoi*, feared as tyrannical and subversive (ὡς τυραννικὰ καὶ ἀλλόκοτα, 16.2). When he has himself painted held in Nemea's arms, *hoi presbuteroi* are scandalized by this tyrannical lawlessness (τυραννικοὺς καὶ παρανόμους), but the people are delighted (χαίροντες) and run to see it (16.5). They seem to adore him for precisely the *paranomia* that makes his rivals so detest him.

Pothos—desire, longing—is how Aristophanes characterizes the demos' feeling for Alcibiades. They long for him and want to have him. In their desire to possess (ἔχειν) this charismatic and illustrious man, the demos recall Aristogeiton, the middling citizen who loved and possessed another beautiful aristocratic youth (ἐραστῆς ὃν εἶχεν αὐτόν, Thuc. 6.54.2). Alcibiades is another Harmodius, shining in his youth, eromenos of the demos.⁶⁹ Is it mere coincidence that tradition gives one of Alcibiades' first erastai the name Demokrates (Plut. *Alc.* 3.1)?⁷⁰

Worse still, if the demos love Alcibiades, he loves them back. In Plato's *Alcibiades*, Socrates says he will remain Alcibiades' erastes so long as Alcibiades is not spoiled by the demos: "For my chief fear is of your being ruined by becoming a lover of the people" (τοῦτο γὰρ δὴ μάλιστα ἐγὼ φοβοῦμαι, μὴ δημεραστῆς ἡμῖν γενόμενος διαφθαρεῖς, 132a2–3). In Socrates' imagination, the young Alcibiades will grow up to be the active lover to a passive Athenian demos, "the fair-faced people of great-hearted Erechtheus" (132a5). In this relation, the demos is no longer a population of vigorous and virile Aristogeitons, fighting for

68. On this extended simile (Aes. *Ag.* 717–36), see Knox 1951. Rose (1992:199–202) sees the lion cub as a symbol of the aristocratic class, with its tendency toward tyranny. The ostensible object of comparison in the original passage, though, is Helen, to whom Alcibiades is also compared by Plutarch (*Alc.* 23.6).

69. Harmodius is ὥρα ἡλικίας λαμπρός (Thuc. 6.54.2). Alcibiades is characterized by τὴν λαμπρότητα τῆς ὥρας, and this is one of the things that attracted erastai to him (Plut. *Alc.* 4.1; cf. Ath. 12.534c, ὥραϊον ἐφ' ἡλικίας πάσης). In Thucydides, *lamprotês* distinguishes Alcibiades in both a positive (6.16.3, 5) and a negative sense (6.12.2).

70. Perhaps we may see the same relation in Alcibiades' first entrance into politics: when he made a contribution to the public revenue, the crowd was so enthusiastic (κροτοῦντος καὶ βοῶντος ὡς ἡδονῆς, Plut. *Alc.* 10.1) that Alcibiades forgot about a quail that he was carrying under his cloak and the bird flew away, to the great excitement of the crowd. De Romilly connects this quail to the birds commonly given by erastai as gifts to their eromenoi (1995:45; see, e.g., Ar. *Birds* 707). In this anecdote, the entire Athenian assembly acts like erastai to Alcibiades, chasing the quail to give to him. The man who does finally catch it (and consequently becomes one of Alcibiades' favorites) is an average Athenian citizen and a ship's pilot: once again a *mesos politês* woos a *lampros* young man. (My thanks to Leslie Kurke for pointing this out to me.)

their love and their liberty; instead, it is they who play the part of Harmodius, the passive eromenos, and a Harmodius, moreover, who willingly succumbs to the charm of this sexy Hipparchus.

Socrates may fear the effect of this *dêmerastia* on Alcibiades, but what of his beloved, the demos? Plutarch spells out the disastrous implications for the Athenians in his narration of Alcibiades' triumphant return from exile (*Alc.* 32). Alcibiades longs to see his country again, and so, never one to shrink from public attention, he stages an elaborate spectacle of his return. He sails into the Piraeus with a fleet of ships adorned with trophies of war and purple sails; an aulos player and a tragic actor, both in lavish attire, mark the time for the rowers (*Plut. Alc.* 32.2). Alcibiades stages a drama of his own tyranny so explicit and theatrical that Plutarch rejects the narrative altogether: he finds it unlikely that Alcibiades would luxuriate so before the Athenians after his long exile and prefers to imagine that Alcibiades really returned diffident and fearful (*Alc.* 32.2). Plutarch wants Alcibiades to be the modest eromenos of a manly Athenian demos, waiting coyly to be invited ashore; instead, the demos prostrate themselves like a chorus of women before their tragic tyrant:⁷¹ they rush to greet him, embracing and crowning him, counting off the favors he had done them and their misfortunes during his absence. They have become Alcibiades' eromenoi, and the same sort of eromenoi that Alcibiades himself was, shamelessly pursuing their erastes.⁷²

The political ramifications of this relationship become clear two sections later in Plutarch's narrative.⁷³ Alcibiades reinstates the procession that began the Eleusinian Mysteries and, under heavy guard, himself escorts the statue of Iacchus to Eleusis (a gesture not without its irony, of course, as it was for profaning the mysteries that Alcibiades had been exiled in the first place).

... θέαμα σεμνὸν καὶ θεοπρεπὲς τὴν στρατηγίαν ἐκείνην ἐπιδεικνύμενος, ὑπὸ τῶν μὴ φθονούντων ἱεροφαντίαν καὶ μυσταγωγίαν προσ-
αγορευομένην. μηδενὸς δὲ τῶν πολέμιων ἐπιθέσθαι τολμήσαντος,

71. Tyrants were often associated with theatricality, see Plato *Rep.* 577b1; Arist. *Pol.* 1314a39–40; Bushnell 1990:17–20. Cf. Ps.-And. 4.22–23: he compares Alcibiades' living with a Melian woman (after having ordered the destruction of Melos) to a tragedy and chides the Athenians that they view such things with horror on the stage, but when they see them taking place in Athens they don't care. Wilson 1997:81–85 discusses this passage's depiction of Alcibiades as transgressive *chorêgos* as well as tragic actor.

72. The demos is equally slavish in Xenophon's version (*Hell.* 1.4.18–20). There, too, Alcibiades' return is a great spectacle, greeted with wonder by the gathered crowd (θαυμάζοντες καὶ ἰδεῖν βουλόμενοι τὸν Ἀλκιβιάδην, 1.4.13), although without Plutarch's erotic diction. Individual reactions differed, but Xenophon recounts at greatest length the words of those who forgave Alcibiades everything, defended him against past charges, and pitied him his suffering in exile. Cf. Bloedow 1973:67–71; de Romilly 1995:197–205 on this incident.

73. In Xenophon (*Hell.* 1.4.20), upon disembarking, Alcibiades went before the boule and ekklesia and cleared his name and (since, Xenophon adds, the ekklesia had forbidden opposition) he was immediately proclaimed *hapantôn hêgemôn autokratôr* (1.4.20). Cf. *Plut. Alc.* 33.2–3; D.S. 13.69.1–3.

ἀσφαλῶς ἀπαγαγὼν εἰς τὴν πόλιν, ἦρθη μὲν αὐτὸς τῷ φρονήματι, καὶ τὴν στρατιὰν ἐπῆρεν ὡς ἅμαχον καὶ ἀήττητον οὕσαν ἐκείνου στρατηγοῦντος, τοὺς δὲ φορτικοὺς καὶ πένητας οὕτως ἐδημαγώγησεν, ὥστ' ἐρᾶν ἔρωτα θαυμαστὸν ὑπ' ἐκείνου τυραννεῖσθαι, καὶ λέγειν ἐνίους καὶ προσιέναι παρακελευομένους, ὅπως τοῦ φθόνου κρείττων γενόμενος καὶ καταβαλὼν ψηφίσματα καὶ νόμους καὶ φλυάρους ἀπολλύντας τὴν πόλιν ὡς ἂν πράξει καὶ χρῆσται τοῖς πράγμασι, μὴ δεδιὼς τοὺς συκοφάντας.

(*Alc.* 34.6–7)

He made so devout and solemn a spectacle of this expedition that those who weren't jealous of him proclaimed him both an initiate and hierophant. None of the enemy dared attack, and he led the procession safely back to the city. This raised his own spirits and roused the army, which felt invincible with him in command. As for the common and poor folk, he so swayed them that they lusted with an amazing desire to be ruled by him as a tyrant. Some even proposed this and went up to urge him to place himself above envy, abolish decrees and laws and get rid of the fools who were destroying the city; then he could act and manage affairs without fear of denouncers.

Here the results of Alcibiades' dangerous seductiveness are taken to their extreme. The demos' response to his charisma—a charisma that is always implicitly or explicitly sexual—is the desire to be ruled by him; they long to be ruled by him as a tyrant, ἐρᾶν ἔρωτα θαυμαστὸν ὑπ' ἐκείνου τυραννεῖσθαι. Alcibiades inspires in the demos an unwholesome and passive desire, a politically masochistic desire. If the love of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, a love that would not bear tyranny, is the foundation of Athenian democracy, the desire one feels for Alcibiades signals the end of the democracy. The beloveds of a tyrant, the demos become—by their own choice—the castrated Herms; they willingly abrogate their phallic dominance and the unique prerogatives of Athenian masculinity. It is no wonder, then, that Alcibiades was associated with the mutilation of the Herms. His love castrates.

Perhaps we can now see why in Thucydides' text the tyrannicide narrative failed to provide a secure defense against the threat of castration implicit in the mutilation of the Herms: the tyrant himself is positively invested with desire. On the one hand, the tyrant is an example of everything Athens hated, the antithesis of the self-controlled Athenian citizen; on the other hand, he is a figure of desire—the desire to be him and to be loved by him. The pleasure the tyrannicide narrative afforded democratic Athens was not only thinking about the death of the tyrant and the victory of democracy, but also imagining the prior threat, the tyrant's love.⁷⁴ Thucydides' odd introduction to the digression suggests this connection: what people remembered about the story, and what reminded them of it at the

74. In this context, it is significant that the first Herm depicted in Athenian art (on a kylix by Epictetus, Copenhagen NM 119 [referred to by Halperin 1990a: n.96 and Osborne 1985:48]) bears

time of the mutilation, was Athens' inability to defend itself against the castrating attention of a tyrant, be it Hipparchus or Alcibiades.⁷⁵ The demos truly is, as Alcibiades' enemies always feared, "soft" for him (*malakos*, Thuc. 6.29.3; Plut. *Alc.* 20.8). Not only does Alcibiades' *paranoia* call into question all the norms of Athenian sexuality, but the eros he inspires sits ill with our imagination of the Athenian citizen as a voracious sexual aggressor and tireless opponent of tyranny. If the mutilation of the Herms suggests the fictionality of that idealized representation of Athenian citizen sexuality, the eros of Alcibiades indicates the complexities that lie beneath it, revealing a civic unconscious where what is hated becomes desired and a city of tyrannicides fosters a tyrant whom they hate but also love and long to possess.

No doubt we should be suspicious about the political agenda that underlies the representation of this passive eros. The authors who write of it are elite, and we can imagine the interest *hoi agathoi* might have had in representing the demos as "in love with" its elite leaders. Indeed, one might wonder if this fifth-century imagination of a slavish demos is not part of the same oligarchic movement that culminated, soon after this, in the rule of the Four Hundred and then the Thirty. So perhaps we should see the erotics surrounding Alcibiades as an elite fantasy of a democratic love for the elite. And yet, it was the demos that voted to reinstate Alcibiades, and source after source—from the elitist Xenophon to popular comic poets—tells us of its love for him. And even if this imagination of an amorous demos was an elite fantasy (on the part not only of Thucydides and Plutarch but also of Alcibiades' aristocratic rivals, those prurient *endoxoi*), what does it mean that this relation was conceived in such sexual—even sexy—terms?

Alcibiades, I am proposing, was a repository for democratic fantasies. In his ability to change to blend with his circumstances, Plutarch had compared him to Helen (*Alc.* 23.6), and his role in the Athenian imagination was, I think, similar to hers in the epic tradition. In *Odyssey* 4 (277–79), Menelaus tells of Helen imitating the voices of all the wives of the Achaeans in order to lure the men out of the Trojan Horse: a mere *eidōlon* herself, she becomes what each man wants to hear; she bears the projection of all men's desire. So, too, Alcibiades is what the desire of others makes him. Thus he can be simultaneously the lascivious tyrant Hipparchus, seducing the fair-faced demos with his hybristic sexuality; the illustrious aristocrat Harmodius, a beautiful youth whom the demos long to possess; and even (in his own self-representation before the Spartans, Thuc. 6.89.4; Isoc. 16.25–26), an Aristogeiton protecting his beloved, the demos, from

the inscription "*Hiparkhos kalos*." The Herms may represent a simultaneous fetish of democratic masculinity and erotic cathexis to tyranny.

75. Dover imagines the contemporary argument (in 415) that gave rise to Thucydides' digression (1970:329): "'Beware, men of Athens, of the would-be tyrant; for nothing is easier than to give yourselves into the hands of a tyrant, but nothing harder than to escape him again. Why, not even the tyrannicides....'" Tyranny seduces and even the tyrannicides were impotent against it.

tyranny.⁷⁶ He is the quintessential object of desire, and of a desire that comes to seem increasingly complex—and less normative—the closer one looks at him.

From the fifth century on, Alcibiades has been treated as an anomaly, an impossible figure whose individual transgressions ultimately served to resecure the boundaries he crossed, the exception that reconfirmed the rules. The fifth-century general Arcestratus supposedly said that Greece could not bear two Alcibiades. Plutarch, who relates the quote, agrees. Unable to explain the demos' love for Alcibiades, he finally throws up his hands, saying that public opinion was so divided about him because of the inconsistent or anomalous nature of his own character: for him, Alcibiades exists precisely as an anomaly.⁷⁷ Many modern scholars, too, have followed Plutarch's lead in viewing Alcibiades as unique and uniquely dangerous.⁷⁸ But I am arguing that Alcibiades was no anomaly, but rather was central to Athenian manhood. He represents an instability—a vacillation in Athenian masculinity toward its perceived boundaries (femininity, passivity, tyranny), and a complexity in the "protocols" of democratic eros—that is not anomalous but endemic. It is this same instability that makes Thucydides unable to keep Harmodius and Aristogeiton distinct from the mutilation of the Herms, or to find in the former a victorious virility to set against the impotence of the latter. Around Alcibiades, the normativities of sexuality and politics become perverted, queered. The constitutive exclusions that ground the Athenian subject are brought center-stage; illegitimate desire becomes inseparable from legitimate; an ideal of citizen masculinity and a nightmare of tyrannical effeminacy coexist within one man, both the products of the same regulatory norms.

Alcibiades represents the potential for *paranoia* with normativity. For even if we agree with Arcestratus that Greece could not bear two Alcibiades—that he was the exception that proved the "rules" of sex, a "perverse implantation" created by, contained within, and subject to those rules—this aberrant figure aroused a desire that displaced those rules. Loving him for his political power

76. Cf. D.S. 13.68.4: the powerful thought they had found in Alcibiades a man who could stand up to the demos, while the poor saw him as an ally in their revolutionary plans. The army at Samos urges him to lead them against the tyranny of the Thirty (Plut. *Alc.* 26.3).

77. Plut. *Alc.* 16.9: οὕτως ἄκριτος ἦν ἡ δόξα περὶ αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν τῆς φύσεως ἀνωμαλίαν. On Plutarch's characterization of Alcibiades and sources for this characterization, see Russell 1995. One can compare the querulous perplexity of Ps.-Andocides (4.16): Alcibiades is guilty of every sort of transgression, *hybrisma*, and *hamartēma*, both in private life and public (all of which are extensively documented by the speaker). And yet (*deinotaton pantōn*), he talks as though he were well disposed to the demos and calls others oligarchic and enemies of the people (*misodēmos*); and although he deserves death, he is chosen for honors. Cf. 24: some say there has never been anyone like Alcibiades before; I say he will destroy Athens.

78. The opinion of Cornelius Nepos is often reiterated in the modern scholarship on Alcibiades: *constat enim inter omnes, qui de eo memoriae prodiderunt, nihil illo fuisse excellentius vel in vitiis vel in virtutibus.... ut omnes admirarentur in uno homine tantam esse dissimilitudinem tamque diversam naturam* (*Alc.* 1.1, 4). See, e.g. Forde, esp. chs. 1 and 4; de Romilly 1995:11: "Alcibiade est un cas unique et qui sort de l'ordinaire: il est aussi un exemple type, qui peut servir, à chaque instant, de vivant leçon" (cf. 32–33, 253).

or stirring rhetoric meant also loving him for his tyrannical finery and sexual *hybris*: his eros generates a dissonance within the eroticized relations between the demos and its leader, a *dêmerastia* in which the expected polarities—active and passive, masculine and feminine, lover and beloved, democrat and tyrant, Greek and foreigner—become profoundly skewed. As a figure of the Athenian imagination, Alcibiades emerged from the fertile norms of sex and is proof of their dominion; the demos' perverse desire for him is another and perhaps unanticipated result. This is not to argue that the sexual norms that created Alcibiades (and his *paranomia*) lost their potency for his transgression; it is rather that in the saturated locus of desire and fantasy (both "normal" and "perverse") that Alcibiades embodies, we glimpse the complex interrelatedness of normativity and *paranomia*, of desire and its governing protocols, their mutual dependence and also the potential challenge they pose to one another.

Plutarch contains the eros of Alcibiades by discounting him as an aberration; Thucydides, on the other hand, lets the problem lie. His refusal to account for his digression, I have suggested, constitutes a denial or repression of the nightmares it evokes: the *malakia* of the citizen lover, the castration of the demos, the seductions of tyrants—all the sexual perversions personified in Alcibiades. A possible solution to the problem of Alcibiades' erotics comes from a different, and perhaps surprising, quarter: Platonic philosophy. Plato resolves the crisis of Alcibiades' eros by incorporating it into a new sort of community, a community able to contain it and in fact founded upon it, and a community, not surprisingly, that is significantly removed from the democracy. The love of Alcibiades, which within the democratic sphere raises the threat of tyranny and castration, within this elite setting becomes the foundation for a different erotics and a different politics.⁷⁹ I would like to conclude, then, by looking briefly at Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium*. Needless to say, this text requires far more detailed and nuanced consideration than I can give it here. But even such a necessarily cursory discussion will be useful, I think, because the *Symposium's* representation of Alcibiades draws together and reworks so many of the issues we have seen surrounding him and, in the dialogue's (admittedly tendentious and tenuous) answer to the questions he raises, casts into particularly clear relief the true perversity of his eros within the democracy. Plato's incorporation of Alcibiades' eros as a central element of Socratic philosophy shows the extent to which the

79. In moving from Thucydides to Plato's *Symposium*, we are shifting from the sphere of public deliberation to that of private conversation. This distinction, however, has been under considerable pressure in the episodes we are discussing. The mutilation of the Herms was blamed on either a small group of symposiasts or a wide-spread conspiracy: was it a private joke or a political action? It was quite possibly at a symposium just like the one Plato recounts that the mutilation of the Herms originated. Likewise in the accompanying profanation of the Mysteries, public rituals were parodied in private houses. Alcibiades is central in this confusion of public and private, a man who was said to use public silver at his own table (Ps.-And. 4.29; Plut. *Alc.* 13.3) and made private treaties with Athens' enemies (Thuc. 5.43, 45; Plut. *Alc.* 14), and whose private life was ever an issue of public concern. See Bloedow 1990:4 and n.14.

crisis of sexuality embodied in Alcibiades was a specifically *democratic* crisis, and a crisis, specifically, of *democratic* sexuality.

Plato's *Symposium* builds upon the same dichotomy we saw in Thucydides between a positive and a negative eros. The early speeches describe the normative homosexual eros familiar from the tyrannicide legend; indeed, they are the locus classicus for this sort of love and its beneficent effects. Phaedrus argues that there is no better good for a young man than to have a good erastes or for an older man than to have a good *paidika*; Pausanias associates pederasty with civilization and democracy (and brings in Harmodius and Aristogeiton to prove his point), and the other speakers take a similar view. The same relation that was privileged in the tyrannicide legend as integral to the democracy also grounds the philosophical community, as pederasty forms the basis of pedagogy.⁸⁰

But alongside this expected erotics is a more confused relationship. Phaedrus had argued that the best army would be one composed of lovers and beloveds; his examples are a bit odd, though. The first is Alcestis and Admetus, a heterosexual marriage. The second is Orpheus, who fails to save his wife because of his "softness" (μαλθακίῳ, 179d4). Achilles and Patroclus are the third example, but here there is a question as to who is the erastes and who the eromenos (179e1–180b5). The ranks of his noble homosexual army are here broken by the incursion of a woman, a soft man, and a relationship where eromenos and erastes cannot be clearly distinguished: we are back on the terrain of Alcibiades. As in Thucydides, even here in this most homosocial of environments, normative sexuality and normative masculinity are less clear and stable than we might expect.

But of course, these early speakers are far from the truth, which is only revealed after Socrates' Diotima speech and then the arrival of Alcibiades himself.⁸¹ Initially, the flirtation between Socrates and Alcibiades seems to illustrate the virtuous eros praised by Phaedrus: Alcibiades says Socrates has improved him and made him feel shame, and their stand together at Potidea picks up Phaedrus' ideal of a citizen army. But their relationship, of course, goes beyond Phaedrus' rather conventional understanding, since Socrates loves Alcibiades not for his money, charm or good looks, but as a manifestation of Absolute Beauty. Socrates' chaste, philosophical passion legitimates Alcibiades as a love object. Whereas the demos responded to something suspect within Alcibiades—purple robes and a charming

80. Harmodius and Aristogeiton were, of course, familiar figures at symposia. Interestingly, the skolia tend not to dwell upon the erotic nature of their relationship (unless, with Henderson 1987 on Ar. *Lys.* 630–31, one understands the symbolism: "sword=penis, myrtle-wreath=pubis"; cf. Lambin 1979). Perhaps that went without saying in the context: the speech of Pausanias shows how paradigmatic their love was for the erotic atmosphere of the (at least Platonic) symposium. On the tyrannicide skolia, see further Ar. *Ach.* 980, 1093; *Wasps* 1224–27; fr. 444 K-A; Antiphanes 3 K-A; Pl. Com. 216 K-A; Ehrenberg 1956.

81. On Alcibiades' entrance, see Nussbaum 1986:193. Not only is Alcibiades drunk when the rest of the company has voted to drink in moderation (176d2–4, e1–3), but he also comes in accompanied by the flute girl who was banished at the beginning of the party (176e6–9, 212d6).

lisp—Socrates sees deeper and suggests that there is more there to love than a sexy and dominating *kharis*.⁸²

Moreover, while the eros of Alcibiades was castrating in the world of democratic citizens, within the walls of this dining room, it becomes a part of the very philosophy that grounds the community. Alcibiades tells of his failed attempt as a boy to seduce Socrates, recounting all the humorous details of the episode. He admits that he plotted against Socrates like an erastes with his naive eromenos (217c7–8), and so we get the kind of role reversal we have come to expect from Alcibiades. Socrates becomes the eromenos: he pretends to be the erastes, says Alcibiades, but is really the *paidika* (οὗς οὗτος ἐξαπατῶν ὡς ἐραστῆς παιδικὰ μᾶλλον αὐτὸς καθίσταται ἀντ' ἐραστοῦ, 222b3–4).⁸³ As in Thucydides and Plutarch, here too Alcibiades' transgressive behavior threatens the masculinity of those who fall for him. Socrates, like the demos, would seem to be unmanned by the love of Alcibiades, but with Socrates it is different, for Socrates, unlike the demos, can be passive while still remaining dominant. Being acknowledged as the object of adoration does nothing to diminish Socrates' authority; indeed, it is the basis for it: it is by making Alcibiades long for him that he makes him his slave.⁸⁴ As *dēmerastēs* Alcibiades was a potential tyrant, but as *erastēs Sōkratous* he is a slave. Within the sympotic community, this adult man (Socrates) is the ultimate eromenos, and here the confusion of sexual roles that surrounds Alcibiades is not threatening or castrating, but rather revelatory of a deeper philosophical truth.

Understanding that deeper truth consolidates the group of symposiasts. Alcibiades prefaces the story of his abortive seduction with an apologia (217e1–218b7), asking the forbearance of the symposiasts and sending away the slaves, and the vulgar and uninitiated (βέβηλός τε καὶ ἄγρουνος, 218b6). He then proceeds to tell a story that a less indulgent or sophisticated audience might indeed condemn, for in it he behaves more like a boy prostitute than like a decorous young eromenos. Socrates himself points this out when he suggests that by offering his body in exchange for wisdom, Alcibiades is proposing a financial deal, and a bad deal at that, a trade of bronze for gold (218e2–219a1). There has already been much talk about both bronze and gold in the banter between these two: Alcibiades has

82. Plutarch (*Alc.* 4.1–3, 6.1) says Socrates loved Alcibiades for his *euphuia* and *aretē*; cf. Pl. *Alc.* 131c–e. Plutarch comments that Socrates' love was largely responsible for Alcibiades' fame (*Alc.* 1.3); Plato has Socrates himself promise that only he can help the young man achieve his ambitions (*Alc.* 105e, 124d). At the same time as Socrates' love redeems Alcibiades, Alcibiades is also essential for Socrates'—and Plato's—philosophy. Not only was he Socrates' most conspicuous student, but *Alcibiades I* was the traditional starting place for students of Platonic philosophy. On the authenticity of this dialogue, see Bluck 1953; Clark 1955.

83. On this speech and erotic reciprocity or intersubjectivity in Plato, see Nussbaum 1986:187–92; Halperin 1986:68, 1990b:132. Carnes 1998 studies the place of transgressive sexualities within the dialogue.

84. *Symp.* 215e6, 216b5; cf. Plut. *Alc.* 4.3, 6; Plato *Alc.* 135c–d. In the *Symposium*, Aristodemus is also an erastes of Socrates (173b3). See Gagarin 1977:28–33; Kahn 1990:293–94; Goldhill 1998:120–24 on the depiction of Socrates as a love object.

said that Socrates scorns wealth and beauty and considers these things valueless commodities, *ktêmata*, but that he contains within himself an *agalma*, a priceless object of incredible rarity, a treasure that is "holy, golden, all-beautiful, and wondrous" (217a1). In the economy of this elite circle, Socrates is the gold standard. Alcibiades' shameless seductions would seem, then, to challenge this economics as well as the sexual economy between erastes and eromenos: he offers himself like a whore for a prize that has already been declared priceless.

This is how the uncharitable—the vulgar and uninitiated—might interpret it, but of course, those at the table know better. Not everyone at this party has shown himself able to understand love; not everyone has understood Socrates' speech; but they all know how to read Alcibiades' behavior. What constitutes this group of urbane philosophers is the fact that they see this as charming precociousness and not as prostitution. The importance of a correct reading of Alcibiades' behavior can be seen in Dover's commentary. Of the "bronze for gold" trade, he says: "the analogy will not stand up to detailed scrutiny."⁸⁵ Why not? Because if you did scrutinize it, you would have to admit the very economics that the dialogue seeks to deny, the economics that sells wisdom for sex at a profit; and to admit that would get you bounced from this party, along with the slaves and the vulgar and uninitiated. The philosophical community is thus built around a certain reading of Alcibiades' eros, a reading in which it becomes legitimate and central. The erotic chaos Alcibiades had caused in Thucydides and Plutarch is here deflected through a gentlemanly demurral.

The language of initiation throughout this passage is apt: Alcibiades had been accused of profaning the Mysteries, parodying a public ritual in his own house at drinking parties not unlike this one. Here, too, public and private have been reversed: the democracy has faded into the background and a new community has been established, built around a new mystery, Platonic eros, known only to the circle of initiates.⁸⁶ And if the democracy was founded upon the love of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, in this new philosophical community, it is Alcibiades' sexuality that is foundational. The aggressive eromenos is no longer a threat to his emasculated erastes, no longer a prostitute, socially abject and abjecting, but merely an admirer of the supreme love that is embodied in the most valuable love-object, Socrates and his philosophy. If Alcibiades' eros is perverse within the democracy, here it is the missionary position. Alcibiades'

85. Dover 1980 ad 219a1; cf. his censure of the prurient at 1978:156 n.7, but also contrast his startling frankness in paraphrasing Pausanias' speech (185b) at 1978:91: "to translate from euphemism into plain English; acceptance of the teacher's thrusting penis between his thighs or in his anus is the fee which the pupil pays for good teaching, or alternatively, a gift from a younger person to an older person whom he has come to love and admire."

86. Note also the language of initiation and the Mysteries used by Diotima (209e5–210a4). Cf. And. 1.61–62. Members of Socrates' circle were among those accused in the profanation of the Mysteries: Phaedrus (And. 1.15); Charmides (And. 1.47); and Akumenos (possibly the father of Eryximachos, And. 1.18).

hybris, similarly, is no threat to this community as it was to the democracy; here it seems only delightful narcissism, and if it smacks of tyranny, what matter in this elite dining room, far from the agora? In Thucydides the mutilation of Herms is attributed to drunken young aristocrats coming from a symposium;⁸⁷ here we have that symposium, and the eros that in Thucydides castrates the demos here grounds a closed community of elite men. Elite homosexuality has been saved, then, as has the elite male subject; all that has been lost is the demos and the democracy.⁸⁸

By legitimating and incorporating Alcibiades' sexuality, by making it normal rather than *paranomos*, Platonic philosophy can reconcile Harmodius and Aristogeiton and the mutilation of the Herms in a way that Thucydides could not; no longer a traumatic convergence, the juxtaposition of these two narratives becomes a foundation point for a whole new erotic and social economy. So finally we return to the connection between the Herms and the tyrannicides, but this time in a new setting, the pseudo-Platonic treatise *Hipparchus*. In this dialogue (which is probably spurious, but still thought to be fourth century⁸⁹) the tyrannicide and the mutilation of the Herms are reinterpreted and—*mirabile dictu*—both tyrant and Herms are resurrected and restored to their former grandeur. The treatise deals with the question of *philokerdia*, love of profit, and whether it can ever be a positive quality. Socrates says it can and offers as proof, of all people, the tyrant Hipparchus (228b4–229d7). This is a very different Hipparchus, though, from the one we met in Thucydides; here he is a wise and beneficent leader, a sage educator of his people, a figure who suspiciously resembles the Platonic Socrates himself. Moreover, the motive for the tyrannicide, in this account, is not erotic but pedagogic. Harmodius was Aristogeiton's beloved but also his student; Aristogeiton prided himself on his prowess as a teacher and considered Hipparchus a pedagogical rival. The problem comes when a young nobleman whom Harmodius loved went over to the camp of Hipparchus, and, putting himself under the tyrant's tutelage, scorned the wisdom of Harmodius and Aristogeiton; so angered were they by this insult to their pedagogy that they killed their rival Hipparchus. The tyrant is here redeemed as a teacher and philosopher, and it is he who wins the contest of influence, even though he dies for it. He gains both the love and the

87. Thuc. 6.28.1; Plut. *Alc.* 18.8, 19.1; And. 1.61. On public suspicion toward elite symposia and symposiasts during this period, see Murray 1990. Contra, Fisher 1998.

88. The contingency and tenuousness of this "solution" to the problems raised by Alcibiades should not be forgotten: it was for "corrupting youths" such as Alcibiades that Socrates was sentenced to death. Perhaps, then, Plato's re-evaluation of Alcibiades' eros within the sympotic setting plays a similar role to Thucydides' tyrannicide digression, constituting a defense against a crisis within contemporary democratic politics. In his retreat to the dining room, Plato can re-imagine Alcibiades' sexuality in a way that reaffirms Socrates' supremacy rather than brings about his death (just as Thucydides by turning to the past can reground a democratic male sexuality that is under threat in the present). Of course the *Symposium* can offer no more secure and unproblematic a male subject than the tyrannicide myth; but that is an issue that cannot be pursued here.

89. See H. Leisegang *RE* s.v. Platon 2367; Fornara 1968:419 n.71.

admiration of the nameless but discerning eromenos, and dies not as a lecherous monster but as the supreme philosopher and lover.

As an example of Hipparchus' wisdom, the text credits him with the establishment of the Herms.⁹⁰ He erected these statues along the roadsides and inscribed them in elegiac couplets with his own wise sayings. Far from being castrated by a licentious tyrant, these Herms—in a truly Platonic move—are given phalloi that can never be cut off: wise words, not erect penises, distinguish Hipparchus' Herms. These Herms, moreover, bespeak the benevolence of the tyrant; the inscriptions read: "The memorial of Hipparchus: go with just thoughts" and "The memorial of Hipparchus: do not deceive a friend." The Herms which were testaments to the democratic citizen—his autonomy and freedom, his phallic dominance—here become *mnēmata* of the tyrant. Hipparchus, no longer a sexual predator upon his people, becomes instead their protector and sponsor of their masculinity. Through his wisdom, the Herms are restored to their former glory and more, symbols of a demos whose only passion is for this benevolent Socratic despot. *Hipparchus* saves the democratic phallus but only under the rule of an enlightened tyrant. Democratic eros, in this tendentious account, is shown to be not hostile to tyranny but in fact dependent upon it. Thus our two narratives—the tyrannicide legend and the mutilation of the Herms—have truly been reconciled, as tyrant and Herms unite under the aegis of Platonic philosophy, able now to withstand any assassination or mutilation.

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90. Cf. above, note 34. Socrates himself is indirectly compared to a Herm at *Symp.* 215b1.

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