

Dēmokratia

Fredrik Sixtensson

Dēmokratia

The Prehistory of a Word in Relation to the Greek
Typology of Constitutions



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Abstract

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This thesis discusses how the term δημοκρατία relates to the classical Greek typology of constitutions. The two other major constitutional terms, μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία, have another suffix than δημοκρατία. As there are no explanations for this division between -αρχία and -κρατία in Classical Greek literature, the thesis attempts an explanation through investigating and comparing the words underlying these suffixes, ἀρχή and κράτος. It has often been assumed that ἀρχή refers to less oppressive power than κράτος. Older scholarship has also held that δημοκρατία is calqued on μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία but with the suffix changed, which could possibly highlight the pejorative character of δημοκρατία. This thesis considers that assumption an article of faith: the chronology of the terms (probably μοναρχία—δημοκρατία—ὀλιγαρχία) in fact suggests that it is -αρχία that is pejorative: ὀλιγαρχία was coined, in a time when μοναρχία was in disrepute, probably as a way to criticize moderate democrats resisting "radical democracy" in Athens for being tyrants in disguise. This criticism was possible because ἀρχή, due to political developments in radically democratic Athens, was polysemous and could refer both to supreme power and to non-supreme offices. Ὀλιγαρχία could then technically refer to both those who wanted *fewer offices* and to those who wanted *a few to rule supreme*, but the morphological resemblance to μοναρχία rather implied the latter even when referring to the former. As for κράτος, the thesis argues that it is rooted in hubris, but makes it possible to construct justice *out of* hubris. Furthermore, it is argued that κράτος can be understood as approaching legitimate power, at least in tragedy and in the epics. It was strongly connected to Zeus and to manhood, to forthrightness and to the capacity of creating military victories (the latter being a reason for the common mistranslation of κράτος as "victory"). Negative allusions to *kratos* in Archaic poetry indicate that *kratos* by then was considered a dead or dormant capacity that should lie dead or dormant. It is possible that δημοκρατία revived this capacity; that the term implies a kind of transgression that also serves to re-establish legitimate monarchic power (monarchic because the collective Dēmos is one). No definitive conclusions can, however, be drawn. Although the collective dēmos is often portrayed as Zeus or as a king in contemporary art, this is possibly an *effect* of the word rather than its cause. In the end, the conclusion that can be drawn without too much speculation is that δημοκρατία was so named either because the democrats claimed supreme power over and beyond that of the magistrates, neutralizing the notion of rank, or because -αρχία was considered a slur, or both.

Keywords: Democracy, δημοκρατία, ἀρχή, κράτος, Greek democracy, kratos, archē, Greek typology of constitutions, Greek polis

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Till min familj

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Abbreviations and Explanations

Aeol.		Aeolic
Aesch.		Aeschylus
	<i>Ag.</i>	<i>Agamemnon</i>
	<i>Cho.</i>	<i>Libation Bearers</i>
	<i>PV</i>	<i>Prometheus Bound</i>
	<i>Sept.</i>	<i>Seven against Thebes</i>
	<i>Supp.</i>	<i>Suppliants</i>
Alc.		Alcaeus
Andoc.		Andocides
	2	<i>On his Return</i>
Antiphon		Antiphon
	6	<i>On the Choreutēs</i>
app. crit.		apparatus criticus
Ar.		Aristophanes
	<i>Ran.</i>	<i>Frogs</i>
	<i>Thesm.</i>	<i>Women at the Thesmophoria</i>
	<i>Vesp.</i>	<i>Wasps</i>
Archil.		Archilochus
Arist.		Aristotle
	<i>Ath. Pol.</i>	<i>Athenian Constitution</i>
	<i>Eth. Eud.</i>	<i>Eudemian Ethics</i>
	<i>Eth. Nic.</i>	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
	<i>Mag. Mor.</i>	<i>Magna Moralia</i>
	<i>Metaph.</i>	<i>Metaphysics</i>
	<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politics</i>
	<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Rhetoric</i>
Ath.		Athenaeus
Athenagoras		Athenagoras
	<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Legatio pro Christianis</i>
Att.		Attic
Bacchyl.		Bacchylides
	<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epinicians</i>
codd.		codices
Dem.		Demosthenes
	<i>Fals. leg.</i>	<i>On the False Embassy</i>
	<i>Leoch.</i>	<i>Against Leochares (spurious)</i>

ep.	<i>Olynth.</i>	<i>Olynthiac</i>
Eur.		epistle, letter
		Euripides
	<i>Andr.</i>	<i>Andromache</i>
	<i>Hel.</i>	<i>Helen</i>
	<i>Heracl.</i>	<i>Heraclids</i>
	<i>Supp.</i>	<i>Suppliants</i>
frag.		fragment
gen.		genitive
Hes.		Hesiod
	<i>Cat.</i>	<i>Catalogue of Women</i>
	<i>Theog.</i>	<i>Theogony</i>
Hdt.		Herodotus
Hom.		Homer
	<i>Il.</i>	<i>Iliad</i>
	<i>Od.</i>	<i>Odyssey</i>
Ion.		Ionic
Isoc.		Isocrates
	<i>Areop.</i>	<i>Areopagiticus</i>
	<i>De pace</i>	<i>On the Peace</i>
	<i>Panath.</i>	<i>Panathenaicus</i>
	<i>Paneg.</i>	<i>Panegyricus</i>
LSJ		Liddell–Scott–Jones (<i>A Greek–English Lexicon</i>)
Lys.		Lysias
	12	<i>Against Eratosthenes</i>
	18	<i>On the Confiscation of the Property of the Brother of Nicias</i>
	25	<i>Defence against a Charge of Subverting Democracy</i>
Myc.		Mycenaean
OCD		<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i>
Philo		Philo
	<i>Abr.</i>	<i>On the Life of Abraham</i>
	<i>Aet.</i>	<i>On the Eternity of the World</i>
	<i>Mos.</i>	<i>Life of Moses</i>
Pind.		Pindar
	<i>Isthm.</i>	<i>Isthmian Odes</i>
	<i>Ol.</i>	<i>Olympian Odes</i>
	<i>Pyth.</i>	<i>Pythian Odes</i>
Pl.		Plato
	<i>Alc.</i>	<i>Alcibiades</i>
	<i>Criti.</i>	<i>Critias</i>

	<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Laws</i>
	<i>Menex.</i>	<i>Menexenus</i>
	<i>Phdr.</i>	<i>Phaedrus</i>
	<i>Plt.</i>	<i>Statesman</i>
	<i>Resp.</i>	<i>Republic</i>
	<i>Ti.</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>
Plut.		Plutarch
	<i>Arist.</i>	<i>Life of Aristides</i>
	<i>Cleom.</i>	<i>Life of Cleomenes</i>
	<i>Lyc.</i>	<i>Life of Lycurgus</i>
	<i>Sol.</i>	<i>Life of Solon</i>
[Plut.]	<i>X orat.</i>	<i>Life of the ten Orators</i>
Polyb.		Polybius
SBL		Society of Biblical Literature
Simon.		Simonides
Sol.		Solon
Soph.		Sophocles
	<i>Aj.</i>	<i>Ajax</i>
	<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antigone</i>
	<i>OC</i>	<i>Oedipus at Colonus</i>
	<i>OT</i>	<i>King Oedipus</i>
	<i>Phil.</i>	<i>Philoctetes</i>
	<i>Trach.</i>	<i>Women of Trachis</i>
Theophr.		Theophrastus
	<i>Char.</i>	<i>Characters</i>
	<i>Phys. op.</i>	<i>Opinions of the</i> <i>Natural Philosophers</i>
Thgn.		Theognis
Thuc.		Thucydides
TLG		Thesaurus Linguae Graecae
Xen.		Xenophon
	<i>Ages.</i>	<i>Agésilas</i>
	<i>Cyr.</i>	<i>Cyropaedia</i>
	<i>Mem.</i>	<i>Memorabilia</i>
[Xen.]	<i>Ath. Pol.</i>	The Old Oligarch

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	vii
Abbreviations and Explanations	ix
1. Introduction.....	15
Material	16
Theory and Method	18
State of Research	19
Structure	25
Other preliminaries.....	26
2. Δημοκρατία in Context.....	29
Greek Terms for Constitutions.....	29
Formation.....	29
First Attestations and Original Reference.....	31
Conclusions	42
Constitutional Typologies	43
Typological Prehistory.....	43
The Typology of One, Few, and Many.....	44
Conclusions	54
Connotation of ἀρχή and κράτος.....	54
Benign <i>Archē</i> , Harsh <i>Kratos</i> ?	55
Connotations Reversed	58
Conclusions	61
Debrunner’s “Δημοκρατία”.....	64
Debrunner’s Argument	64
Criticism	66
Conclusions	68
3. <i>Archē</i> and <i>Kratos</i> Compared.....	69
Institutional <i>Archē</i> , Fundamental <i>Kratos</i>	69
Geographical <i>Archē</i>	70
The Relationship between <i>Kratos</i> and Honor.....	72
<i>Kratos</i> Outranks <i>Archē</i>	74
<i>Kratos</i> Underpins <i>Archē</i>	75
Conclusions	78

4. An Inquiry into <i>Archē</i>	80
The Polysemy of Ἀρχή	80
Preliminaries	80
Analysis	82
Conclusions	88
The Archon: from Supremacy to Nothing	88
Background	88
The Athenian Archon and the Magistracy	89
Conclusions	100
5. An Inquiry into <i>Kratos</i>	102
The Monosemy of κράτος	102
The Conceptual Connections of <i>Kratos</i>	106
<i>Kratos</i> and Deceit	106
Victory	109
Linking <i>Dikē</i> and <i>Hubris</i>	114
<i>Kratos</i> and Legitimacy?	122
<i>Kratos</i> and Manhood	126
Conclusions	131
Epilogue: <i>Kratos</i> in Classical Prose and Comedy	132
<i>Kratos</i> in Herodotus and Thucydides	134
Attic Allusions to Epic–Ionic	137
Conclusions	142
6. Concluding Remarks	143
7. Summary in Swedish	149
8. Bibliography	153
Editions of Primary Sources	153
Secondary Sources	158

1. Introduction

Democracy is doubtless one of the most central and controversial concepts of the modern era. The values connoted by “democracy” have become so hegemonic that almost every regime on Earth—except perhaps only absolute monarchies—attempts to legitimize its rule with reference to democracy. Even North Korea, which frequently scores near zero on the US non-governmental organization Freedom House’s yearly reports on democracy and freedom, is officially the *Democratic People’s Republic of Korea*. Wars are now fought, ostensibly not in the national interest but in the name of democracy, and acts of terror are denounced not as attacks on a sovereign country but as attacks on the idea of democracy itself, thereby resembling something like a secular religion.

What ancient Greek democracy can teach us about modern democracy is debatable. For one thing, scholars do not agree on whether ancient and modern democracy are instances of the same concept. Nonetheless, ancient democracy is often brought up in defense of modern democracy: the democratic character of the West is often attributed to the invention of democracy in ancient Greece; conflicts of different eras construed as standing between “Western light” and “Eastern darkness” can be understood as continuations of the ancient conflict between Greece and Persia, between democracy and despotism and so forth. Research on ancient democracy, interesting and relevant in its own right, is also important for placing the ideological discourse surrounding modern democracy in proper context.

This thesis aims at contributing to our knowledge on democracy, not by researching the history of “popular rule” as such, but through researching the term δημοκρατία itself: the linguistic context in which the term was coined, when it was coined, and what it means to say that the *dēmos* has *kratos*—especially given that the two other major constitutional terms, μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία, are suffixed with -αρχία and thereby relate to ἀρχή: another Greek word for power and rule. Accordingly, this thesis will investigate the origins of the Greek constitutional typologies; how δημοκρατία was integrated into them, how δημοκρατία relates typologically to other constitutional terms—especially μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία—and how the different semantics of the

political terms ἀρχή and κράτος can help us better understand the Greek constitutional typology and the semantics and formation of the word δημοκρατία.¹

Material

The origins of the word δημοκρατία are somewhat obscure. The era to which it purportedly belongs, beginning in the late sixth and ending sometime in the early half of the fifth century BCE, borders on history and myth: few sources (if any) are contemporaneous with the political developments in Greece which led to the establishment of democracy. In the earliest attested historiography, democracy has already been established, as has the term δημοκρατία.

The noun κράτος, however, a constituent part of δημοκρατία, is well attested before and around the time δημοκρατία was first coined. A large part of the material underlying this thesis therefore consists of all of the attestations of the noun κράτος from Homer through Aristotle. As one of the aims of this thesis is to explain the evolution of the Greek typology of constitutions, which consisted mainly of terms alternately suffixed with -αρχία and -κρατία, all attestations of ἀρχή from Homer through Aristotle have been included as well. The assumption is that the coining of the word δημοκρατία can only be understood with regards to the wider linguistic context, which includes the meaning of κράτος and how κράτος contrasts with other alternative expressions for power, such as ἀρχή.

The chronological span (Homer–Aristotle) equates the Archaic and Classical eras in Greek history. As semantics can (but does not always) change quickly, research on the coining of δημοκρατία should ideally be restricted to sources from the time when the classical Greek political typology (μοναρχία, ὀλιγαρχία, δημοκρατία) was formulated, but sources from this time are few, comprising Archaic poetry (Pindar) and early Greek tragedy (Aeschylus, possibly Sophocles), and has to be complemented. Being the first systematic political philosopher and greatly influential at that, Aristotle forms the end-point of this study: if Aristotle employed ἀρχή and κράτος as theoretical terms, later uses of ἀρχή and κράτος would derive from his discourse, and would therefore be less interesting. Homer forms the starting-point, simply for being the earliest attested literary Greek. Most testimonia, gnomologia and the like, collected centuries after the time period treated here and likely inauthentic, have been excluded.

Even though semantics cannot be trusted to remain stable over the course of hundreds of years, studying ἀρχή and κράτος with the hope of understanding the Greek constitutional typology—as opposed to studying, for example, ὀλιγαρχία and δημοκρατία—has been premised on the idea that the latter

¹ I use “constitutional typology” and “typology of constitutions” to refer to what other scholars call “classification of regimes,” “classification of governments,” *Verfassungstypologie*, etc.

terms for constitutions were probably less stable semantically, as they were implicated in complex political and ideological struggles over the years.² As such, they are unreliable witnesses to their own history. Much like “fascism” does not mean the same thing today as it did in Italy in 1922, it is not unthinkable that δημοκρατία, for example, meant something else in Herodotus’ *Histories* (written c. 440) than in Aristotle’s *Politics* (c. 330), and that neither meaning reflected the original impetus behind the word’s coining. Ἀρχή and κράτος were not disputed phenomena to the same degree as δημοκρατία and ὀλιγαρχία were, and are therefore (*prima facie*) more likely to have been semantically stable. As we shall see, however, they did change semantically, but rather in ways that reflect political developments and bear on the question of how δημοκρατία was coined and the political typology created.

My original intention was to limit this study to the nouns ἀρχή and κράτος, leaving out their cognates, in order to keep the material manageable and treatable with traditional analogue philological methods. It eventually became clear, however, that this meant leaving out interesting data. As a compromise, passages in which the cognate verbs ἄρχω and κρατέω occur together and can shed light on each other have also been included in the material. All attestations of the important constitutional terms suffixed with -αρχία or -κρατία (that is, μοναρχία, ὀλιγαρχία, δημοκρατία, ἀριστοκρατία, as well as the marginal ἰσοκρατία, τιμοκρατία, τιμαρχία) also form part of the material, but as these words (as was hypothesized above) contribute relatively little to the understanding of their prehistory, they have received little treatment in this thesis.

The main perspective of this thesis is linguistic, not philosophical. This means that little attention has been paid to systematic thinking expressed in technical terms. Insofar as philosophical works are discussed, they are treated as linguistic sources, even if this division cannot strictly be upheld. This choice is due to the assumption (which may be false) that the basic constitution-words were coined in more or less everyday speech and not in technical discourse.³ -αρχία and -κρατία do not conform to any political theory, as we shall see, which implies that they are best studied as linguistic data. Theory is in a sense language aiming for conceptual clarity, whereas concepts employed in everyday language tend to be fuzzy. Although theory certainly reflects everyday language, for example by exploiting tensions in non-theoretical language, these should not be equated.

² Cf. Raphael Sealey, *The Athenian Republic: Democracy or the Rule of Law?* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987), 100–102, 106.

³ David Asheri, “The Prehistory of the Word ‘Democracy’ (Δημοκρατία),” *Mediterraneo Antico* 1, no. 5 (2002): 7.

Theory and Method

The methods applied in the thesis are largely historical-philological, more specifically what Martin Ostwald, studying νόμος and θέσιμος, called the “semantic method.”⁴ Because the main objects of study are two words, the texts studied will be short passages and not entire works: as there are no entire primary-source works focused on ἀρχή or κράτος or the origin of δημοκρατία, this focus on passages is inevitable. Such a method may, however, produce superficial readings unsupported by their context. Yet there is no real alternative if the aim is to establish the general senses of the terms, which provided the context for the coining of δημοκρατία.

How best to interpret is a formidable question. A controversial political scientist—I believe it was Samuel P. Huntington—once said that if one cannot be controversial, one should remain silent. If “controversial” means “provoking an intellectual response,” his proposal has great merit. In these fixed yet scantily attested parts of Greek history, speculation is necessary. The interpretive method employed here can be called “non-translation.” This is a commitment to read words without translating them, in order to avoid naively importing conceptualizations informed by modern languages. When a concept is employed in a manner contradicting our sensibilities, common sense, or even our understanding of physical reality, we should only conclude that it is a poetical device after examining whether the speaker (author, poet) could have intended their description to be literal. When Ajax is denied Achilles’ armor and complains that his *kratē* is pushed away from him, is this poetical metonymy or a literal equation between armor and *kratos* (Soph. *Aj.* 446)? The use of this method is in part motivated by the relevant scholarship’s virtual unanimity regarding the monosemy of κράτος; if that assumption is correct, this approach should be productive.

The interpretive method is certainly not flawless. For one thing, it may exoticize unnecessarily. More importantly, untranslated concepts are still understood through other concepts, happily translated. If one were dogmatic about the methodological advantages of not translating, the logical conclusion would be to write entirely in Ancient Greek, or even better, to reprint the original passages without comment. Such a position is of course untenable. We cannot escape our cultural background, prejudices and preconceptions by employing linguistic tricks; our claims about what non-translation can achieve must therefore be modest. We should view our translations as road signs, which distort reality through simplification but still help us to navigate the

⁴ Martin Ostwald: “[The semantic method] proceeds inductively from the particular contexts in which each of the two terms is found, in order to define the variety of usage of each in different areas of Greek thought and action. Once this is done, an attempt can be made to discover whether a common denominator exists which at once gives a basic meaning of each term and explains how this meaning is applied in practice in the contexts in which each term appears.” *Nomos and the Beginnings of the Athenian Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 10.

road. In this (rather imprecise) analogy, the “actual road” would be the words left untranslated. This interpretative method is a complement, not superior, to other methods. Interpretation should vacillate between prudence and boldness; if truth is to be found, it is in this dialectic.

My linguistic understanding is informed by Cognitive Linguistics, which (put briefly and broadly) views language as an extension of human cognition and psychology, not as an autonomous cognitive activity.⁵ Its view of meaning probably strikes most readers as commonsensical: meaning is always a function of contexts such as the broader cultural context, the immediate context of utterance, and the discourse to which the utterance belongs.⁶ Relevant insights from this theoretical framework will be utilized where applicable.

State of Research

It is no exaggeration to say that the state of research is unclear. Given the size of the scholarship on Greek democracy, research devoted specifically to the coining of δημοκρατία and the division of constitutions in -αρχία and -κρατία is remarkably scarce. Instead, the amount of comments made *en passant* is vast. The most influential article devoted to the formation of δημοκρατία is Albert Debrunner’s 1947 article “Δημοκρατία.”⁷ In keeping with the apparent lack of interest in the subject matter, the article was published in a *Festschrift*. Its argument (which will be examined in detail below) is, briefly put, that δημοκρατία was calqued on μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία, but the expected outcome δημαρχία was substituted for δημοκρατία, because δημαρχία already referred to a municipal magistrate. Still, Debrunner argues that δημοκρατία was the better term because -αρχία presupposes inferior subjects, which arguably do not exist in democracy.⁸ In these respects, Victor Ehrenberg agrees with Debrunner, whose findings were integrated into Paul Chantraine’s dictionary and thence has influenced scholars like Emmanuèle Caire.⁹ Konrad Kinzl

⁵ “Cognitive Linguistics” capitalized, because it is a school of thought, not a discipline. For an introduction, see William Croft and D. Alan Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For cognitive-semantic theory compared with other semantic theories, see Dirk Geeraerts, *Theories of Lexical Semantics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁶ In Dirk Geeraerts’ words, Cognitive Semantics is marked by “a belief in the contextual, pragmatic flexibility of meaning, the conviction that meaning is a cognitive phenomenon that exceeds the boundaries of the word, and the principle that meaning involves perspectivization.” *Theories of Lexical Semantics*, 182.

⁷ Jean-Luc Breuil describes it as an “étude fondamentale.” “De κράτος à δημοκρατία: Une famille de mots chez Hérodote,” *Ktêma*, no. 20 (1995): 81 n. 44.

⁸ Albert Debrunner, “Δημοκρατία,” in *Festschrift für Edouard Tièche* (Bern: Verlag Herbert Lang & CIE, 1947), 11–24.

⁹ Victor Ehrenberg, “Origins of Democracy,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 1, no. 4 (1950): 523; P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: histoire des mots*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1968) s.v. δῆμος; Emmanuèle Caire, “Entre

finds the essence of Debrunner's argument—the artificiality of δημοκρατία—irrefutable.¹⁰ Christian Meier, however, disagrees with Debrunner on the impropriety of ἀρχή as a characteristic of democracy, because democracy was not characterized by its lack of subjects but rather by the rotation of rulers and subjects.¹¹

The question of the formation of δημοκρατία relates to and sometimes fully overlaps with the question of whether there is any functional difference between -αρχία and -κρατία. This question has mostly been treated as a byproduct of some other study. As we have seen, Debrunner assumes that -αρχία, unlike -κρατία, implies subjects.¹² Edouard Will makes the same argument: δημοαρχία would have implied that the plebeian *demos* would have exercised power over disenfranchised nobles, which was not the case. Will adds that the ἀρχή is the name of democratic Athens' empire because of this implication.¹³ As we have seen, Ehrenberg agrees with Debrunner about δημοαρχία, but his argument in *The Greek State* suggests that he considers the suffixes basically synonymous.¹⁴ Konrad Kinzl makes the argument (rather difficult to comprehend) that δημοκρατία, unlike compounds in -αρχία, does not denote a form of government in itself, but a state of affairs resulting from majority rule.¹⁵ Christian Meier's earliest position (as far as I know) was to agree with Debrunner, adding that he did not see any increased connotative "pointedness" (*Zuspitzung*) in exchanging -αρχία for -κρατία.¹⁶ Analyzing the distinction between -νομία, -αρχία, and -κρατία, he has proposed that they relate to each other as the points in a triangle (that is, any two share some characteristics missing in the third); -κρατία and -αρχία differ insofar as -αρχία identifies the character of the government, -κρατία which segment has supreme power without necessarily being part of the government.¹⁷ Meier has later rephrased this

démocratie et oligarchie: Les enjeux politiques de la définition du *dèmos* à Athènes au Ve siècle," *Cahiers d'études romanes*, no. 35 (2017): n. 3, <https://doi.org/DOI : 10.4000/etudesromanes.5549>. On δημοαρχία being prohibited, see also Asheri, "Prehistory," 5.

¹⁰ Konrad H. Kinzl, "Δημοκρατία," *Gymnasium* 85 (1978): 319.

¹¹ Christian Meier, "Drei Bemerkungen zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte des Begriffs Demokratie," in *Discordia Concors: Festgabe für Edgar Bonjour zu seinem siebzigsten Geburtstag am 21. August 1968*, vol. 1 (Basel: Verlag Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1968), 24.

¹² Debrunner, "Δημοκρατία," 19.

¹³ Edouard Will, *Le monde grec et l'orient*, vol. 1 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), 446f.

¹⁴ Ehrenberg: "The change from names indicating a good or bad order or equality (*-nomia*) to the statement of rule (*-archia*, *-kratia*) whether of the few or the many, was more than a mere change of names: it implied the realization of the factor of power in politics and in constitutional life." *The Greek State*, 2nd ed. (London: Methuen, 1969), 43.

¹⁵ Kinzl, "Δημοκρατία," 316f.

¹⁶ Meier, "Drei Bemerkungen," 24.

¹⁷ Meier, "Die Entstehung des Begriffs 'Demokratie,'" *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 10, no. 4 (December 1, 1969): 561. The argument is interesting but only convincing in terms of two of the three angles: the triangle conceptualization appears to make Meier overstate his case.

(it seems) in less metaphysical terms: κράτος refers to real power and the acquisition of power, ἀρχή to institutionalized authority.¹⁸

David Asheri appears to see -κρατία as analogous to -αρχία and applied to δημοκρατία because δημαρχία was already taken—essentially Debrunner’s position, but without Debrunner’s addition that -κρατία fit better.¹⁹ Josiah Ober has argued that terms ending in -αρχία refer to monopolization of office, δημοκρατία to the empowerment of the *dēmos* and “the regime in which the *demos* gains a collective capacity to effect change in the public realm.”²⁰ Ober stresses that the *dēmos* could not by definition monopolize office; he also points out that “the one” and “the few” were inherently capable, hence the lack of μονοκρατία and ὀλιγοκρατία.²¹ The -κρατία terms refer to a “newly activated capacity,” and κράτος is not supreme power *per se*, but “enablement,” “capacity to do things.”²² This interpretation of κράτος is, as far as I know, unique to Ober.²³ Most recently, Emmanuèle Caire has argued that -αρχία denotes access to government functions, -κρατία to what social group has supreme power.²⁴ This comes close to Meier’s position. It appears as if the functional difference most commonly ascribed to the suffixes hinges on whether -αρχία always refers to the “government”—a meaning peculiar to ἀρχή—or if it refers to “supremacy,” and to what extent the control of government equals supremacy.

The question on the relationship between -αρχία and -κρατία relates to, and sometimes overlaps with, the question of the relationship between ἀρχή and κράτος. This is, to my knowledge, the subject of only one major study: Lucia Marrucci’s *Kratos e arche: funzioni drammatiche del potere*. Although she rarely draws explicit conclusions about the difference between -αρχία and -κρατία, the very juxtaposition of κράτος and ἀρχή seems intended to bear on that difference. Marrucci argues that *archē* is power to participate in, whereas *kratos* is power to obey.²⁵ This in a sense contradicts Debrunner’s

¹⁸ Meier, “Macht, Gewalt II: Terminologie und Begrifflichkeit in der Antike,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, ed. Reinhart Koselleck, Otto Brunner, and Werner Conze, vol. 3 (Stuttgart, 1982), 824f n. 38.

¹⁹ Asheri, “Prehistory,” 5.

²⁰ Josiah Ober, “The Original Meaning of ‘Democracy’: Capacity to Do Things, not Majority Rule. Version 1.0,” *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 15 no. 1 (March 2008): 7.

²¹ Ober, 7.

²² Ober, 6.

²³ I suspect that this somewhat subdued interpretation of κράτος is due to Ober’s identification of affinities between ancient and modern democracy, as expressed in e.g. *The Rise and Fall of Classical Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 103f. Cf. the remarks in John K. Davies, “Democracy without Theory,” in *Herodotus and His World: Essays from a Conference in Memory of George Forrest*, ed. Peter Derow and Robert Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 321f; and Greg Anderson, *The Realness of Things Past: Ancient Greece and Ontological History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 28f.

²⁴ Caire, “Entre démocratie et oligarchie,” para. 3.

²⁵ Lucia Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche: Funzioni drammatiche del potere* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 2010), 260.

argument that *archē* presupposes subjects while *kratos* does not. Similarly, ἄρχω has a collective resonance that κρατέω “does not know”; ἄρχειν “is not imposition, but corresponds to a sort of resonant power.”²⁶ It is also characterized by the ability to “set things in motion” (*messa in moto*), which seems to equate two senses of ἄρχω: “begin” and “rule.”²⁷ *Kratos*, proposes Marrucci, is a force that must be confronted with something else; this, yet again, appears to contradict Debrunner.²⁸ Marrucci also makes the interesting claim that κράτος takes on territorial meanings, and that δημοκρατία is primarily characterized by the territoriality of the *dēmos*.²⁹ Despite this, she apparently approves of Chantraine’s opinion (derived from Debrunner) that δημοκρατία was coined as a substitute for δημοαρχία.³⁰ In Marrucci’s view, *kratos* is more connected to identity, whereas *archē* is circumscribed and temporary.³¹ The name of the Athenian *archē*, which Will took as implying domination over subjects, in reality hides its brutal *kratos*; Marrucci apparently sees *archē* as either a misnomer or a euphemism.³²

In addition to Marrucci, some scholars have treated the difference between κράτος and ἀρχή either in shorter treatises, or as sections within larger works.³³ The nineteenth-century scholar J.H.H. Schmidt, examining synonymy in Greek words for “force” (*Kraft*), such as ἰσχὺς, σθένος, and κράτος, addresses the difference between κράτος and ἀρχή, and concludes that ἄρχειν differs from κρατεῖν in its derivation from law or inheritance.³⁴ This conclusion approaches a distinction based on legitimacy. Schmidt also argues that κράτος, which can variously be translated as “strength,” “power,” “victory,” is monosemous, at least in Homer but apparently also in later prose.³⁵

Besides these, there are relevant studies concerned with either ἀρχή or with κράτος. Edmond Lévy argues that ἀρχή (at least in Herodotus) refers to the combination of effective and “if not always legitimate, at least recognized” power.³⁶ Émile Benveniste holds that κράτος (apparently monosemously) refers to superiority and prevalence and rejects the meanings “physical force”

²⁶ Marrucci, 7.

²⁷ Marrucci, 137.

²⁸ Marrucci, 14.

²⁹ Marrucci, 108.

³⁰ Marrucci, 113 n. 301.

³¹ Marrucci, 154f.

³² Marrucci, 261.

³³ This heading could have included Meier, “Macht, Gewalt.”

³⁴ J.H.H. Schmidt: “Im Gegensatz zu κρατεῖν bedeutet ἄρχειν die durch die Gesetze oder das Herkommen bestimmte Herrschaft über andere, oder besser die ordnungsmäßige Leitung anderer, die Stellung besonders der gewählten [sic] Obrigkeiten.” *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1879), 672.

³⁵ Schmidt: “So ist denn ganz offensichtlich, dass κράτος bei Homer an allen Stellen ein und dieselbe Bedeutung hat... bezeichnet immer die Macht insofern sie den Vorrang gegen die anderen verschafft...” 3:668. See also p. 669f.

³⁶ Edmond Lévy, “Archè chez Hérodote,” in *Φιλολογία: Mélanges offerts à Michel Casevitz*, ed. Pascale Brillet-Dubois and Édith Parmentier (Lyon: Maison de l’Orient et de la Méditerranée, 2006), 98.

and “spiritual force.”³⁷ Jean-Luc Breuil, studying the semantics of κράτος in two articles spanning from Homer through Herodotus, argues that κράτος is a neutral term employable in both positive and negative contexts.³⁸ Breuil agrees with Schmidt and Benveniste that the apparent sub-meanings are ultimately due to context and that κράτος, at least in Herodotus, is monosemous.³⁹ Κράτος, holds Breuil, always establishes a hierarchy. Vittorio Citti argues that κράτος in tragedy refers to legitimate power (*il legitimo potere*), and as such can lend even a positive connotation to βία, “violence.”⁴⁰ John Glucker, analyzing Thrasymachus’ argument in the *Republic* 338, argues that:

[a]s against ἀρχή or ἡγεμονία, κράτος clearly designates political *power*. As against δύναμις or ἰσχύς, κράτος is no mere strength, but power *over others*. Thus κράτος and its cognates unite in one concept the idea of government and the idea of superior force.⁴¹

Glucker apparently, like Benveniste, Breuil, and Schmidt, attributes monosemy to κράτος. Although it is unclear why ἀρχή and ἡγεμονία do not designate power in Glucker’s view, κράτος is apparently a more dominant type thereof.

Other scholars examine the terms in searches for Greek political concepts matching modern political concepts, the most frequent attempt being to find Greek correspondences to the Weberian distinction between *Herrschaft* and *Macht*. This is essentially a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate power: *Herrschaft* is sometimes glossed as “legitimate *Macht*.”⁴² As we saw above, other scholars (e.g. Lévy, Schmidt) have touched on the question of legitimacy without reference to Weber (which would have been impossible for Schmidt), but most scholars already addressed tend to work from within

³⁷ Émile Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes 2: Pouvoir, droit, religion*, Le sens commun (Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1969), 71.

³⁸ Breuil, “Κράτος et sa famille chez Homère. Étude sémantique,” in *Études homériques*, ed. Michael Casevitz, Travaux de la Maison de l’Orient 17 (Lyon: Maison de l’Orient Méditerranéen, 1989), 22.

³⁹ Breuil, “De κράτος à δημοκρατίη,” 84.

⁴⁰ Vittorio Citti, “Κράτος e Βία contrapposti e congiunti nelle tragedie di Eschilo,” *Vichiana: Rassegna internazionale di studi filologici e storici* 1 (1964): 318.

⁴¹ John Glucker, “Word Power,” *Grazer Beiträge: Zeitschrift für die klassische Altertumswissenschaft* 14 (1987): 143 (italics in original).

⁴² The concept *Herrschaft* is realiter more complex. According to Jonathan Hearn, it identifies “relationships in which one actor can routinely expect his or her commands, whether explicit or implicit, to be obeyed, and even internalized as principles of action, by those they are directed at”; as to legitimacy, “Weber described most forms of domination as ‘legitimate,’ meaning not that they should be approved of, but that those subject to domination frequently found that situation justifiable on some grounds, and that this was basic to the operation of domination.” See “Domination,” in *Encyclopedia of Power*, ed. Keith Dowding (SAGE Publications, February 1, 2011), 204. Weber’s original formulation can be found in Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (1922), accessed July 23, 2021, <https://www.textlog.de/7312.html> I §16.

Greek, working their way outward to (often rather untheorized) political concepts. The scholars mentioned here instead begin with a more theorized understanding of the concepts *inwards* toward Greek. Ober attempts to apply *Herrschaft* and *Macht* to -αρχία and -κρατία, but concludes that they do not apply neatly.⁴³ Christian Meier found that ἀρχή, κράτος and κύριος all refer to both *Herrschaft* and *Macht*.⁴⁴ Although critical of some of Meier's other points, Ulrich Gotter concludes, similarly, that Greeks found rule [*Herrschaft*] and power [*Macht*] identical, and that the former concept was “amorphous.”⁴⁵ The identification between *Macht* and *Herrschaft* is due to the “uncontested expectation that anyone who had the potential to assert his will actually did so.”⁴⁶ With regards to connotation, Gotter argues that “power, as articulated in the notions of *arche* and *kratos*, is neither good nor bad.”⁴⁷ Peter Spahn, analyzing ἀρχή, also finds Weberian concepts inapplicable.⁴⁸

We can conclude with reviewing some terminological observations made *en passant* in the treatment of other subjects. Political scholar E.V. Walter argues that ἀρχή suggests voluntary obedience, κράτος compulsion.⁴⁹ Raphael Sealey—relevant to this thesis also for other reasons (see “Δημοκρατία” below)—notes that “κράτος is a strong word and can have an unpleasant flavor,” which means δημοκρατία may have been pejorative.⁵⁰ John R. Wallach argues—somewhat like Marrucci—that κράτος denotes force facing determined resistance; δημοκρατία apparently has its name because it “constantly has to overcome and resist oligarchical tendencies in society.”⁵¹

In summary, the conclusions of previous scholarship are contradictory: (1) ἀρχή presupposes a dichotomy between rulers and subjects, yet it is power in which to participate; (2) κράτος does not presuppose a dichotomy between rulers and subjects, but is characterized by opposition and confrontation; (3) κράτος can be pejorative, but also laudatory and neutral; (4) ἀρχή denotes something resembling legitimacy, but it is not legitimacy, and -αρχία does not

⁴³ Ober, “Original Meaning of ‘Democracy,’” 5f. Ober takes as a starting point Aristotle’s political typology, saying that what Aristotle considers good regimes approximates what Weber calls *Herrschaft*. I think, however, that the concept “legitimacy” is only meaningful if it adds a dimension beyond “good” and “bad.” Ober eventually saves Weber’s theory by modifying the *Herrschaft* to mean refer to institutions.

⁴⁴ Meier, “Macht, Gewalt,” 820.

⁴⁵ Ulrich Gotter, “Cultural Differences and Cross-Cultural Contact: Greek and Roman Concepts of Power,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, no. 104 (2008): 199.

⁴⁶ Gotter, 199.

⁴⁷ Gotter, 187.

⁴⁸ Peter Spahn, “Archē in Herodotus and Thucydides,” in *Thucydides and Political Order: Concepts of Order and the History of the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Christian R. Thauer and Christian Wendt (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 59.

⁴⁹ E.V. Walter, “Power and Violence,” *The American Political Science Review* 58, no. 2 (June 1964): 355.

⁵⁰ Raphael Sealey, “The Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 6 (1973): 282.

⁵¹ John R. Wallach, “Platonic Power and Political Realism,” *Polis, the Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought* 31 (2014): 30.

denote legitimate regimes specifically; (5) κράτος differs from ἀρχή in that ἀρχή denotes legitimacy, yet κράτος is apparently used about legitimate power in tragedy.

Since scholars who attribute legitimacy to ἀρχή have done it in an untheorized fashion, whereas those applying theory have denied the concept's applicability, it seems safe to conclude with Ober, Meier, Gotter, and Spahn that ἀρχή and κράτος neither affirm nor deny legitimacy. Some less contradictory conclusions remain: (1) δημοκρατία has its name because it was a close-enough substitute for δημοαρχία, which was impossible; (2) κράτος is a monosemous word; (3) ἀρχή is more associated with institutions; (4) κράτος and ἀρχή do not differ in terms of legitimacy.

These conclusions prompt some questions which will be addressed throughout this thesis. (1) If δημοκρατία was a substitute for δημοαρχία, it presupposes a specific chronological and morphological relationship between μοναρχία, ὀλιγαρχία, and δημοκρατία. What is the basis for this presupposition? (2) If κράτος is monosemous, what can those instances of κράτος usually translated as “strength” and “victory” teach us about κράτος as power? And can this bear on our understanding of δημοκρατία? (3) If the monosemy of κράτος is relevant, what of ἀρχή: is it also monosemous, implying that we should understand its “power” meanings in terms of its “beginning” meanings? And how does the notion of “supremacy” inherent in ἀρχή relate to the references to magistrates? Should this bear on our understanding of -αρχία and negatively, of δημοκρατία? (4) Does Ober's “bleached” reading of κράτος as “empowerment” reflect the sources?

Additionally, a few questions of perennial interest will be addressed to varying degrees. Are there differences in connotation between ἀρχή and κράτος, and if so, when? Can anything be concluded about the difference in connotation between -αρχία and -κρατία? How does ἀρχή and κράτος feature in theoretical language? Can either term be identified with specific constitutional functions? And how should we date the constitutional terms in absolute and relative terms?

Structure

Excluding the bibliography, this thesis consists of six chapters in all. The first chapter contains introductory matters, establishing the material, the theory and method used, as well as the state of research.

In the second chapter, “Δημοκρατία in Context,” I contextualize δημοκρατία and the other major constitutional terms, the overarching purpose being to establish a chronology (whether absolute or relative) between the constitutional terms, in order to determine which terms depended on which for their formation. I discuss how constitutions were formed; when the three

major constitutional terms (μοναρχία, ὀλιγαρχία, δημοκρατία) were first attested and to what they originally referred; the “invention” of the concept democracy and the coining of the term δημοκρατία (which do not necessarily coincide). The origin and evolution of the Greek constitutional typologies will then be traced. This is followed by a discussion on what the attested constitutional typologies can tell us about the typological division between -αρχία and -κρατία. Thereafter, the connotations of ἀρχή and κράτος will be discussed; the contents of this section foreshadows a criticism of Albert Debrunner’s 1947 article “Δημοκρατία,” an influential article that argues that the formation δημοκρατία linguistically depends on μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία, which has consequences not only for the relative chronology between the terms, but also for how to understand the relationship between -κρατία and -αρχία.

The third chapter, “*Archē* and *Kratos* Compared,” forms an interlude in which I compare *archē* and *kratos* in terms of the differences identified by previous research, as well as those differences preliminarily established in the second chapter.

The fourth chapter, “An Inquiry into *Archē*,” deals more specifically with ἀρχή. I trace its diachronic development from being a non-political term, through meaning “supremacy,” to meaning “office.” It will be shown how this diachronic evolution bears on the constitutional terms, especially on ὀλιγαρχία. I also discuss to what extent the polysemy of ἀρχή should guide our interpretation of the term in its political uses.

In the fifth chapter, “An Inquiry into *Kratos*,” I inquire more specifically into κράτος; much like in the previous chapter (*mutatis mutandis*), the diachronic development of the term will be traced. As the term is probably best seen as monosemous and cannot be perfectly translated into English in a way that conveys this monosemy, the concept *kratos* will be closely analyzed in terms of its mythological roots and its connections to other concepts, especially the three into which it is usually translated (viz. “strength,” “victory,” and “power”). The epilogue to this chapter discusses why κράτος was so rare in Attic prose.

The sixth chapter concludes the results of this thesis.

Other preliminaries

The material has been excerpted from the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) corpus. Unless explicitly stated, the editions used are those from the TLG, which are listed at the end of this thesis. If other editions than those found in the TLG are quoted, this is indicated in a footnote containing a reference to the edition. The orthography of the editions has been retained—hence the occasional *iota adscriptum*—except for certain clarifying additions (such as indicating a speaker, adding a colon, vel sim.)

When a Greek word is discussed as a word in the Greek language, it is written in Greek letters: “κράτος sometimes had laudatory connotations.” But when a Greek word is used in an English sentence to refer to the concept denoted by the Greek word, it is transliterated: “Athens had seven hundred *archai*.” There are, however, borderline cases. (In the Swedish summary, I transliterate even when referring to the word.)

In the running text, names of Greek authors and works are spelled out and referred to with English names. In references, these have been abbreviated. The abbreviations are those used by the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, unless the OCD does not offer an abbreviation, in which case the *SBL Handbook of Style* has been used. Hence, the running text has “Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*,” references have “Aesch. *PV*.”

In displayed quotes, references to the Greek text appear at the end of the translation. In the running text, references appear at the beginning of a paragraph. If the references need to be more specific within the paragraph, they will be added within parentheses next to the referenced word. The English titles are mostly those used by the Loeb Classical Library. Some titles whose Latin name are conventionally used (including *Magna Moralia*, *Panegyricus*) have not been translated into English.

Secondary literature is referred to with full notes when first mentioned, thereafter with a short title.

A slash in a quotation of Greek poetry indicates a line break. Since translations cannot conform to the original line divisions, slashes in translated passages do not indicate line breaks, but new speakers. Slashes in non-poetic quotes always indicate new speakers.

The phrase “constitutional term” refers to any term suffixed with *-αρχία* and *-κρατία*.

The phrase “constitutional suffix” refers to the suffixes *-αρχία* and *-κρατία* unless otherwise stated.

Many scholars debate whether it is better to translate or transliterate *δημοκρατία*.⁵² Supporters of transliteration argue that using “democracy” tempts readers to view Greek *δημοκρατία* as proto-liberal-democracy. Most who translate the term appear to do so simply because it is convenient, but some indeed see an affinity between *δημοκρατία* and modern liberal democracy.⁵³ Given the argument about non-translation above, it is probably unsurprising that I am sympathetic to transliteration. Surprising, then, is perhaps my choice to translate nonetheless. This is certainly due to convenience, not as in “laziness” but as in “facilitating consistency and transparency”: it is easy to transliterate *dēmokratia*, difficult to know with which adjective to describe a

⁵² An argument for using “democracy” is found in Moses I. Finley, *Politics in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 9 n. 25. An argument against is found in Anderson, *Realness of Things Past*, 46–50. Cf. the remarks in L.J. Samons II, “Democracy, Empire and the Search for the Athenian Character,” *Arion, Third Series* 8, no. 3 (2001): 129.

⁵³ See n. 22 above.

feature of *dēmokratia* such as ostracism. If I say that it is “democratic” and have acknowledged that I use this term analytically and without reference to modern democracy, it is fine. But if I say that it is *dēmokratikos*, I am not only describing the practice, but also impressing upon the reader that someone once said ὁ ὄστρακισμὸς δημοκρατικός ἐστὶ, although this pairing (let alone this specific phrase) never once occurs in ancient Greek. The translation of “democracy” and certain other words is motivated by my wish to remain transparent.

All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated. In the running text, passages are usually offered in Greek with a full translation. In footnotes, passages are offered in translation, with relevant Greek words inserted within brackets where appropriate.

2. Δημοκρατία in Context

In order to understand properly how δημοκρατία was coined and what it meant, we need to examine the terminology for political constitutions. For as long as there has been political philosophy, the terms for political constitutions have been arranged in typologies, the most well-known typology comprising terms suffixed with -αρχία and -κρατία. How were the words for specific constitutions formed? When were the major terms for specific constitutions first attested, and what did they mean in context? How did these typologies arise? Is the division between -κρατία and -αρχία motivated by connotational differences between ἀρχή and κράτος? It is to these questions we now turn.

Greek Terms for Constitutions

Formation

Greek terms for constitutions were usually formed with the abstract suffix -ία (or -εια), roughly a Greek equivalent to the English suffix “-ness.”¹ Τυραννίς, formed with the likewise abstract suffix -ιδ, is the main exception.

Most constitutional terms are formed by joining this suffix to a ruler’s title: αἰσυμνητεία, “elective tyranny,” βασιλεία, “kingship,” δεσποτεία, “patriarchal ruler,” δυναστεία, “rule of influential men,” μοναρχία, “single rule,” πολιτεία, “rule of citizens,” and τυραννίς, “tyranny.”² These words can also refer to political offices; for example, βασιλεία can mean both “(the constitution) kingship” and “the office of king.” Δυνάστης and πολίτης are not ruling titles but social categories, though of different kinds: πολίτης is generally legally defined, δυνάστης is an “influential citizen,” which in Greece usually meant a wealthy citizen. Δεσπότης and τύραννος denote characteristics of the ruler, which in turn implies a certain political regime: a *despotēs* is a sole ruler governing the state as though it were his own household. Τύραννος, originally

¹ These suffixes do double service as collectives: δουλεία can mean both “slavery” and “slave population,” ἑταιρεία both “friendship” and “group of friends,” and so forth. For the proliferation of the suffix -ία in the political vocabulary, see Robert Browning, “Greek Abstract Nouns in -σις, -τις,” *Philologus* 102 (1958): 63, 66.

² A constitution was characterized primarily by how many of the *polis*’ inhabitants was “franchised.” Therefore, πολιτεία in the sense “constitution” can be understood as “(definition of) citizenry.”

a neutral word for a monarchic ruler who had not inherited his position, eventually denoted a monarch ruling self-interestedly.³ Μόναρχος, originally probably a pejorative applied to *turannoi* (!) in that word's original sense, eventually denoted a sole ruler and became an umbrella term encompassing βασιλεία, δεσποτεία, and τυραννίς.⁴

Other constitutional terms are derived from compounds in which the first element is either an attribute (εὖ-, δυσ-, ἴσο-), a number (ὀλιγο-, πολυ-) or a social category (ἄριστο- "best," δημο- "people," πλουτο- "rich," τιμο- "rich, honorable"); the second element is usually a political term, such as ἀρχή, "rule," κράτος, "power," νόμος, "law." To this compound, the suffix -ία is added. As numbers are often proxies for social categories, the distinction between number and social category is fluid; it is for instance unclear when ὀλίγοι became a socio-political term.⁵ Its singular counterpart ὀλίγος is also attested as a sociopolitical term in Archaic times (Simon. frag. 15 Page), but then refers to "pettiness" (in a sense the opposite connotation to ὀλίγοι) as opposed to the grand (μέγας). The establishment of ὀλίγοι as a sociopolitical term may have been an effect of the coining of ὀλιγαρχία, but it is also possible that ὀλίγοι in its sociopolitical sense *preceded* ὀλιγαρχία; hence it is uncertain if ὀλιγαρχία first meant "rule of a few" or "rule of the social class *oligoi*." Δῆμος is first attested in the meaning "land" and "people" with little differentiation inbetween.⁶

The attributes mostly combine with νόμος to form words such as ἰσονομία, εὐνομία, and δυσνομία. Εὐνομία and δυσνομία apparently do not refer to specific constitutions; whether ἰσονομία does is disputed.⁷ The numbers are prefixed to ἀρχή: ὀλιγαρχία; the word πολυαρχία is attested but refers to military leadership and not to political constitutions.⁸ The words for social categories are generally combined with κράτος to form -κρατία: ἀριστοκρατία,

³ For a penetrating discussion, see Greg Anderson, "Before Turannoi Were Tyrants: Rethinking a Chapter of Early Greek History," *Classical Antiquity* 24, no. 2 (2005): 173–222.

⁴ For μόναρχος originally being pejorative, see Anderson, 207. See also Justus Cobet, "König, Anführer, Herr, Monarch, Tyrann," in *Untersuchungen ausgewählter altgriechischer sozialer Typenbegriffe*, ed. Elisabeth Charlotte Welskopf, Soziale Typenbegriffe im alten Griechenland und ihr Fortleben in den Sprachen der Welt 3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1981), 52; and Pedro Barceló, *Basileia, Monarchia, Tyrannis* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993), 104f.

⁵ Walter Donlan argues that "its usage as [a socio-political term] is not absolutely clear," but considers it an "[adumbration] of fifth-century usage." "Social Vocabulary and Its Relationship to Political Propaganda in Fifth-Century Athens," *Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica*, no. 27 (1978): 98 n. 4.

⁶ Cf. Walter Donlan, "Changes and Shifts in the Meaning of Demos in the Literature of the Archaic Period," *La Parola del Passato: Rivista di studi antichi* 135 (1970): 382f. See also Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 25. Contrast (slightly) J.A.O. Larsen, "Demokratia," *Classical Philology* 68, no. 1 (January 1973): 45.

⁷ Ostwald argues that ἰσονομία does not refer to a political constitution per se, but to "the principle of political equality. See *Nomos*, 97. Ehrenberg holds that ἰσονομία was appropriated by democrats. See "Origins of Democracy," 534.

⁸ Cf. the military term πολυκοιρανίη "many-leadership."

δημοκρατία, πλουτοκρατία, τιμοκρατία, although τιμαρχία is attested as well.⁹ There is a hapax ἰσοκρατία (Hdt. 5.92), with an adjectival designator attached to -κρατία, the meaning of which is debated.¹⁰

One may be tempted to think that certain suffixes are semantically predisposed to take specific prefixes, concluding for instance that numbers take ἀρχή and social categories take κράτος because of some characteristic of either of these words. One should remember, however, that analogy plays a role: most constitutions with -κρατία were coined in the wake of δημοκρατία, and although ἀριστο- may take -κρατία because ἀριστο- denotes a social category, the reason for the pairing is probably rather that δημοκρατία triggered analogical formations.¹¹ This testifies to one of the benefits of a diachronic approach: undoing the falsehoods impressed on us by synchronic analysis.

First Attestations and Original Reference

Μοναρχία

Μοναρχία was first attested in Alcaeus (frag. 6a.27 Lobel and Page, fl. c. 600). In the Classical era, the word was less common than δημοκρατία and ὀλιγαρχία, in part because of competition from the more specific τυραννίς and βασιλεία, in part because Greek Classical-era monarchies only existed on the periphery: traditional kingship still existed in Persia and in Macedonia, while tyrants thrived in Sicily and Asia Minor, the latter being under the Persian yoke. When we encounter Greek kings in other places, they are either, as in Athens, vestiges of traditional kingship with little power intact, or as in Sparta, integrated into an oligarchic constitution.¹² In Classical parlance, μοναρχία was used mainly as a neutral umbrella term for tyrannies and kingships, the common feature of which is the one supreme leader with no legal restraints on his power, the difference between the two being that kings come into power and rule according to custom, whereas tyrants usurp power and violate custom. But, as mentioned above, it has been proposed that in Archaic Greece, μόνναρχος was a controversial term originally referring to aristocrats who tried

⁹ Cf. Caire, “Entre démocratie et oligarchie,” para. 3. Aristotle, however, considers the possibility that ἀριστοκρατία means “the best type of rule” (*Pol.* 1279a).

¹⁰ Ostwald examined the term and concluded that it refers to “a form of government which embodies the bicameral principle of a council which deliberates and formulates policies and an assembly (or a larger representative council) which validates them.” “Isokratia as a Political Concept,” in *Language and History in Ancient Greek Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 37.

¹¹ Analogical formation does not rule out the possibility that δημο- was first suffixed with -κρατία because -κρατία somehow is more proper for social classes. This question will not be treated in this thesis.

¹² Since Sparta had *basileis* with real power, some scholars refer to it as a “monarchy” (despite the fact that Sparta had two kings), e.g. Ehrenberg, *Greek State*, 44; and Mogens Herman Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes: Structure, Principles, and Ideology* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1999), 66.

to monopolize power.¹³ As Greg Anderson has argued, these were not necessarily “tyrants”: *turannoi* were originally normal aristocratic leaders who were unusually successful in claiming their position as *primus inter pares*.¹⁴ But critics of certain aspects of this phenomenon, such as Alcæus and Solon, used *μοναρχία* or *μόναρχος* pejoratively to refer to the tyrants.¹⁵ The neutral connotation of *μοναρχία* in the Classical typologies is probably due to the rarity of monarchies in mainstream Greek politics. *Ὄλιγαρχία* and *δημοκρατία* on the other hand, denoting two widespread and ideologically opposed constitutions, became fraught with controversy.

Ὄλιγαρχία

When treating the “invention” of oligarchy and the coining of *ὀλιγαρχία*, a special conceptual problem arises. *Ὄλιγαρχία* is first attested in Herodotus, but scholars often anachronistically assume that the few-men regimes attested in the Archaic era were oligarchies in the Classical sense of the word, and that the word *ὀλιγαρχία* must have been coined in the Archaic era to refer to these regimes. Scholarly use of “oligarchy” as an analytic term for few-man rule in Archaic times has probably contributed to this assumption: Whibley (1896), for example, a classic study of oligarchy, says that the origin of oligarchy “can be traced to the invention of money,” i.e. to the Archaic era.¹⁶ But contemporary scholarship usually situates oligarchy proper—both concept and term—in the mid-fifth century as an anti-democratic reaction.¹⁷ Matthew Simonton has expressed this pointedly, saying that “the oligarchic impulse first arises out of a sense of disgust toward democracy and its governing element, the people.”¹⁸ Therefore, democracy and oligarchy cannot be separated. Simonton has also proposed that in the first attestation of *ὀλιγαρχία*—Megabyzus’ advocacy of oligarchy in Herodotus’ Constitutional Debate (Hdt. 3.81)—Megabyzus invokes theoretical and not empirical evidence because oligarchy was a constitutional innovation at the time (whether the time of the debate, c. 520,

¹³ Cobet, “König, Anführer,” 52. Cf. n. 4 above.

¹⁴ Anderson, “Before Turannoi Were Tyrants,” 202.

¹⁵ T. A. Sinclair, *A History of Greek Political Thought*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), 21 n. 1; Barceló, *Basileia, Monarchia, Tyrannis*, 104f; Anderson, “Before Turannoi Were Tyrants,” 207.

¹⁶ Leonard Whibley, *Greek Oligarchies: Their Character and Organization* (Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, 1968), 74f. For use of “oligarchy” that acknowledges the terminological issue, see Andrew T. Alwine, “The Soul of Oligarchy: The Rule of the Few in Ancient Greece,” *TAPA* 148, no. 2 (Autumn 2018): 237. Admittedly, many Greeks in the Classical era referred to Archaic few-man rule retrospectively as oligarchies.

¹⁷ Caire, *Penser l’oligarchie à Athènes aux Ve et IVe siècles: Aspects d’une idéologie*, *Études Anciennes* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2016), 34; Matthew Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy: A Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 5, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1vwmh2v>. A similar suggestion is found in Meier, *Die Entstehung des Politischen bei den Griechen*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989), 285.

¹⁸ Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy*, 31.

or that of the author, c. 440).¹⁹ “Oligarchy” should therefore not be used about the type of few-man rule that presumably preceded democracy; Simonton calls these “elite-led regimes.”²⁰ The intrinsic connection between democracy and oligarchy is supported by Whibley’s observation that the constitutional characteristics of oligarchy are inversions of democratic characteristics: oligarchic magistrates were independent, could be re-elected, and were always appointed from the same group; besides, there was no separation of powers.²¹ Simonton has added that oligarchies privileged the council and circumscribed the role of the assembly, but stresses that “restricting the franchise”—i.e. barring citizens from the assembly—is not a defining characteristic of oligarchies: they often allowed broad participation in the assembly, only that the assembly’s competence was reduced.²²

Scholars generally hold that ὀλιγαρχία was pejorative.²³ Sealey notes that ὀλιγαρχία was a “blunt word” already in Herodotus.²⁴ Caire argues that ὀλιγαρχία was coined as a slur against those who opposed the widened eligibility to the offices.²⁵ This seems correct: other scholars note that proponents of ὀλιγαρχία often avoided the word in favor of a euphemism.²⁶

Δημοκρατία

The probable span within which δημοκρατία was coined is between Cleisthenes (late sixth century)—the alleged founder of democratic government in Athens—and Herodotus, the first to put δημοκρατία in writing (c. 440); this is a span of sixty or seventy years. It is true that δημοκρατία since its first attestation has been used about Cleisthenes’ constitution, but this is quite possibly a retroactive application. This possibility means we must examine what the Greeks considered to be the invention of democracy, to be able to put the terminological question in context.

¹⁹ Simonton, 30f.

²⁰ Simonton, 8 n. 22.

²¹ Whibley, *Greek Oligarchies*, 144. It should be noted that “separation of powers” today usually denotes the separation of executive, legislative, and judicial powers, a division which did not exist in Classical Greece. The Greek separation of powers, if that term is appropriate, is tantamount to giving each social stratum political power, so that no faction dominates the polis. Ironically, such a regime is often called “mixed,” which inverts the metaphor of separation.

²² Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy*, 40.

²³ Ostwald argues that ὀλιγαρχία began to “assume political ideological overtones for the first known time in Thucydides’ account of the civil war in Korkyra.” “Oligarchy and Oligarchs in Ancient Greece,” in *Polis & Politics: Studies in Ancient Greek History*, ed. P. Flensted-Jensen, T.H. Nielsen, and L. Rubinstein (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2000), 386. Perhaps this implies that the terms became less descriptive and more connotative.

²⁴ Sealey, “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 277.

²⁵ Caire, *Penser l’oligarchie*, 34.

²⁶ E.g. Charles Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952), 273; Sealey, “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 278.

The Concept Democracy and the Concept Δημοκρατία

In discussions about Greek democracy, two things must be separated: the allegedly timeless concept “Democracy,” which presumably first manifested in ancient Greece and is, perhaps, a spiritual ancestor of modern liberal democracy; and a constitution specific to ancient Greece which the Greeks labeled *δημοκρατία*, which may in parts overlap with its eponymous timeless concept.²⁷ Precisely to which degree one should identify ancient Greek democracy with modern democracy is disputed. On the one end of the spectrum, Josiah Ober has argued that ancient Greek civic culture and values have a “more-than-superficial similarity to attractive features of contemporary democratic society.”²⁸ On the other end, there is Greg Anderson, who argues that the “ontological premises” of ancient Greece were radically different from those of the modern world, meaning that any attempt to understand ancient *dēmokratia* in terms of modern democracy amounts to distortion.²⁹ Somewhere in between, there are scholars like J.K. Davies, who considers ancient democracy a historically situated response to the failures of tyranny.³⁰ No matter for which perspective one has more sympathy, it is important to remember that labelling a historical constitution a “democracy” after applying analytic modern criteria, such as the existence of a popular parliament (vel sim.) or some level of competence in the popular assembly, is not necessarily the same as identifying what the Greeks thought was *dēmokratia*.³¹ Of course, the opposite is true as well: the Greeks’ labeling a constitution “democratic” does not mean that the constitution would pass for democratic according to modern criteria.

²⁷ Moses I. Finley’s statement that the Greeks “discovered democracy” appears premised on conceptual realism. *Democracy Ancient & Modern* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), 13.

²⁸ Ober, *Rise and Fall*, 103f. Cf. Paul Cartledge, *Democracy: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1–8 and *passim*.

²⁹ Greg Anderson, “Retrieving the Lost Worlds of the Past: The Case for an Ontological Turn,” *American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (June 2015): 787–810; and *Realness of Things Past*. Cf. Quentin Skinner’s point about the “priority of paradigms,” “democracy” being one of the paradigms mentioned, in “Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas,” in *Meaning & Context*. *Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. James Tully (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 47.

³⁰ Davies, “Democracy without Theory.”

³¹ Suggestions that a supreme or even sovereign assembly defines Greek democracy are found in G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, “The Constitution of Five Thousand,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 5, no. 1 (1956): 2; Ehrenberg, *Greek State*, 52; Meier, “Die Entstehung des Begriffs ‘Demokratie,’” 535; Finley, *Democracy Ancient & Modern*, 18; and Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 284f. See also Hansen, *Athenian Democracy*, 150f. Sovereignty is however notoriously difficult to define. For a discussion of the concept, see Jens Bartelson, “The Concept of Sovereignty Revisited,” *The European Journal of International Law* 17, no. 2 (2006): 463–474. For an analysis of Athens in terms of sovereignty (defined as holding a monopoly on violence) to Athens, see Moshe Berent, “Sovereignty: Ancient and Modern,” *Polis* 17 (2000): 15. It is however clear that the assembly played a role in making Pisistratus tyrant, as Ostwald argues in *Nomos*, 147. This means that the assembly was not powerless before Cleisthenes.

As many think a popular assembly is a *sine qua non* for democracy, we should begin by mentioning *Iliad* 12.211–214, which contains κράτος in the context of a popular assembly. Polydamas complains about commoners having to exalt Hector’s *kratos* in the Trojan assembly:

Ἐκτορ αἰεὶ μὲν πῶς μοι ἐπιπλήσσεις ἀγορῆσιν / ἐσθλὰ φραζομένῳ, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ
μὲν οὐδὲ ἔοικε / δῆμον ἐόντα παρέξ ἀγορευόμεν, οὔτ’ ἐνὶ βουλῇ / οὔτέ ποτ’ ἐν
πολέμῳ, σὸν δὲ κράτος αἰὲν ἀέξειν.

Hector, you always rebuke me in the assembly, although I give good advice, because it is not seemly for someone who belongs to the people to speak contrarily in the assembly, neither in council nor ever in war, but always to exalt your *kratos*. (Hom. *Il.* 12.211–214)

But this *kratos* is not a capacity exercised by any political institution; it is simply a personal quality of Hector, for which the assembly is a good arena of praise.³²

Having said that, there is something more substantial in the so-called Spartan *Rhetra*, probably composed in the seventh century and therefore possibly the oldest constitutional document in Greek.³³ It seemingly attributes *kratos* to the *demos* and is therefore, at times, considered a milestone in the evolution of the concept democracy.³⁴ The *Rhetra*, handed down to us by Plutarch, whose source probably was the now lost Aristotelian *Constitution of the Spartans*, contains the alleged legislation of Sparta’s mythical founding father Lycurgus; it is remarkable for describing the powers of the Spartan popular assembly with the words δᾶμος (Dorian for δῆμος) and κράτος, which means the Greek usage appears to foreshadow modern theories on democracy.³⁵

Διὸς Συλλανίου καὶ Ἀθανᾶς Συλλανίας ἱερὸν ἰδρυσάμενον, φυλὰς φυλάξαντα
καὶ ὠβᾶς ὠβάξαντα, τριάκοντα γερουσίαν σὺν ἀρχαγέταις καταστήσαντα,
ᾧρας ἐξ ᾧρας ἀπελλάζειν μεταξὺ Βαβύκας τε καὶ Κνακιῶνος, οὔτως εἰσφέρειν
τε καὶ ἀφίστασθαι· δάμῳ δὲ τὴν κυρίαν ἤμεν καὶ κράτος.

Having founded a temple for Syllanian Zeus and Syllanian Athena, divided the people into tribes and *obai*, and formed a council of elderly of thirty with the *archagetai*, [he?] shall from time to time gather the assembly [?] between Babyka and Knakion, and thus both introduce and repeal [sc. proposals?]. But the people shall have *kuria* and *kratos*. (Plut. *Lyc.* 6)³⁶

³² Cf. Cobet: “Von einer formellen Abstimmung ist bei einer Volksversammlung nie die Rede, die Reaktion der Versammelten wird aber regelmäßig notiert.” “König, Anführer,” 37.

³³ Mary Fragkaki, “The Great Rhetra,” *Rosetta*, no. 17 (2015): 35 n. 4.

³⁴ E.g. in István Hahn, “Demos und Kratos,” *Homonía* V (1983): 69–114.

³⁵ For Plutarch’s source, see Daniel Ogden, “Crooked Speech: The Genesis of the Spartan Rhetra,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, no. 114 (1994): 85.

³⁶ We cannot discuss all aspects of the Rhetra here, but will concentrate on the very last line. For further reading, see Fragkaki, “Great Rhetra.”

The wording of the last line is disputed; a majority of scholars reconstruct it with τῶν κυρίων, which is often translated “sovereignty,” but that word is not attested before Polybius (c. 200–118). Other scholars propose ἀναγορία (“right to speak out”) or ἀνταγορία (“right to respond”), neither of which are attested.³⁷ Tyrtaeus paraphrases the *Rhetra*’s last line as “the multitude of the people shall be accompanied by victory and *kratos*” (δήμου τε πλήθει νίκη καὶ κάρτος ἔπεσθαι, frag. 4.9 West), which does not solve the textual conundrum. Plutarch interprets the *Rhetra* (and its accompanying Rider) as establishing that the council introduces proposals before the popular assembly, which ratifies or rejects the proposals.³⁸ But even if this is correct in practice, the literal sense of the passage is not evident. Most translators translate like Ogden: the people shall *have* the *kratos*. But the construction [εἶναι + DATIVE], although often expressing possession, can also express accompaniment. This is the literal meaning of the verb ἔπεσθαι in Tyrtaeus’ paraphrase, but ἔπεσθαι can also metaphorically signify possession. We therefore have to decide whether we shall interpret the passages as possessive (the *dēmos* has *kratos*) or as sociative (*kratos* accompanies the *dēmos* ≈ the *dēmos* decides who has *kratos*; cf. the argument about Alcinous in “*Kratos* and Legitimacy?” below). This may appear to be nit-picking, but if democracy is to be understood as “the *dēmos* having *kratos*,” the interpretational nuance bears on the passage’s status as a milestone in the evolution of the concept democracy. On the strictly terminological side, it is uncertain if the combination of δᾶμος and κράτος implies the existence of the term δημοκρατία; most research on the coining of δημοκρατία does not mention the *Rhetra*, which indicates that most scholars attribute little historical significance to the *Rhetra* and its pairing of δᾶμος and κράτος. It should be noted that Greek sources from the Classical era never mention the *Rhetra* in discussions of democracy either.

As Classical Greek writers are usually preoccupied with Athens, they instead mostly credit Cleisthenes as the founder of democracy.³⁹ Cleisthenes ousted the Pisistratid tyrants, who had dominated Athens for the better part of the 500s; he also destroyed clan loyalty by replacing old clans defined by blood with communities based on where one lived. He possibly made the assembly supreme and granted every free man the right to speak in the assembly

³⁷ E.g. Polybius: “And first of all, the council has control of the treasury [ἔχει τὴν τοῦ ταμείου κυρίαν]” (6.13). Earlier attestations in the TLG corpus appear to be misanalyses of the adjective κυρία. Note that the council in this passage from Polybius has *kyrian* rather than *is kyria*.

³⁸ Fragkaki, “Great Rhetra,” 45. There is a stronger emphasis on the assembly’s only having a “yea-or-nay competence” in David Butler, “Competence of the Demos in the Spartan Rhetra,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 11, no. 4 (October 1962): 385–396.

³⁹ Cf. J.A.O. Larsen, “Cleisthenes and the Development of the Theory of Democracy at Athens,” in *Essays in Political Theory Presented to George H. Sabine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1947), 14. Solon is sometimes credited either as inventor of democracy or as the spiritual predecessor to Cleisthenes. Larsen, however, calls the evidence for this opinion “late and weak” and attributes the view to “those who wished to modify the later democracy on conservative lines.” 12f.

(ἰσηγορία).⁴⁰ All of these reforms align well with modern assumptions regarding democracy, for which reason Cleisthenes is often credited with inventing Greek democracy.⁴¹ He did not remove the civic property classes, however, nor the legislation that only members of the upper two could become archons.⁴² Democratic and oligarchic factions alike claimed Cleisthenes—and Solon, for that matter—as their own, which complicates the interpretation of his legacy: did the oligarchs claim Cleisthenes because they had to pay lip service to the founder of democracy, or were they sincere, revering him as a non-partisan founding father for ousting the tyrants?⁴³ Another complication is that Cleisthenes, according to Isocrates, “brought back and reinstated the *dēmos*” (τὸν δῆμον καταγαγὼν πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς κατέστησεν, Isoc. *Areop.* 16). Δῆμος often being shorthand for δημοκρατία, the passage implies that the Athenians did not consider Cleisthenes the founder of democracy but its re-
viver.⁴⁴

The definition of δημοκρατία, as found in the earliest sources, does not correspond well to Cleisthenes’ reforms. Neither the Constitutional Debate (Hdt. 3.80) nor the Old Oligarch (e.g. 1.2) emphasize the assembly, but rather the magistracy’s (ἀρχή) being open to the public (as we have mentioned, Cleisthenes’ constitution did not remove the property classes restricting the archonship to a minority of the population). Besides, the first characteristic of democracy mentioned in the Constitutional Debate is the assignment of office by lot, which was probably rare in Cleisthenes’ time.⁴⁵ These characteristics rather belong to so-called “radical democracy” (τελευταῖα δημοκρατία, cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1292b–1293a), at the peak of which Herodotus and (perhaps) the

⁴⁰ This is the traditional view. Scholarly works questioning Cleisthenes’ connection to *isēgoria* include G.T. Griffith, “Isegoria in the Assembly at Athens,” in *Ancient Society and Institutions: Studies Presented to Victor Ehrenberg* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 115–138; and Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology and the Power of the People* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 72f.

⁴¹ For scholars emphasizing the importance of the “supreme assembly,” see Hignett, *Athenian Constitution*, 156; Meier, “Die Entstehung des Begriffs ‘Demokratie,’” 535; Ste. Croix, *Class Struggle*, 289; and Ober, *Rise and Fall*, 185f. Kinzl has argued that δημοκρατία does not refer to the δῆμος qua “people” (sc. gathering in the assembly) but to δῆμος qua “village community,” which Cleisthenes empowered. See “Δημοκρατία,” 324.

⁴² According to the Athidographers and Aristotle, Solon had granted access to the assembly to the thetes, the lowest property class. Hignett argues that this was actually Cleisthenes’ reform. See *Athenian Constitution*, 117, 142f. If true, the reform belongs in the enumeration.

⁴³ Larsen, “Cleisthenes,” 14; Ehrenberg, “Origins of Democracy,” 539.

⁴⁴ Georges Mathieu argues that the statement is false, given that there were “fortes differences” between the Solonic and Cleisthenic constitutions. See *Discours*, ed. Georges Mathieu, vol. 3 (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1966), 67 n. 1. He possibly overstates his case. How large the differences between the Cleisthenic and Solonic constitutions actually were remains an open question.

⁴⁵ Hignett supposes that the lot was used in Cleisthenes’ time, but that the participants in the lottery came from fixed set of candidates. See *Athenian Constitution*, 230f. Davies considers it impossible to date the introduction of the lot, but appears to incline toward either the 480s or the 450s, both of which are after Cleisthenes. See “Democracy without Theory,” 329.

Old Oligarch were writing.⁴⁶ This means δημοκρατία is either a Cleisthenic term, the meaning of which had changed as the constitutional reality has evolved, or a term contemporaneous with Herodotus that was anachronistically projected back onto Cleisthenes' time. Let us delve into this question.

The Term Δημοκρατία

The origin and dating of the term δημοκρατία is disputed. As noted above, the first attestation is found in Herodotus, but Herodotus is also the earliest extant prose, which complicates interpretation. The origin of δημοκρατία received little scholarly treatment until the late 1940s, when many works, often independent of one another, appeared. These works make up the foundation upon which later research stands. J.A.O. Larsen argues that Cleisthenes clearly did not use δημοκρατία himself; he rather used ἰσονομία, and was only retroactively labeled a democrat by the Periclean democracy.⁴⁷ Albert Debrunner holds that it is “not entirely coincidental” (*nicht nur Zufall*) that the attestations of δημοκρατία belong to the mid-fifth century and later.⁴⁸ Ehrenberg argues that the phrase δήμου κρατοῦσα χεὶρ, “the ruling hand of the people” (Aesch. *Supp.* 604) alludes to δημοκρατία, proving that the term had been coined at the production of the play. It makes sense in context: *Suppliants* tells the story of the Danaids who flee marriage with their Egyptian relatives and seek asylum in Argos. The Argive king Pelasgus defers the matter to the Argive people, and at the people's show of hands—an emblem of later democracy—the phrase δήμου κρατοῦσα χεὶρ appears. Ehrenberg thought the play was from “before the year of Marathon,” which is not long after the Cleisthenic constitution was introduced.⁴⁹ Scholars today, however, tend to date it to the late 460s.⁵⁰ This date coincides with the reforms of Ephialtes, which increased the political rights of the lower strata of society: if δήμου κρατοῦσα χεὶρ indeed refers to the term δημοκρατία (which appears likely), it cannot be excluded that δημοκρατία was a slogan of Ephialtes' reform movement, not the name of the Cleisthenic system.⁵¹

⁴⁶ The Old Oligarch is generally held to be from the mid-fifth century. See Alwine, “Soul of Oligarchy,” 239. Simon Hornblower argues *contra* that the Old Oligarch is a forgery from the fourth century. See “The Old Oligarch,” in *Polis & Politics: Studies in Ancient Greek History*, ed. P. Flensted-Jensen, T.H. Nielsen, and L. Rubinstein (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen, 2000), 363–384.

⁴⁷ Larsen, “Cleisthenes,” 13f.

⁴⁸ Debrunner, “Δημοκρατία,” 21.

⁴⁹ Ehrenberg, “Origins of Democracy,” 524.

⁵⁰ For a summary, see Lynette G. Mitchell, “Greeks, Barbarians and Aeschylus' ‘Suppliants,’” *Greece & Rome* 53, no. 2 (October 2006): 205 n. 2.

⁵¹ Monica Centanni, “Δήμου κρατοῦσα χεὶρ: Aesch. *Suppl.* 604,” in *Mythologein: Mito e forme di discorso nel mondo antico. Studi in onore di Giovanni Cerri*, ed. Antonietta Gostoli and Roberto Velardi, *Quaderni di AION* 18 (Pisa: Serra, 2014), 221. For an argument that δημοκρατία referred to the movement of Ephialtes, see Otto Henrik Linderborg, “Herodotus and the Origins of Political Philosophy: The Beginnings of Western Thought from the Viewpoint of Its

Raphael Sealey argues that δημοκρατία was “doubtless” coined in the middle of the fifth century.⁵² He questions the connection between δήμου κρατοῦσα χεῖρ and δημοκρατία, noting that Pelasgus does not defer to the people out of duty, but in order to avoid having sole responsibility.⁵³ It may be added that Pelasgus explicitly says that *he decides* to involve the people in the discussion, not that he *must* involve them; the assembly’s competence would then resemble that of the (presumably non-democratic) Spartan assembly as described in the Spartan *Rhetra*.⁵⁴

I pause here for a short methodological observation. Note that although the matter discussed is *when to date the term* δημοκρατία, the value of δήμου κρατοῦσα χεῖρ as evidence for the existence of the term δημοκρατία is measured according to how well δήμου κρατοῦσα χεῖρ corresponds to a characteristic of the *concept* “democracy.” This shows that it is difficult to disentangle the historical–linguistic question from the political–scientific one.

Sealey argues that Pericles’ hesitant use of δημοκρατία in the Funeral Oration (Thuc. 2.37) shows that the term δημοκρατία was still controversial in 430.⁵⁵ This implies that it had not become the constitutional self-designation at the time, which is an argument against projecting δημοκρατία back to Cleisthenes’ time.⁵⁶ Sealey’s interpretation of Pericles is not incontestable, but Loren Samons has similarly pointed out that Pericles puts little emphasis on δημοκρατία as though he were uncomfortable with stressing this name: he “almost apologetically” mentions it, “while noting qualities mitigating the negative conclusions one might draw from this name.”⁵⁷ Sealey’s observation that δημοκρατία was both laudatory and pejorative—like most “-isms” today—appears true.⁵⁸ But as the negative connotation in ὀλιγαρχία can be attributed to the ὀλιγ- element, the negative or positive connotation of δημοκρατία can be attributed to attitudes toward the *dēmos*, which, although technically signifying the total population, was used by democracy’s opponents as a slur for the poor uneducated mob.⁵⁹ It could be added that even if it

Impending End” (Uppsala University, 2018), 58ff. See also Will, *Le monde grec et l’orient*, 1:447.

⁵² Sealey, *Athenian Republic*, 102.

⁵³ Sealey, “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 267.

⁵⁴ See Butler, “Competence of the Demos,” 395.

⁵⁵ Sealey, “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 281.

⁵⁶ Cf. Larsen, “Cleisthenes,” 13f.

⁵⁷ Samons, “Democracy, Empire and the Search for the Athenian Character,” 143. Sealey’s argument is based on how Pericles uses the discourse particles μέν and δέ. See “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 281; the argument is repeated in *Athenian Republic*, 102. But he is overstating the case: the contrast between μέν and δέ is sometimes so small that it is synonymous to τε...καί. See J.D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), 370. Furthermore, artificial antithesis is a hallmark of Thucydides’ style. See Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers*, 2nd ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 68.

⁵⁸ Sealey, “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 253.

⁵⁹ For the shifting connotations of δῆμος, see Hansen, “The Concepts of Demos, Ekklesia and Dikasterion in Classical Athens,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 50, no. 4 (2010): 505–507. Cf. Breuil: “Lorsque notre auteur veut donner une connotation laudative au pouvoir

is true that Pericles hesitates to use δημοκρατία, it only proves that the word is somehow partisan and not embraced by every citizen, which is not the same as the word being pejorative. To use a modern analogy: Sweden has often been described as a “social democratic country,” but not even proudly social democratic prime ministers refer to Sweden as such.

Mogens Herman Hansen argues for an early dating of δημοκρατία. In Antiphon 6.45, the speaker says that during his tenure as *prytanis* he offered sacrifices for democracy. As his *prytania* was around year 420, Hansen argues that δημοκρατία must have been the Athenian self-designation at the time.⁶⁰ This means, according to Hansen, that δημοκρατία “beyond doubt” was what Athenians called their constitution “as far back as the sources go.”⁶¹ He disagrees with Sealey about δήμου κρατοῦσα χεῖρ, which Hansen interprets as referring to δημοκρατία.⁶² Unlike Ehrenberg, he knows the play is from the 460s. He further argues that the inscription IG I³.37.49, if it has been correctly restored, would decisively date the term to around 450.⁶³ Hansen suspends judgement before 470, but as no prose existed earlier, and as δημοκρατία does not scan easily—the earliest attestations in poetry are from comedy with lax meters—he finds arguments from silence unconvincing.⁶⁴ On the argument from silence, I agree with Hansen, but I am skeptical to his argument about 470 as the *terminus ante quem*. The argument is based on the name of the father of Lysis in Plato’s *Lysis*: “Democrates” (cf. “Debrunner’s Argument,” n. 1 below). Following John Davies, Hansen assumes Democrates was born around 470, and argues that the name testifies to the “*parti pris*” of his parents:

It is unlikely, in fifth-century Athens, that the name and the abstract [i.e. δημοκρατία] were completely unconnected. Thus the most plausible explanation seems to be that Lysis’ grandfather called his son Democrates because

du peuple, ce n’est pas l’élément δημο- qu’il emploie, mais ἰσο-.” “De κράτος à δημοκρατίη,” 83. The use of δῆμος to refer to a particular segment of the populace is found already in Homer, where δῆμος usually means the whole population except the chieftain and people of status. See Donlan, “Changes and Shifts,” 384.

⁶⁰ Mogens Herman Hansen, “The Origin of the Term ‘Demokratia,’” *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 11, no. 3 (March 1986): 35. The *prytania* was the executive committee within the council, composed of fifty men of a single tribe; they served for a tenth of the year—the council consisting of five hundred men—and were then replaced by fifty men from another tribe.

⁶¹ I agree with Hansen that δημοκρατία was probably the Athenian self-designation by then (and probably decades before). It is theoretically possible, however, that the speaker applies the label δημοκρατία retroactively, and that during his tenure, he simply offered sacrifices for the *politeia*.

⁶² Hansen, “The Term ‘Demokratia,’” 35.

⁶³ “IG I³ 37,” The Packard Humanities Institute, accessed July 15, 2021, <https://epigraphy.packardhum.org/text/37>. But the restoration is so uncertain it seems uninvokable: [λ]έσο και δεμο[κρατίαν οὐ καταλύσο Κολοφῶνι οὐτ’ α]-

⁶⁴ Hansen, “The Term ‘Demokratia,’” 35f. Eric W. Robinson calls the argument from silence “remarkably weak.” See *The First Democracies: Early Popular Government Outside Athens*, *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte. Einzelschriften* 107 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997), 45.

demokratia was already a designation of the Athenian constitution accepted by the Athenians themselves.⁶⁵

Naming a child “Democrates” could certainly indicate democratic sympathy if the term δημοκρατία existed, but just as the name “Socrates” does not prove the existence of *σωκρατία, Democrates does not prove the existence of δημοκρατία. The argument appears circular. If names were significant in this respect, the Lacedaemonian *Damocrates*—a contemporary of the Spartan king Cleomenes (fl. 500; see Plut. *Cleom.* 25.5)—would imply the existence of Lacedaemonian δαμοκρατία.⁶⁶ This failure to date δημοκρατία with certainty to the 470s means that we do not know if the coining of δημοκρατία coincided with Cleisthenes’ reforms or with Ephialtes’ reforms. If we are skeptical to the claim that δήμου κρατοῦσα χεῖρ refers to δημοκρατία, we may even attribute δημοκρατία to the subsequent consolidation of the democratic regime under e.g. Pericles, although such skepticism appears excessive.

At any rate, we cannot identify with certainty to what constitution δημοκρατία originally referred.⁶⁷ It is possible, however, that δημοκρατία did not refer to any technical constitutional design at all, but rather to a political ideal with vague technical definitions.⁶⁸ Deciding which government is a democracy would then be a matter of defining the ideology of the people with influence. Thucydides mentions (5.29) that the Mantineans “consider” (νομίζοντες) Argos, among other things, to be “run democratically” (δημοκρατουμένην) just like their own city. This indicates that which *polis* was a democracy was somewhat arbitrary. If the location of *kratos* is arbitrary, it also follows that the borders between different constitutions—if these are defined according to where *kratos* is located—is not always clear. Thucydides’ discussion of the so-called “rule of the 5,000”—a short-lived Athenian regime following some failed narrow oligarchies—is telling: scholars have argued over how to characterize this regime; to name but one example, G.E.M. de Ste. Croix opines that the regime fulfilled the “minimum essential characteristics of democracy, as it was understood by the Greeks”: the right of all citizens—though numerically circumscribed—to attend the assembly and sit on courts.⁶⁹ Thucydides, however, calls it a “moderate mixture” (μέτρια

⁶⁵ Hansen, “The Term ‘Demokratia,’” 36.

⁶⁶ Plutarch also mentions how fighters at Plataea (479) offer sacrifices to heroes, including one Damocrates (Plut. *Arist.* 11). On a side note, Isagoras was the name of the foremost opponent of Cleisthenes, who was probably the architect of *isēgoria*.

⁶⁷ Note also Asheri’s opinion that the term had “a prolonged and difficult birth” c. 460–440. “Prehistory,” 7.

⁶⁸ Most modern democracies say that they want to maximize popular influence over politics, but they differ as to how they maximize this: a popularly elected head of government, a head of government elected by parliament, some checks on popular influence to make sure it does not lead to tyranny, etc.

⁶⁹ Ste. Croix, “Constitution of Five Thousand,” 2. I believe that he, in saying the Greeks defined democracy as attending the assembly, imports a modern definition.

ξύγκρασις), viz. of democracy and oligarchy, which means these constitutions faded into one another.

We can compare here when the Athenian Pisander tried to persuade the Athenians to employ “a different sort of democracy” by putting the offices in the hands of the few (μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον δημοκρατουμένοις... ἐς ὀλίγους μᾶλλον τὰς ἀρχὰς ποιήσομεν, Thuc. 8.53), which however upsets the people as a call for oligarchy (ὁ δῆμος χαλεπῶς ἔφερε τὸ περὶ τῆς ὀλιγαρχίας, Thuc. 8.54). Robinson has argued that this may have been a euphemism, but that this is beside the point: “such a government would... remain as a whole a *demokratia*.”⁷⁰ The better conclusion is that the borders between the constitutions are fuzzy, and that the constitutions were in practice not defined by any minimal, mutually exclusive criteria.⁷¹ This means that ὀλιγαρχία and δημοκρατία, and consequently -αρχία and -κρατία, fade into each other.

Conclusions

In conclusion, although it is possible to differentiate between the suffixes -αρχία and -κρατία depending on what type of suffix they take, it is unclear if this is due to some characteristic of the suffixes themselves or due to analogy.

Μοναρχία is without a doubt the oldest of the main constitutional terms, and was probably originally a pejorative term referring to would-be tyrants.

It is unclear from the attestations alone if δημοκρατία or ὀλιγαρχία was coined first: both are first attested in Herodotus (6.43 and 3.81).⁷² Scholars argue that democracy and oligarchy are connected conceptually, for which reason ὀλιγαρχία should not anachronistically be projected to a time when democracy did not exist. Ὀλιγαρχία was probably coined as a pejorative term, but it is not certain.

Δημοκρατία cannot be dated more precisely than somewhere between the time of Cleisthenes and the mid-450s, with 462 as a probable *terminus ante quem*. It is likewise uncertain to which constitutional arrangement δημοκρατία originally referred. As the Greeks apparently considered oligarchy and democracy to exist on a continuum, so should consequently the constitutions ending in -αρχία and -κρατία (cf. “Constitutional Typologies” below). In the oldest sources, δημοκρατία was controversial, but could have positive or negative connotations depending on context. It is impossible to say if it was originally coined as a laudatory or pejorative term.

⁷⁰ Robinson, *First Democracies*, 60.

⁷¹ For unclear borders between oligarchy and democracy, cf. Ostwald, “Isokratia,” 37f; and Alwine, “Soul of Oligarchy,” 235.

⁷² The verb δημοκρατέομαι is attested in Herodotus 4.137.

Let us now consider how the constitutional terms were integrated into the Greek constitutional typologies, and if there is any logic to these typologies which can help us explain the constitutional suffixes.

Constitutional Typologies

Typological Prehistory

In the words of Greg Anderson, the Archaic *polis* was “a minimally structured, vaguely defined institutional space in which private interests for competition for power within the elite might be negotiated.”¹ Insofar as common institutions existed, they tended to include a king, magistrates, a council, an assembly, as well as religious festivals.² The council was open to the landed citizenry; the assembly to free men. The social organization was mirrored in the military organization, with its supreme commander (*anax*), commanding officers (*gerontes*, *archoi*, etc.), and common soldiers (*laoi*, whose gathering was called *agora*).³ The ubiquity of these institutions prompted Ehrenberg’s observation that the constitutions “are not to be regarded as independent forms of state, but as different expressions of one and the same Polis.”⁴ Whether these observations are true or not, the earliest political typology did indeed not discriminate between different sets of institutions. Instead, it distinguished simply between *eunomia* and *dusnomia*, good and bad custom:⁵

ταῦτα διδάξαι θυμὸς Ἀθηναίους με κελεύει, / ὡς κακὰ πλεῖστα πόλει Δυσνομίη
παρέχει· / Εὐνομίη δ’ εὐκοσμία καὶ ἄρτια πάντ’ ἀποφαίνει, / καὶ θαμὰ τοῖς
ἀδίκοις ἀμφιτίθησι πέδας·

My spirit urges me to teach the Athenians these things: that Bad Custom does most harm to the city, and that Good Custom brings everything in good order

¹ Anderson, “Before Tyrannoi Were Tyrants,” 179. On a similar note, Lin Foxhall has argued that the public offices could not be fully separated from the office-holders, who looked like “rivals on the playground taking turns.” See “A View from the Top: Evaluating the Solonian Property Classes,” in *The Development of the Polis in Archaic Greece*, ed. Lynette G. Mitchell and P.J. Rhodes (London: Routledge, 1997), 120.

² Davies, “Democracy without Theory,” 325.

³ Ehrenberg, *Greek State*, 13f.

⁴ Ehrenberg, 43f.

⁵ Εὐνομίη is attested since Homer (e.g. *Od.* 17.487); Hesiod made Eunomiē the daughter of Themis (“divine law”, *Theog.* 902) and Dusnomiē the daughter of Eris (“strife”, *Theog.* 230). In later Greek, εὐνομία was sometimes used as a euphemism for oligarchy (e.g. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.8–9). Cf. Ostwald, *Nomos*, 84; and Sealey, “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 256. For the translation of Εὐνομίη as “Good Custom” rather than “Good Law,” see Maria Noussia-Fantuzzi, *Solon the Athenian: The Poetic Fragments* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 259. For Solon’s dependence on Hesiod, see Elizabeth Irwin, *Solon and Early Greek Poetry: The Politics of Exhortation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 155–198, esp. 183–193.

and in full accord, and often puts shackles on wrongdoers. (Sol. frag. 4.30–33 West)

Solon's use of *eunomia*, however, suggesting an attempt to “ensure a particular reception of this term,” indicates that the meaning of *eunomia* was contested.⁶ This is because *eunomia* was not a constitution per se, but a political ideal to which different constitutions—or simply different claimants to political power—aspired. As such, the distinction *eunomia*–*dusnomia* is not a proper constitutional typology; at most it is a proxy for one.⁷

At any rate, the possibility for constitutional typology inheres in the terminology. The word underlying *eunomia* and *dusnomia*, νόμος, habitually translated into English as “law,” “custom” and “habits,” differs from *thesmos* as a legal concept in that *thesmos* is “imposed by an external agency”—typically gods—whereas *nomos* is human in origin and is authoritative because it is accepted by a community.⁸ The possibility of acceptance implies the possibility of rejection, that is to say, the acknowledgment of differences, a sine qua non for typological thinking.⁹

The Typology of One, Few, and Many

The most famous typology of constitutions in ancient Greek thought distinguishes between different types of *politeiai*, an abstract noun derived from πολίτης (“citizen”) and traditionally translated as “constitutions”: as Greek constitutions arguably mainly differ in how large a part of the community has the right to participate in politics—i.e., how many of its inhabitants are citizens, narrowly defined—πολιτεία can often be translated as “(arrangement of) citizenship.”¹⁰

The active participants in politics were either one, a few, or many (“all”), and the respective constitutions were called μοναρχία, ὀλιγαρχία, and δημοκρατία. Monarchies arguably has only one such citizen, and as such they are sometimes treated separately. Aristotle, for instance, refrains at times from calling monarchy a *politeia* (Arist. *Pol.* 1292b). From Aristotle's characterization of the *polis* as ruled by the majority of the citizenry (Arist. *Pol.* 1294a),

⁶ Irwin, *Solon and Early Greek Poetry*, 188.

⁷ Cf. Meier, “Drei Bemerkungen,” 7.

⁸ Ostwald, *Nomos*, 55.

⁹ For democracy as the “radical imagining of alternatives,” see Linderborg, “Herodotus and the Origins.”

¹⁰ *Politeia* also has the narrower meaning “citizen-state” or “republic,” i.e. “a state where the citizens (broadly defined as general populace) rules,” treating πολιτεία (“constitution in which the citizens rule”) as a formal equivalent of e.g. βασιλειά (“constitution in which the king rules”). Cf. Meier, “Die Entstehung des Begriffs ‘Demokratie,’” 570ff. The applicability of the concept “citizenship” in Archaic Greece is disputed and cannot be treated at length here; a recent study on the subject is Alain Duplouy and Roger W. Brock, eds., *Defining Citizenship in Archaic Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

Victor Ehrenberg even infers that monarchies are not *poleis* in the strictest sense.¹¹

The first evidence of a political typology founded on the division between the one, the few, and the many is found in a poem by Pindar from the 460s:¹²

ἐν πάντα δὲ νόμον εὐθύγλωσσοσ ἀνὴρ προφέρει, / παρὰ τυραννίδι, χῶπόταν ὁ
λάβρος στρατός, / χῶταν πόλιν οἱ σοφοὶ τηρέωντι.

In every type of order, the plain-spoken man thrives: in the tyranny, and whenever the riotous multitude or those with skill watch over the city. (Pind. *Pyth.* 2.86–88)¹³

Although Pindar does not use the terms μοναρχία, ὀλιγαρχία, or δημοκρατία, he implies the same basic numeric distinction, which must have been familiar to his audience.¹⁴ In what follows, we will examine how this political typology was expressed and varied throughout the Classical era, in order to see if any inferences can be made about the typological division between -αρχία and -κρατία.

Herodotus

The first political typology unanimously accepted by scholars as such is Herodotus' Constitutional Debate (Hdt. 3.80–83, especially 3.80–82).¹⁵ The debate, if authentic, took place in the Persian Empire shortly after the overthrow of Pseudo-Smerdis in 522, allegedly a magus by the name of Gaumata who usurped the throne by posing as Smerdis son of Cyrus II.¹⁶ The interlocutors in the debate are the Persian noblemen Otanes, a proponent of “isonomy”—paraphrased as “democracy” in Herodotus 6.43—Megabyzus, a proponent of oligarchy, and Darius, a proponent of monarchy.¹⁷ Most scholars tend to think

¹¹ Ehrenberg, *Greek State*, 44. He refers to Aristotle's *Politics* 1294a for this point. But Aristotle, although refraining at times (e.g. *Pol.* 1292b) from calling a monarchy a *politeia* (i.e. a “citizen-state” or “constitution”), does not say that monarchies are not *poleis*.

¹² Simonton considers this the earliest evidence of typological thinking in *Classical Greek Oligarchy*, 1. Cf. Jacqueline de Romilly, “Le classement des constitutions d'Hérodote à Aristote,” *Revue des études grecques* 72, no. 339/343 (January 1959): 81. The importance of Pindar is downplayed in Jochen Bleicken, “Zur Entstehung der Verfassungstypologie im 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. (Monarchie, Aristokratie, Demokratie),” *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 28, no. 2 (Qtr 1979): 150.

¹³ For στρατός as a term for the general population, see Ehrenberg, *Greek State*, 48. For the correspondence between the warriors' assembly and the popular assembly, see Ehrenberg, 59.

¹⁴ Sealey, “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 276.

¹⁵ Romilly: “Mais [le classement des constitutions] trouve son expression la plus ferme dans la célèbre discussion qu'Hérodote prête aux chefs perses après le massacre des Mages, à III, 80 sqq.” “Classement des constitutions,” 81.

¹⁶ This allegation is quite possibly Dareian propaganda against the real Smerdis.

¹⁷ Bleicken considers the typology not to be a result of theoretical speculation, but a reflex of constitutional thinking grounded in political reality that had evolved out of the political struggles of the seventh and sixth centuries. See “Entstehung der Verfassungstypologie,” 172.

the debate never happened, and believe it reflects the constitutional thinking of Herodotus' own time (c. 440).¹⁸ At any rate, it is obvious that Herodotus wished to present the debate as real, whether he believed it himself or not.

The debate is introduced in 3.80. Herodotus says that some Greeks will find parts of the debate difficult to believe, but emphasizes that the words “were indeed spoken” (ἐλέχθησαν δ’ ὄν). This refers to Otanes’ democratic position.¹⁹ As Otanes does not use the term δημοκρατία, it has been proposed that the term had negative connotations, either to Otanes’ interlocutors or to Herodotus’ contemporaries. Instead of δημοκρατία, Otanes uses ἰσονομία, which he describes as “majority rule” (πληθους ἄρχον).²⁰ This majority rule is characterized by electing officials by lot (πάλαφ...ἀρχὰς ἄρχει), auditing the government (ὑπεύθυνον δὲ ἀρχὴν ἔχει), and referring all deliberation to the public (βουλευματα δὲ πάντα ἐς τὸ κοινὸν ἀναφέρει), all of which were also characteristics of mid-fifth century Athenian democracy.

In Herodotus 3.81, the oligarchic supporter Megabyzus paraphrases πληθους ἄρχον as “giving *kratos* to the multitude” (ἐς τὸ πληθους...φέρειν κράτος). Megabyzus proceeds to lambast the people, and in doing so, substitutes Otanes’ πληθους, “majority,” for δῆμος, “people”; Emmanuèle Caire has proposed that Megabyzus thereby substitutes a neutral term for a pejorative one,

¹⁸ Cf. Hansen, “The Term ‘Demokratia.’” For an argument that the purpose of the passage is to portray real political motivations, see Helmut Apffel, *Die Verfassungsdebatte bei Herodot* (3, 80-82) (Erlangen: Diss. Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, 1958), 84–93, 96. Cf. Kinzl, “Δημοκρατία,” 119.

¹⁹ In Herodotus 6.43, the Persian Mardonius is described as introducing democracies on the Ionian coast around the year 480; Herodotus says that those who do not believe that Otanes advocated democracy will likely consider it “amazing” (θῶμα) that another Persian actually introduced such regimes. It is disputed what this means in practice. Hans Schaefer argues that δημοκρατία here does not refer to Greek democracy proper, but is used more broadly to refer to free constitutions as opposed to tyranny. See “Besonderheit und Begriff der attischen Demokratie im 5. Jahrhundert,” in *Synopsis: Festgabe für Alfred Weber* (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1948), 502f. Cf. M.M. Austin, “Greek Tyrants and the Persians, 546–479 BC,” *Classical Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1990): 306.

²⁰ For the connotation of δημοκρατία, see Sealey, *Athenian Republic*, 99f. Another possibility is that Herodotus tries to avoid anachronism, which is one of the conclusions in Lévy, “Les dialogues perses (Hérodote III, 80–83) et les débuts de la science politique,” *Lalies. Actes des Sessions de Linguistique et de Littérature* 22 (Paris: Éditions Rue d’Ulm, 2003), 119–145. For *isonomia*: It is clear that Herodotus thinks Otanes refers to democracy, but it is disputed if ἰσονομία and δημοκρατία are synonyms. Maeandrius the Samian tyrant pronounces ἰσονομία when he abolishes his tyranny and puts the *archē* of Samos “in the middle” (ἐς μέσον, Hdt. 3.142). Ostwald, although analyzing isonomy and democracy as conceptually distinct argues that Maeandrius’ isonomy in practice refers to democratic government. See *Nomos*, 107f. (For a discussion of the expression ἐς μέσον, see Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 46–52.) But oligarchies can be *isonomoi*, too, as in Thuc. 3.62. Ehrenberg takes ἰσονομία as “equality of peers” in “Origins of Democracy,” 531. Cf. Ostwald, *Nomos*, 114, 120. A.W. Gomme interprets *oligarchia isonomos* as “constitutional, law-abiding” and with “all citizens have equal civil rights, though not equal political power.” See *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956), 347.

which appears likely.²¹ As scholars often consider ἀρχή a less offensive alternative to κράτος (more on this below), Megabyzus' replacement of ἄρχον with κράτος could likewise be due to his wish to criticize Otanes' position.²² Like Otanes, Megabyzus devotes more time to criticizing what he opposes than to explaining what he supports, but unlike Otanes, who at least touched on the technicalities of isonomy, Megabyzus is vague and sloganeering about oligarchy. Matthew Simonton has proposed that the lack of concretion is because oligarchy was a constitutional innovation at the time.²³ If Simonton is correct, and if the Constitutional Debate indeed reflects Greece in Herodotus' time, this would date the *constitution* oligarchy to sometime before 440.²⁴ Megabyzus also avoids the term ὀλιγαρχία, which points to its negative connotation already in the time of Herodotus; he prefers the term “a collection of the best men” (ἀνδρῶν τῶν ἀρίστων...ὀμιλίην).²⁵

In Herodotus 3.82, Darius, who supports monarchy, uses both πλῆθος and δῆμος for the people. The difference is that πλῆθος refers to the people as good subjects: “the one, best man...would be blameless in overseeing the multitude” (ἐνὸς τοῦ ἀρίστου...ἐπιτροπεύει ἂν ἀμωμήτως τοῦ πλῆθεος); δῆμος refers to the people when they rule: “when the people rule” (δήμου...ἄρχοντος).²⁶ Darius uses ὀλιγαρχίη to refer to Megabyzus' position, which he criticizes.²⁷ In his argument for the supremacy of monarchy, Darius makes some interesting terminological allusions: when the monarch stops oligarchic factionalism he proves himself the “best” (ἄριστον); this alludes to Megabyzus' proposal that power be given to the best men; when the monarch stops plebeian wickedness he proves himself “mightiest” (κράτιστον); this alludes to δημοκρατία. Monarchy thereby appropriates the qualities inherent in the other constitutions. Somewhat *pace* the point made above about Megabyzus and κράτος, this indicates that -κρατία does not have negative connotations.

²¹ Caire, “Entre démocratie et oligarchie,” para. 10. See also Lévy, “Les dialogues perses,” 128.

²² Another possibility is that δῆμος has a partisan quality. See also how Otanes shifts from μοναρχίη to τύραννος when detailing the hubristic behavior of a monarch, reverting to μουναρχος when comparing monarchy to the πλῆθος ἄρχον.

²³ Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy*, 30f.

²⁴ Simonton's hypothesis is that oligarchy proper was an anti-democratic reaction. If oligarchy could be confidently dated to the 440s, which is probable but not certain, it would strengthen his argument.

²⁵ Megabyzus may allude to ἀριστοκρατία—though first attested in Thucydides—as he uses ἀρίστων, ἄριστοι, ἄριστα in the context of κράτος. See Sealey, “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 274. Ὀλιγαρχία, of course, became the negative counterpart to ἀριστοκρατία in most political typologies.

²⁶ Cf. how δῆμος could be used for δημοκρατία.

²⁷ Technically, he uses ὀλιγαρχίη about the oligarchic junta. Ehrenberg mistakenly says that ὀλιγαρχίη is “awkwardly put in [viz. between μουναρχος and δῆμος] instead of the ὀλίγοι, the small group of ruling men” and that it “looks very much like an afterthought.” See “Origins of Democracy,” 525. But ὀλιγαρχία is attested as “ruling junta of few” (e.g. Thuc. 4.74, Arist. *Pol.* 1289b). The suffix -ία is used for both abstracts and collectives, e.g. δουλεία, “slavery; slave population”; hence ὀλιγαρχία, “few-man rule; a group of few men ruling.”

Plato

Multiple typologies occur in Plato.²⁸ These are often presented in dialogue by different *dramatis personae*, making it difficult to know what terminology Plato himself used. *Republic* 338d (c. 375) offers the famous typological division between the one, the few, and the many. The passage, a *locus classicus* in political philosophy, contains Thrasymachus' argument that might makes right.

εἶτ' οὐκ οἶσθ', ἔφη, ὅτι τῶν πόλεων αἱ μὲν τυραννοῦνται, αἱ δὲ δημοκρατοῦνται, αἱ δὲ ἀριστοκρατοῦνται;

Don't you know then, he said, that some cities are ruled by tyrants, others democratically, and others by aristocrats? (*Pl. Resp.* 338d)

Thrasymachus' choice of words—naming two -κρατία terms—aims for the point he is making, namely that the ruling element (τὸ ἄρχον) is the element with *kratos* (τὸ κρατοῦν).²⁹ As each city makes laws to secure its regime, and the regime (ἀρχή) is what has *kratos* (κρατεῖ), he concludes that right is what benefits the powerful (τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος σύμφερον).³⁰ This is the only time in any discussion of constitutions in which some substantial difference between *archē* and *kratos* is acknowledged: *kratos* is a type of power that underlies or transcends *archē*, and law depends ultimately on the sanction of *kratos*.

Plato revisited the typology in the *Statesman* 291d (c. 360).

Ξένος: ἄρ' οὐ μοναρχία τῶν πολιτικῶν ἡμῖν ἀρχῶν ἐστὶ μία; ... καὶ μετὰ μοναρχίαν εἶποι τις ἂν οἶμαι τὴν ὑπὸ τῶν ὀλίγων δυναστείαν. ... τρίτον δὲ σχῆμα πολιτείας οὐχ ἢ τοῦ πλήθους ἀρχή, δημοκρατία τοῦνομα κληθεῖσα;

Stranger: Isn't monarchy one of the political regimes? ... And after monarchy, I guess you could mention the rule of the few. ... The third type of constitution, isn't that the rule of the multitude, what they call democracy? (*Pl. Pht.* 291d)

²⁸ The authors in between Plato and Herodotus may discuss the opposition between oligarchy and democracy (e.g. Thuc. *passim*, Lys. 18.8) or the merits of democracy (e.g. Eur. *Supp.* 352), but do not mention any explicit typology.

²⁹ James Adam: "Thrasymachus proceeds to define κρείττων as ὁ κρατῶν (not ὁ ἰσχυρότερος, as Socrates had insinuated): -κρατοῦνται in δημοκρατοῦνται and ἀριστοκρατοῦνται well brings out this meaning." *The Republic of Plato*, ed. and comm. James Adam, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 29.

³⁰ The full phrase is αὕτη δὲ που κρατεῖ, where αὕτη refers to ἡ ἀρχή. John Glucker has argued for a translation "the established government has, in some sense, power." See "Word Power," 139. The use of τυραννοῦνται can be explained in either two ways: either that it is self-evident that tyrants have *kratos*, or that naming the obvious alternative—μοναρχοῦνται—would bring in a word from the -αρχία family, confusing the point. As there are no -κρατία words for single rule, Thrasymachus did not have much choice.

The inclusion of *δυναστεία* ὑπὸ τῶν ὀλίγων and exclusion of *ὀλιγαρχία* is idiosyncratic. *Δυναστεία* has two senses: one general, i.e. “rule,” one specialized, i.e. “narrow oligarchy.”³¹ The former sense is intended; the reference to oligarchy lies solely in the attribute “of the few.” Plato uses *δυναστεία* either because *ὀλιγαρχία* is pejorative, or in order to vary his terms: *αρχία–δυναστεία–κρατία*.³² The Stranger says that these three constitutions become five, “producing out of themselves two additional names”; this is because people are wont to make further distinctions based on criteria such as oppression or voluntary obedience, poverty or wealth, law or lawlessness. Monarchy is hence divided into oppressive tyranny and non-oppressive kingship. The rule (*κρατηθεῖσαν*) of a few people is divided into aristocracy and oligarchy. The name “democracy” is retained in both good and bad versions of popular rule; the interlocutors recognize this as a problem but do not remedy it. The constitutions, whether *-αρχίαι* or *-κρατίαι*, are all *archai*. Along with the paraphrase of aristocracy and oligarchy as *κρατηθεῖσαν*, this indicates that the difference between the constitutional suffixes, if any, does not translate directly into *ἀρχή*, *κράτος*, and their cognates.

Plato’s other discussions of constitutions have varieties of such a quinquepartite typology. In *Laws* 693d, the Athenian holds that there are two fundamental forms of government, monarchy and democracy, from which other forms of government arise (*ἐξ ὧν τὰς ἄλλας γεγρονέναι*), the point being that monarchy and democracy represent the two extremes, one man and every man ruling, between which every other type of constitution is positioned. The Athenian also introduces the notion of “citizen-state” (*πολιτεία*): asked in what type of “constitution” (likewise *πολιτεία*) they live, the Spartan Megillus and the Cnossian Cleinias cannot answer; Megillus admits to being confused by Sparta’s combination of properties of tyranny (the kings), aristocracy (the *gerousia*), and democracy (the ephorate). The Athenian responds:

Ἀθηναῖος: ὄντως γάρ, ὦ ἄριστοι, πολιτειῶν μετέχετε· ἅς δὲ ὀνομάκαμεν νῦν, οὐκ εἰσὶν πολιτεῖαι, πόλεων δὲ οἰκίσεις δεσποζομένων τε καὶ δουλευουσῶν μέρεσιν ἑαυτῶν τισι, τὸ τοῦ δεσπότου δὲ ἐκάστη προσαγορεύεται κράτος. χρῆν δ’ εἶπερ του τοιούτου τὴν πόλιν ἔδει ἐπονομάζεσθαι, τὸ τοῦ ἀληθῶς τῶν τὸν νοῦν ἐχόντων δεσπίζοντος θεοῦ ὄνομα λέγεσθαι.

³¹ The word is an abstract formed from *δυναστής*, which is often used about the most influential elite. An example of “narrow” oligarchy—compared with oligarchies having thousands of members—is the rule of the Thirty Tyrants in Athens. As Ober has pointed out, oligarchic regimes “were often named for a fixed number of potential office-holders: The Thirty, The Four Hundred, The Three Thousand, The Five Thousand, and so on.” See “Original Meaning of ‘Democracy,’” 6.

³² Note also how the Stranger does not say “the first constitution... the second constitution... the third constitution,” but varies: *πολιτικῶν ἀρχῶν μία, μετὰ μοναρχίαν and τρίτον σχῆμα πολιτείας*, i.e. “one of the governments,” “thereafter,” “the third form of constitution.”

Athenian: That is because you truly partake in citizen-states, gentlemen.³³ But those we have just mentioned are not citizen-states, but administrations of cities ruled by and serving under some of their constituent parts, and each administration is named after the master's *kratos*. But if one ought to name the city after some such thing, one ought to name it after the God who in truth rules those who have good sense. (Pl. *Leg.* 712e–713a)

The point is that a *politeia* qua “citizen-state” is a state governed by its citizenry, that is, all factions are represented and none excluded, whereas most *politeiai* qua “constitutions” are ruled by one faction to the exclusion of the others. This prompts the Athenian’s remark that constitutions that are not citizen-states should “most correctly” (ὀρθώτατα) be called “faction-states” (στασιωτεῖαι, Pl. *Leg.* 832c; from στασιώτης, “partisan”).³⁴

The *Republic* features Plato’s famous “five regimes”: aristocracy, understood as the rule of the philosopher-king, timarchy/timocracy, which approximates aristocracy as usually understood, oligarchy, democracy, and tyranny. When Socrates discusses timocracy, he at first has no name for it. But since it “loves honor” (φιλότιμον), he proposes that it be called either “timocracy” (τιμοκρατία) or “timarchy” (τιμαρχία), implying that the suffixes are virtual synonyms (*Resp.* 545b).³⁵ The choice between the suffixes seems motivated by a wish to allude to something else:

Φέρε τοίνυν, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, πειρώμεθα λέγειν τίνα τρόπον τιμοκρατία γένοιτ’ ἂν ἐξ ἀριστοκρατίας.

Come now, said I, let us try to say how a timocracy could arise from an aristocracy. (Pl. *Resp.* 545c)

Οὐκοῦν ὡς μεταβαίνει πρῶτον ἐκ τῆς τιμαρχίας εἰς τὴν ὀλιγαρχίαν, ῥητέον;

So shall we say how it first changes from a timarchy to an oligarchy? (Pl. *Resp.* 550d)³⁶

³³ Translators are sometimes confused by the polysemy of *politeia*; cf. Bury’s translation: “for you do, in fact, partake in a number of polities,” as though the Athenian reiterates that their *poleis* are mixtures of many regimes. See Plato, *Laws*, trans. R.G. Bury, vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library 187 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 283. E.B. England offers “you really live under constitutions,” which is imprecise. See *The Laws of Plato*, ed. and comm. E.B. England, vol. 1 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1921), 439. The confusion probably arises because translators often wish to translate a single Greek word with a single English word, but Aristotle’s comments on πολιτεία show that the Greeks thought that the word was polysemous (Arist. *Pol.* 1279a).

³⁴ Cf. England’s translation “not communities but disunities.” *The Laws of Plato*, ed. and comm. E.B. England, vol. 2 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1921), 333.

³⁵ Adam quotes C.E.C. Schneider: “Ehreherrschaft oder Ehrenobmacht.” *The Republic of Plato*, ed. and comm. James Adam, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 201.

³⁶ Adam comments interestingly that although ὀλιγαρχίη was “used in its strictly etymological sense” in Herodotus, it has a property criterion here. 2:219.

Plato uses *τιμοκρατία* for when the constitution evolves out of an aristocracy, and *τιμαρχία* for when constitution evolves into an oligarchy, which indicates that word formation can owe more to analogy than to constitutional technicalities.

Xenophon

Xenophon's works include typologies at least three times: *Memorabilia* (c. 370)—indicating which political typology Socrates supposedly accepted—*Cyropaedia* (c. 370), and the *Agesilaus* (post 360). These passages are rather concise and have little analytical depth. In its claim to represent Socrates' view, *Memorabilia* is philosophically the most authoritative.

Βασιλείαν δὲ καὶ τυραννίδα ἀρχὰς μὲν ἀμφοτέρας ἡγεῖτο εἶναι, διαφέρειν δὲ ἀλλήλων ἐνόμιζε. τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἐκόντων τε τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ κατὰ νόμους τῶν πόλεων ἀρχὴν βασιλείαν ἡγεῖτο, τὴν δὲ ἀκόντων τε καὶ μὴ κατὰ νόμους, ἀλλ' ὅπως ὁ ἄρχων βούλοιο, τυραννίδα. καὶ ὅπου μὲν ἐκ τῶν τὰ νόμιμα ἐπιτελούντων αἱ ἀρχαὶ καθίστανται, ταύτην μὲν τὴν πολιτείαν ἀριστοκρατίαν ἐνόμιζεν εἶναι, ὅπου δ' ἐκ τιμημάτων, πλουτοκρατίαν, ὅπου δ' ἐκ πάντων, δημοκρατίαν.

[Socrates] considered both kingship and tyranny types of government, but he thought they differed from one another. He considered rule over willing people in accordance with the cities' customs to be kingship, but he considered rule over unwilling people which does not follow customs but rather the ruler's will to be tyranny. And wherever offices are appointed from people who fulfill legal requirements, he considered this constitution to be aristocracy, and wherever they are appointed according to income requirements, a plutocracy, and wherever they are appointed from everybody, a democracy. (Xen. *Mem.* 4.6.12)

Although relevant context may seem lacking—what prompts Socrates to talk about constitutions?—the passage has a slight feel of non sequitur even in context, which concerns Socrates' definitions of moral concepts such as courage (*ἀνδρεία*) and justice (*δικαιοσύνη*). But as the discussion of constitutional definitions apparently fit next to the analysis of moral-philosophical fundamentals, Xenophon must have considered constitutional thinking equally fundamental. Xenophon's Socrates accepts the same quinquartite division as did Plato's Stranger—a thinly veiled Socrates—in the *Statesman*, the difference being that Xenophon does not use umbrella terms: he only implies that tyranny and kingship are variants of the same constitution. Aristocracy and plutocracy are supposedly good and bad versions of oligarchy—which Xenophon does not mention—but they are not contrasted as explicitly as tyranny and kingship, nor does Xenophon mention fewness as a common criterion. The oligarchic constitutions are mentioned alongside democracy almost as if these three governments form a group excluding monarchy. There is no sign that any of the three types of government called *-κρατία* are inherently good or bad. Xenophon does not mention any constitution suffixed with *-αρχία*,

perhaps because -αρχία terms form hypernyms (i.e. μοναρχία includes βασιλεία and τυραννίς, ὀλιγαρχία includes ἀριστοκρατία and [here] πλουτοκρατία), perhaps because ὀλιγαρχία was a dirty word.³⁷ This is yet another indication that there is no substantial difference between the -αρχίαι and the -κρατία.

The *Cyropaedia* begins with an implied typology:

Ἐννοιά ποθ' ἡμῖν ἐγένετο ὅσαι κατελύθησαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἄλλως πως βουλομένων πολιτεύεσθαι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν δημοκρατία, ὅσαι τ' αὖ μοναρχίαι, ὅσαι τε ὀλιγαρχίαι ἀνήρηνται ἤδη ὑπὸ δῆμων, καὶ ὅσαι τυραννεῖν ἐπιχειρήσαντες οἱ μὲν αὐτῶν καὶ ταχὺ πάμπαν κατελύθησαν, οἱ δὲ κἂν ὅποσονοῦν χρόνον ἄρχοντες διαγέωνται, θαυμάζονται ὡς σοφοὶ τε καὶ εὐτυχεῖς ἄνδρες γεγενημένοι.

Once we came to ponder how many democracies had been dissolved by those who wanted to be citizens in something other than a democracy, and then how many monarchies and oligarchies had up until now been destroyed by the people, and how some of those who tried to rule as tyrants were deposed very quickly, while some, if they remained in power for an ever so short time, are admired as though they are wise and lucky men. (Xen. *Cyr.* 1.1.1)

Having concluded that ruling animals is easier than ruling men, someone comes to think of Cyrus the Great, who proved that even great numbers of men can be ruled. The passage settles for a tripartite division: democracies, monarchies, and oligarchies; the syntactic coordination (ὅσαι δημοκρατίαι...ὅσαι μοναρχίαι...ὅσαι ὀλιγαρχίαι...ὅσοι τυραννεῖν ἐπιχειρήσαντες) suggests that tyranny forms a category distinct from monarchy.³⁸ The implication is possibly that tyranny is an “anti-constitution.”³⁹ *Agésilas* 1.4 reinforces the idea that tyranny forms a distinct category:

τοιγαροῦν ἄλλη μὲν οὐδεμία ἀρχὴ φανερά ἐστι διαγεγενημένη ἀδιάσπαστος οὔτε δημοκρατία οὔτε ὀλιγαρχία οὔτε τυραννίς οὔτε βασιλεία·

Therefore, it is clear that no other type of rule has been altogether void of strife, neither democracy nor oligarchy nor tyranny nor kingship. (Xen. *Ages.* 1.4)⁴⁰

³⁷ This is the position of Sealey, who argues that ὀλιγαρχία had become a taboo word that could not be associated with Socrates, “a very respectable person.” See “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 294. As to monarchies being *sui generis*, recall Ehrenberg’s argument that monarchies were not proper *poleis* in *Greek State*, 44.

³⁸ Bizos says that Xenophon names “les quatre sortes de gouvernement qu’Athènes elle-même a connues et renversés.” *Cyropédie*, ed. and trans. Marcel Bizos, vol. 1 (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1972), 1 n. 1.

³⁹ The opinion that tyranny is not a constitution is expressed by Plato (e.g. *Resp.* 565d). Cf. Isocrates’ distinction between ἄρχειν and τυραννεῖν in Isoc. *De pace* 91.

⁴⁰ Curiously, Xenophon says “kingship” and not “monarchy,” as he did in the *Cyropaedia*.

Isocrates

Isocrates explicitly mentions a typology in *Panathenaicus* 132 (c. 340).

Ἐγὼ δὲ φημὶ τὰς μὲν ιδέας τῶν πολιτειῶν τρεῖς εἶναι μόνας, ὀλιγαρχίαν, δημοκρατίαν, μοναρχίαν, τῶν δ' ἐν ταύταις οἰκούντων ὅσοι μὲν εἰώθησιν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καθιστάναι καὶ τὰς ἄλλας πράξεις τοὺς ἱκανωτάτους τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ τοὺς μέλλοντας ἄριστα καὶ δικαιοτάτα τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπιστατήσιν, τοῦτους μὲν ἐν ἀπάσαις ταῖς πολιτείαις καλῶς οἰκήσιν καὶ πρὸς σφᾶς αὐτοὺς καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους·

And I for my part claim that there are only three types of constitutions: oligarchy, democracy, and monarchy. Insofar as those in charge are in the habit of giving office and other duties to the most skillful citizens, bound to supervise public affairs in the best and most righteous manner, these will in every kind of constitution govern well with regards to both themselves and others. (Isoc. *Panath.* 132)

There are only three forms of government: monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy; these can be run well or ill.⁴¹ The argument attacks those who think aristocracy is a separate government: any well-administered government deserves the name aristocracy. Unlike Xenophon, Isocrates does not include tyranny in his typology. In Isocrates' *On the Peace* 91, tyranny is treated as qualitatively different: “those who came after them did not aspire to rule [ἄρχειν] but to be tyrants [τυραννεῖν].”⁴² At other times, Isocrates uses the term *πολιτεία* for non-monarchical governments, perhaps referring only to democracies (Isoc. *Paneg.* 125; Ep. 6 11).

Aristotle

Aristotle's most well-known formulation of his political typology is found in *Politics* 1279a–b, but the same typology occurs in *Eudemian Ethics* 1241b. Aristotle distinguishes according to number—that is, between monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy, which are used as umbrella terms for any “rule of one,” “rule of few,” and “rule of many”—and (as Plato did in *Republic*) between rule in the public interest (πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν σύμφερον, *Pol.* 1279a) and self-interested rule; monarchy thus comprises kingship and tyranny, oligarchy comprises aristocracy and oligarchy, democracy comprises citizen-state (*πολιτεία*) and democracy.⁴³ At times, Aristotle conceptualizes the distinctions

⁴¹ Mathieu and Brémond comment somewhat ambiguously: “Isocrate adopte ici la division traditionnelle (cf. Pindare, *Pythiques* II, 87; Hérodote, IV [sic], 80, 83) sans tenir compte des subdivisions qu'avant lui Platon a introduites.” *Discours*, ed. and trans. Georges Mathieu and Émile Brémond, vol. 4 (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1962), 121 n. 1. Isocrates is clearly familiar with the idea that there are good and bad forms of every type of regime, but he does not consider them different types of government.

⁴² But in *On the Peace* 115, Isocrates uses *τυραννίς* and *μοναρχία* as synonyms.

⁴³ Aristotle has been criticized for using the *general* name for constitutions, *πολιτεία*, to refer to *one specific* type of constitution by, e.g., Hansen, *Athenian Democracy*, 66; and Ober, “Original Meaning of ‘Democracy,’” 5. The criticism is misguided: in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

differently; in *Rhetoric* 1365b–1366a, he names four basic constitutions: monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, and aristocracy, but he concedes that monarchy exists in two varieties: kingship and tyranny. A similar fourfold division is offered in *Politics* 1299b.

Conclusions

As can be seen, the names for the constitutions are with few exceptions accepted as given. There is little discussion about the logic behind them nor any obvious explanation for the two apparently synonymous suffixes *-αρχία* and *-κρατία*, the exception being Thrasymachus' insinuation that *kratos* is somehow more fundamental, and possibly more “oppressive,” than *archē*. Moreover, when hypothetical new constitutions are named, the choice of suffix appears motivated by analogy.

Much like the constitutional terms are bad witnesses to their own prehistory, the typological division cannot be explained with reference to the constitutional typologies themselves. This is because the typologies were not theoretical devices for naming constitutions; they were retroactively created to *structure the constitutional terms*.⁴⁴ This means that the constitutional terms cannot be explained with reference to the typology, and any reason for the division between terms in *-αρχία* and *-κρατία* has to be sought elsewhere.

Let us now pursue one of the points addressed in previous research (and possibly implied by the argument of Thrasymachus): the question of the different connotations of *κράτος* and *ἀρχή*. The answer to this question will have consequences for how to understand the connotations of the suffixes *-αρχία* and *-κρατία*.

Connotation of ἀρχή and κράτος

We shall presently turn to Albert Debrunner's article “*Δημοκρατία*,” which poses an argument about the relationship between *δημοκρατία* and the other constitutional terms that has been highly influential. But before doing so, we must address the connotations of *ἀρχή* and *κράτος*, which have consequences for our criticism of Debrunner.

1160a, Aristotle says that the constitution ought to be called timocratic “yet most people call it *politeia*” (*πολιτείαν δ' αὐτὴν εἰώθασιν οἱ πλεῖστοι καλεῖν*), which indicates that this use of *πολιτεία* was common; as we have noted, Isocrates and Plato use *πολιτεία* in this sense as well. (Simonton's critique that Aristotle was “hyper-analytical” and tended to “complicate conventional discourse” is therefore exaggerated. See *Classical Greek Oligarchy*, 35.)

⁴⁴ Asheri: “[*δημοκρατία*] was not coined among theoreticians of what we would today call ‘Political Science,’ where the three regimes would obtain a term of one type and one and the same ending (*-αρχία* or *-κρατία*); it was created in living speech with no apriori patterns and no theory. Pattern and theory came later.” “Prehistory,” 7.

Benign *Archē*, Harsh *Kratos*?

Scholars often argue that *archē* is more legitimate or more “friendly” toward its subjects, whereas *kratos* is more oppressive; I will henceforth refer to these qualities as “benign” and “harsh.” The claim that *kratos* is harsher and *archē* more benign has merit, but it should be noted that this mostly happens when the words are contrasted, whereas they can have other connotations when appearing in isolation. Even so, the words are sometimes seemingly used as synonyms in what appears to be variation:

ὑπ’ ἀρχᾶι δ’ οὐτινος θοάζων / τὸ μείον κρείσσόνων κρατύνει· οὐτινος ἄνωθεν
ἡμένου σέβει κράτη, / πάρεστι δ’ ἔργον ὡς ἔπος / σπεύσαι. τί τῶνδ’ οὐ Διὸς
φέρει φρήν;¹

[Zeus] does not sit enthroned under someone’s *archē*, ?ruling the smaller lot of greater beings.? He reveres the *kratē* of no-one sitting above him. Action is as ready as words to get going. What thing here is not brought forth by Zeus’ will? (Aesch. *Supp.* 595–599)

νῦν δ’ ἐκ θεῶν του κάξ ἀλειτηροῦ φρενὸς / εἰσηλθε τοῖν τρισαθλίον ἔρις κακή,
/ ἀρχῆς λαβέσθαι καὶ κράτους τυραννικοῦ.

But now some god with a wicked mind puts the thrice-unfortunate in a horrible feud about grasping the *archē* and tyrannical *kratos*. (Soph. *OC* 371–373)

In passages where ἀρχή and κράτος are explicitly contrasted, the former is more oriented toward a cooperative in-group, the latter toward a hostile out-group. In military contexts, for example, ἄρχω means “lead,” κρατέω means “conquer”; the view of ἄρχω as a benign counterpart to κρατέω is in part because ἄρχω can mean both “guide” and “rule” (see “The Polysemy of Ἀρχή” below). In *Helen* 16, Isocrates uses ἄρχω and κρατέω to differentiate between voluntariness and submission. He says that Zeus gave Heracles bodily strength (ἰσχύς) which can *kratein* (κρατεῖν δύναται) others with force (βίᾳ), but to Helen Zeus gave beauty, which “naturally rules” (ἄρχειν πέφυκεν) even strength itself.²

Schmidt understands ἄρχειν as different from κρατεῖν in its derivation from law or inheritance, which approaches a difference in legitimacy and may have

¹ M, the oldest and best codex featuring all of Aeschylus’ tragedies, has κάτω, which Voss emended to κράτη. Martin West accepts this emendation, and assumes that κάτω has come from the scholia. See *Aeschyli Tragoediae: Cum incerti poetae Prometheo*, ed. Martin L. West (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1990), 158. Denys L. Page retains κάτω but marks it with a crux. See *Aeschyli septem quae supersunt tragoedias*, ed. Denys L. Page (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/Cite?0085:014:24292> ad loc.

² The attribution of “naturalness” to *archē* is also reversed in *Republic* 444d, where κρατεῖν is associated with the natural (κατὰ φύσιν), ἄρχειν with the unnatural (παρὰ φύσιν). This is probably an allusion to the (viz. unnatural) democratic practice of rotating offices, ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι. The passage will be analyzed below (see “Connotations Reversed”).

consequences for the connotation.³ Schmidt cites as proof Sophocles' *Ajax* 1067–1068: Menelaus tells Teucer that he was unable to *kratein* Ajax “while Ajax lived” (βλέποντος, literally “seeing”, 1067), but now that Ajax is dead, Menelaus will *archo* (ἄρξομεν, 1068) him, i.e. dispose of his corpse as he pleases. Schmidt sees in ἄρξομεν Menelaus' finally establishing his legal rule (*rechtliche Herrschaft*) after a long and vain fight to dominate (κρατεῖν) the stubborn Ajax.⁴ But in this specific instance, Schmidt neglects the adverbial modifying ἄρξομεν, namely χερσὶν παρευθύνοντες (“guiding with the hands,” 1069). The expression usually refers to showing the way to blind people and children; a similar phrase is used earlier by Teucer about Ajax's baby son Eurysaces (“bring him here, whoever of you servants happen to guide him with your hands”; δεῦρο προσπόλων / ἄγ' αὐτὸν ὅσπερ χερσὶν εὐθύνων κυρεῖς, *Soph. Aj.* 541–542).⁵ Ajax must be guided because he “cannot see,” which means that he is dead. In other words, what Schmidt views as legitimacy is really a matter of physical guiding.⁶

Although ἀρχή is more benign when contrasted with κράτος, ἀρχή used independently can refer to domination and compulsion. In the fragmentary Euripidean drama *Peirithous*, Heracles says that he has gone to Hades “because of compulsion” (πρὸς βίαν), having submitted (ὑπέικων) to the *archai* of Eurystheus (*Eur. frag.* 15b 25–26 Page). When ἀρχή is applied to foreign politics, it is often presented as a kind of tyranny, especially in the context of the Athenian *archē*: in a discussion about how to deal with Mytilene, which has revolted from Athens, Cleon the demagogue admonishes the Athenian assembly for failing to see that they run their empire like a tyranny (οὐ σκοποῦντες ὅτι τυραννίδα ἔχετε τὴν ἀρχήν, *Thuc.* 3.37).⁷ Cleon refers to the Athenians' exercising *archē* over unwilling subjects (ἄκοντας ἀρχομένους). Any exercise of *archē* over foreign *poleis* negates the freedom of these states:

χαλεπὸν γὰρ ἦν τὸν Ἀθηναίων δῆμον ἐπ' ἔτει ἑκατοστῶ μάλιστα ἐπειδὴ οἱ τύραννοι κατελύθησαν ἐλευθερίας παῦσαι, καὶ οὐ μόνον μὴ ὑπήκοον ὄντα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑπὲρ ἥμισυ τοῦ χρόνου τούτου αὐτὸν ἄλλων ἄρχειν εἰωθότα.

³ Schmidt: “Im Gegensatz zu κρατεῖν bedeutet ἄρχειν die durch die Gesetze oder das Herkommen bestimmte Herrschaft über andere, oder besser die ordnungsmäßige Leitung anderer, die Stellung besonders der gewählten [sic] Obrigkeiten.” *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, 3:672.

⁴ Schmidt, 3:672.

⁵ Cf. Euripides: “Iolaos: ‘You have spoken well. Now have my armor ready, and put my spear in my hand, and lift up my left arm, and guide [εὐθύνων] my steps.’ / Servant: ‘Do I really have to guide a warrior as if he were a child?’” (*Eur. Heracl.* 725–728).

⁶ Marrucci argues, with reference to this passage (among others), that ἄρχω refers to the future and the hypothetical, whereas κρατέω refers to the present and the certain. See *Kratos e Arche*, 170, esp. n. 496. Her argument resembles what is argued in “*Kratos Underpins Archē*” below, but in this specific case she is mistaken.

⁷ Cf. Thucydides: “to a man who is tyrant or to a polis with an *archē* nothing is irrational if it is gainful, nor is anyone family unless trusted” (*Thuc.* 6.85). See also Pericles' remark in *Thuc.* 2.63.

For it was difficult to deprive the Athenian people of its freedom almost a hundred years after the tyrants had been deposed, not only because they were not subjugated, but also since they for more than half of this time had become used to dominating others. (Thuc. 8.68)

The deprivation of freedom mentioned is the subversion of democracy to institute an oligarchy, which is likened to how Athens deprived subjects of the Athenian *archē* of their freedom.⁸ When ἀρχή is opposed to other political concepts—e.g. with the phrase ἀρχή ἀντί τινος—it is not κράτος but servitude (δουλεία, e.g. Andoc. 2 27.4; Lys. 12 94.7; Thuc. 5.69) or freedom (ἐλευθερία, e.g. Thuc. 8.43) that forms the opposite.⁹ The dichotomy, of course, depends on whose perspective is privileged: someone living under another’s rule will wish to exchange it for freedom (ἐλευθερία ἀντί ἀρχῆς), whereas someone ruling is afraid to lose their dominion and fall into servitude (ἀρχή ἀντί δουλείας). In Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* 2.1.11, Socrates argues that freedom forms the golden middle between rule (ἀρχή) and slavery (δουλεία). Arguably, there is a similar idea behind Otanes’ actions after the Constitutional Debate (Hdt. 3.83): having lost out with his pro-democratic position, he wishes to stay out of politics without either ruling or being ruled (οὔτε γὰρ ἄρχειν οὔτε ἄρχεσθαι ἐθέλω). Otanes’ family is therefore the only Persian house that is still free (ἐλευθερή).¹⁰ The latter shows that ἀρχή as domination is not restricted to foreign politics.

The obverse of ἀρχή sometimes having negative connotations is that κράτος sometimes has positive connotations. Although some scholars note that κράτος can be negative, it is not always the case.¹¹ Breuil’s analysis of Homeric κράτος/κάρτος showed that κράτος could occur in both laudatory and pejorative contexts.¹² Vittorio Citti has pointed out that, in tragedy, even a word like βία could have positive connotations if coupled to κράτος.¹³ It should be clear from the frequent attributions of κράτος to Zeus (e.g. Thgn. 376), Solon’s attributing κράτος to himself (frag. 36.15 West), and the use of ἀριστοκρατία as a euphemism for ὀλιγαρχία that κράτος is not pejorative in itself. If there was a pejorative connotation to δημοκρατία, as some argue, it

⁸ As *archē* in foreign politics is obviously a negative thing, I disagree with Marrucci’s claim that the Athenian *archē* “hides” its *kratos* behind its self-designation, found in *Kratos e Arche*, 261. Her claim is also contradicted by the occurrence of the phrase ὡν Ἀθηναῖοι κρατοῦσι “[*poleis*] which the Athenians rule” in treaties signed by Athenians. For more on these treaties, see Harold B. Mattingly, “The Language of Athenian Imperialism,” *Epigraphica* XXXVI (1974): 33–56.

⁹ Marrucci notes that ἄρχω is often paired with verbs such as πείθομαι “obey,” ἔπομαι “follow,” etc., in the epics, whereas in the drama it is often contrasted with δουλεύω “be in servitude.” *Kratos e Arche*, 170–172.

¹⁰ Stathis Gourgouris calls Otanes’ position “anarchist.” “Archē,” in *Political Concepts: A Critical Lexicon*, ed. J.M. Bernstein, Adi Ophir, and Ann Laura Stoler (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), 20.

¹¹ “Some scholars”: e.g. Sealey, “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 282.

¹² Breuil, “Κράτος et sa famille,” 22.

¹³ Citti also describes κράτος as “il legitimo potere.” “Κράτος e βία,” 318f.

may well rather be due to the complex connotations of δῆμος and the opinion that the *dēmos* was not worthy of having *kratos*.¹⁴

Connotations Reversed

It should be noted that there are exceptions to the rule that when ἀρχή and κράτος are contrasted, ἀρχή has more positive connotations. But these exceptions are mostly due to external pressures, such as the author's wish to allude to a cognate word which in turn has positive connotations, or a term's association with a disliked political practice.¹⁵ Although δημοκρατία is a formation based on κράτος, the striking feature of democracy to authors writing in the fifth century was, as we have mentioned, paradoxically how the *archai* were treated (cf. "First Attestations and Original Reference"). To reiterate, in the Constitutional Debate (Hdt. 3.80), Otanes mentions the election by lot (πάλω μὲν ἀρχὰς ἄρχει) and the accountability of the *archē* (ὀπεύθυνον δὲ ἀρχῆν) before mentioning public deliberation (viz. in the assembly); and the Old Oligarch, after saying how the *dēmos* gives the city power and glory through their service in the navy, opines that it is only right "for everyone to be eligible for offices elected, whether by lot or a vote of hands, and that it be allowed for any willing citizen to speak" (πᾶσι τῶν ἀρχῶν μετεῖναι ἔν τε τῷ κλήρω καὶ ἐν τῇ χειροτονίᾳ, καὶ λέγειν ἐξεῖναι τῷ βουλομένῳ τῶν πολιτῶν, [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.2). The special democratic treatment of the magistracy is summed up in the phrase ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι, "to rule and be ruled," which refers to the democratic practice of rotating the magistrates: each citizen is at times ruler,

¹⁴ Caire proposes that δημοκρατία had positive connotations when contrasted with ὀλιγαρχία, negative when contrasted with ἀριστοκρατία, because of the double connotation of δῆμος. See "Entre démocratie et oligarchie," para. 4. Sealey, similarly, argues that δημοκρατία had complex "implications of approval and disapproval" and "some pejorative force." See "Origins of 'Demokratia,'" 293.

¹⁵ Possible wordplay with ἀρχή can be found in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. Lysistrata tells a member of the *proboule* how the women ruling Athens will solve the city's political problems: "First, just as if we were washing sheep-dung from wool in the bath, we ought to put the city on a bench and flog out the knaves and pick out the caltrops, and those who have gathered together and tied themselves in knots around the offices [ἀρχαῖσι] we shall comb out and pluck their heads..." (Ar. *Lys.* 574–578). This is part of an extended metaphor utilizing wool, the endpoint being that they will weave for the people a harmonious cloak of state. In order to achieve this, the sheep-dung, which tends to gather around the anus of the sheep, has to be removed. One of the meanings attested for the similar noun ἀρχός is "anus, rectum." S.J. Radt interprets this passage (with some hesitation) as a reference to ticks, which "abound in sheep's wool" ("in einem Schafspelz reichlich vorhandenen") and are neutralized by plucking their heads, which would explain ἀποτίλαι τὰς κεφαλὰς. See "Zu Aristophanes' 'Lysistrata,'" *Mnemosyne*, 4, 27, no. 1 (1974): 10. Ticks can, however, also be found around the anus; it depends on the species. See "Technical Bulletin No. 41. Control of External Parasites of Sheep and Goats" (Ethiopia Sheep and Goat Productivity Improvement Program, September 2010), 2, <https://kingsagriseeds.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Technical-Bulletin-No.41.pdf>.

at times subject.¹⁶ If democracy is not intended, allusions to this phrase must be avoided:

εἷς γὰρ ἀνὴρ συνεπέσθη μόνος τῶν πρότερον ἐφ’ ἡγεμονία γενομένων ταύτην ἀποδοῦναι τὴν τάξιν, ἥδη δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἕθος καθέστηκε μηδὲ βούλεσθαι τὸ ἴσον, ἀλλ’ ἢ ἄρχειν ζητεῖν ἢ κρατουμένους ὑπομένειν.

For only one man in those states that had previously been hegemonic was determined to put this order [sc. a mix of democracy and oligarchy] into place, and now the people in the *poleis* are not used to seeking equality, but to seeking to rule or endure domination. (Arist. *Pol.* 1296a–b)

Aristotle uses κρατουμένους as the passive to ἄρχειν, avoiding any phrase resembling ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι.¹⁷ In *Republic* 444d, with its antidemocratic sentiment, Plato uses ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι in a discourse about naturalness to imply that democracy is unnatural; κράτος, in turn, represents positive naturalness apparently by default.¹⁸ To explain justice, Socrates says that justice and injustice is for the soul what health and disease is to the body.

Ἔστι δὲ τὸ μὲν ὑγίαιαν ποιεῖν τὰ ἐν τῷ σώματι κατὰ φύσιν καθιστάναι κρατεῖν τε καὶ κρατεῖσθαι ὑπ’ ἀλλήλων, τὸ δὲ νόσον παρὰ φύσιν ἄρχειν τε καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ἄλλο ὑπ’ ἄλλου. / Ἔστι γάρ. / Οὐκοῦν αἶ, ἔφην, τὸ δικαιοσύνην ἐμποιεῖν τὰ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ κατὰ φύσιν καθιστάναι κρατεῖν τε καὶ κρατεῖσθαι ὑπ’ ἀλλήλων, τὸ δὲ ἀδικίαν παρὰ φύσιν ἄρχειν τε καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ἄλλο ὑπ’ ἄλλου;

But to heal is to arrange the things in the body as dominating one another and being dominated by one another according to nature, whereas disease means ruling and being ruled, the one after the other, contrary to nature. / True / Is making justice then, he said, arranging the things in the souls so that they dominate and are dominated by one another according to nature, whereas making injustice means that they rule and are ruled, the one after the other, against nature? (Pl. *Resp.* 444d)

The passage consists of two syntactically similar but semantically dissimilar phrases. Health is compared to justice, disease to injustice.

¹⁶ Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1277a26. See also 1332b, where Aristotle illustrates equality (which is “the same for similar people,” τὸ τε γὰρ ἴσον ταυτὸν τοῖς ὁμοίοις) with the phrase ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι. Cf. Hans Beck: “Both *archein* and *archesthai* thus appear to be civic virtues, a specification which endorses the idea that citizens fulfilled a double role in politics: they were members of a body politic that at once governed and was governed.” “Introduction: A Prolegomenon to Ancient Greek Government,” in *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government*, ed. Hans Beck (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 3.

¹⁷ In Herodotus 3.83, Otanes, who has just proposed ἰσονομία in the Constitutional Debate, accepts defeat on the condition that he can live in peace, as he wishes neither to rule nor be ruled (οὔτε γὰρ ἄρχειν οὔτε ἄρχεσθαι ἐθέλω). It appears reasonable to assume that if he had prevailed in his advocacy of democracy, he would have wanted both. Cf. Gourgouris, “Archē,” 20.

¹⁸ Contrast Isocrates’ *Helen* 16 above, where strength can conquer “with *kratos*,” whereas beauty “naturally rules” (πέφυκε ἄρχειν).

τὸ μὲν ὑγίειαν ποιεῖν / τὸ δικαιοσύνην
ἐμποιεῖν (“heal” / “create justice”)

τὸ δὲ νόσον (ποιεῖν) / τὸ δὲ ἀδικίαν
(ἐμποιεῖν) (“make sick” / “create injustice”)

κατὰ φύσιν (“according to nature”)

παρὰ φύσιν (“against nature”)

κρατεῖν τε καὶ κρατεῖσθαι (“dominate
and be dominated”)

ἄρχειν τε καὶ ἄρχεσθαι (“rule and be
ruled”)

ὑπ’ ἀλλήλων (“by each other”)

ἄλλο ὑπ’ ἄλλου (“the one after the
other”)

The medical theory is Hippocratic: good health is due to proper mixture of the bodily fluids. The word for mixing, κρᾶσις, resembles κρατεῖν, which contributes to the positive connotation of the latter.¹⁹ Ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι, the democratic character of which is further emphasized by ἄλλο ὑπ’ ἄλλου (“the one after the other”), is construed as against nature.

In *Laws* 690b, Plato expresses the idea that it is natural (κατὰ φύσιν) that the *kreitton* (κρείττονα, “better,” literally “having more *kratos*”) rule (ἄρχειν) the *hetton* (ἥττονα, the opposite of *kreitton*). The rotation of magistrates, however, sometimes makes the worse rule the better, which for that reason is unnatural. Consequently, the proper mixture of bodily fluids, to which κρατεῖν/κράτος alludes, produces health, but the unnatural “rotating of fluids”—so that the wrong fluid at times dominates—produces disease.²⁰

The quoted passage can be compared with *Republic* 431c–d, where Socrates supports a political regime in which the “desires of the multitude” (τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τὰς ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς τε) are “held in check” (κρατουμένας) “by the desires and wisdom in the fewer and more able” (ὑπό τε τῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν καὶ τῆς φρονήσεως τῆς ἐν τοῖς ἐλάττοσί τε καὶ ἐπικειστέροις).²¹ Note that κράτος

¹⁹ A possible similar piece of wordplay is found in Thucydides: “Their speech was a mixture [ἐκράθη] between Chalcidean and Doric, but as to customs, the Chalcidean ones prevailed [ἐκράτησεν]” (Thuc. 6.5). See Tudor Gardiner, *Terms for Power in Thucydides* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, diss., 1968), 95.

²⁰ The medical metaphor employed by Plato has different political implication than Alcmaeon’s medical metaphor, which proposed that “equality” (ἰσονομία) of the bodily fluids produces health and monarchy among them disease. For Alcmaeon and politics, see Ehrenberg, “Origins of Democracy,” 535; and Ostwald, *Nomos*, 99–106.

²¹ Cf. Georgios Tsagdis: “In turn, desire learns to discipline itself, accepting its position and measure in the structure of the city and soul (431b–d). The ruler and the ruled thereby harmonize the very structure of rule, which by nature differentiates their respective positions. In accordance with (*kata*) nature then (444d), *logos* is crowned king (*basileus*).” “From the Soul: Theriopolitics in the Republic,” *Philosophy Today* 60, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 20, <https://doi.org/DOI:10.5840/philtoday201611198>.

is still seen as oppression, but a good type of oppression.²² Κράτος also receives positive connotations if associated, as in Plato’s *Phaedrus* 237e–238a, with ἐγκράτεια, “self-control.”²³ The passage discusses the two principles which “govern and guide” (ἄρχοντε καὶ ἄγοντε) men: desire (ἐπιθυμία) and informed opinion (δόξα). Socrates says the following:

δόξης μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄριστον λόγῳ ἀγούσης καὶ κρατούσης τῷ κράτει σωφροσύνη ὄνομα· ἐπιθυμίας δὲ ἀλόγως ἐλκούσης ἐπὶ ἡδονὰς καὶ ἀρξάσης ἐν ἡμῖν τῇ ἀρχῇ ὕβρις ἐπωνομάσθη.

So when opinion uses reason to lead the way to what is best, and has *kratos*, its *kratos* is called temperance. But when desire drags us without reason toward pleasures and rules in us, its rule is called hubris. (Pl. *Phdr.* 237e–238a)

The passage consists of two phrases. They have symmetric structures but opposite semantics. The table below shows their correspondence:

δόξης (“opinion”)	ἐπιθυμίας (“desire”)
ἐπὶ τὸ ἄριστον (“toward the best”)	ἐπὶ ἡδονὰς (“toward pleasures”)
λόγῳ (“with reason”)	ἀλόγως (“irrationally”)
ἀγούσης (“guiding”)	ἐλκούσης (“dragging”)
κράτουσης (“having <i>kratos</i> ”)	ἀρξάσης (“ruling”)
τῷ κράτει (“ <i>kratos</i> ”)	τῇ ἀρχῇ (“rule”)
σωφροσύνη (“temperance”)	ὕβρις (“insolence, hubris”)

The left-side column contains positive words, the right-side negative words. Κράτος is in the column the left because the connection to ἐγκράτεια gives κράτος a positive connotation. Ἀρχή forms a negative contrast, seemingly by default.

Conclusions

Since the connotation and content of κράτος and ἀρχή vary depending on whether these words are used independently of or in contrast with one another, one must consider the historical relationship between the formations of the

²² For a philosophical analysis of the passage, see Carmelo Muscato, “Δύναμις, ἀρχή, κράτος: Il problema del potere in Platone,” *Itinerari: Seconda serie Quadrimestrale dell’Università di Chieti-Pescara*, no. 1/2 (2005): 15–33.

²³ See Muscato; and Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 279f.

constitutional terms. If δημοκρατία was formed on the template of μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία with the suffix changed, this could be a sign that -κρατία was pejorative, substituting -αρχία for -κρατία to produce the same contrast as between ἀρχή and κράτος.

There are two possible orders in which the constitutional terms may have developed. The first hypothesis can be called the “traditional” hypothesis:

Μοναρχία > ὀλιγαρχία > δημοκρατία

This order assumes that the terms were invented in the same order as the political constitutions, the traditional view of Greek politics being that hereditary kingship (monarchy) gave way to aristocratic rule (oligarchy), which was supplanted by democracy.²⁴ In this hypothesis, ὀλιγαρχία is formed on the template of μοναρχία, and these two establish a pattern, but when δημοκρατία is formed, it breaks the pattern, which gives the impression that there is great significance in the substitution of -αρχία with -κρατία: if there are connotative contrasts between ἀρχή and κράτος, the different suffix in the most recent member of the typological family would probably underscore this connotative contrast. But the following development is more probable:²⁵

Μοναρχία > δημοκρατία > ὀλιγαρχία

This assumes that ὀλιγαρχία originally referred to a reaction against democracy, a common hypothesis (as we have noted above) in recent scholarship on oligarchy.²⁶ If this hypothesis is correct, δημοκρατία is less of a pattern-breaker; the most pertinent question to ask is not why δημοκρατία has a different suffix than μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία, nor really why δημοκρατία has a different suffix from μοναρχία (even though that question is still relevant; we will return to this question in the next paragraph), but rather why ὀλιγαρχία was coined on the template of μοναρχία rather than on δημοκρατία. This is the most pertinent question because the proposed order suggests that ὀλιγαρχία

²⁴ Cf. Apffel’s argument that e.g. δημοκρατία is missing from the Constitutional Debate because the -αρχία terms were older, quoted in Sealey, “Origins of ‘Demokratia,’” 272 n. 19. The assumption that constitutions progressed from one-man rule through few-man rule to many-man rule is simplistic but probably correct in essence, if it be kept in mind that few-man rule does not necessarily equate oligarchy. For the historical development, see Hignett, *Athenian Constitution*; and Ehrenberg, *Greek State*.

²⁵ E.g. Caire, *Penser l’oligarchie*, 34; and Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy*, 40. Will suspended judgement on whether δημοκρατία or ὀλιγαρχία was coined first. See *Le monde grec et l’orient*, 1:446. Ehrenberg argues that for all practical purposes we can think of ὀλιγαρχία and δημοκρατία as simultaneous, yet he entertains the possibility that ὀλιγαρχία was in use before the time of Cleisthenes. See “Origins of Democracy,” 534, 534 n. 45. This possibility is probably due to the influence of Debrunner, as seen in 523 n. 23.

²⁶ See the previous note. Meier observes that oligarchy, although responding to democracy, appears “zunächst im Bewußtsein der aufkommenden Demokratien keine große Rolle gespielt zu haben.” *Entstehung des Politischen*, 285.

which gives credence to hypothesis one above. If true, it would suggest that -κρατία was intended as pejorative.²⁹

Debrunner’s “Δημοκρατία”

Albert Debrunner’s article “Δημοκρατία” (1947) bears on the relative chronology of the constitutional terms. Debrunner argues that δημοκρατία is an artificial word patterned on ὀλιγαρχία, a likewise artificial word which is itself patterned on μοναρχία, this word being a “natural” formation. The expected outcome of this analogy would have been δημοαρχία, but this word could not be used for popular rule as it already referred to the office of δήμαρχος. Hence, -αρχία was exchanged for -κρατία, which at any rate was the more precise word, in Debrunner’s view: ἀρχή suggests subordinates, which do not exist in democracy. The argument thus proposes to establish the order in which the terms were coined, which also has implications for how to understand -κρατία: namely, as an approximation of -αρχία, yet with negative connotations.

Debrunner’s Argument

Debrunner argues as follows: we tend to translate δημοκρατία with *Volksherrschaft* “people’s rule,” without noticing that the translation is formally different: *Volksherrschaft* is a compound of *Volk* and *Herrschaft*, which are words in their own right; but δημοκρατία is a compound of δῆμος and the morpheme -κρατία, of which the latter exists only in compounds. Since other compound nouns ending in -ία usually derive from compound adjectives (φιλολογία comes from φιλόλογος, etc.) δημοκρατία implies *δημοκρατης—the form in -ης is expected when the root word is a sigma-stem—but this adjective does not exist.¹ Even if one could find a *δημοκρατης, Debrunner invokes terms such as ναυκρατής “ruling with ships” and ναυκρατία “rule with ships” to conclude that *δημοκρατης would have meant “having the power of the people” or “having the power *through* the people”; neither meaning matches δημοκρατία. This indicates that δημοκρατία is an artificial formation.

Δημοκρατία differs from words such as θαλασσοκρατία, ναυκρατία, and ιπποκρατία in three ways: (1) the first compound member is the subject, not

²⁹ Debrunner, “Δημοκρατία.” The article is quoted sympathetically in e.g. Ehrenberg, “Origins of Democracy”; Romilly, “Classement des constitutions”; Kinzl, “Δημοκρατία”; Meier, “Macht, Gewalt”; and Breuil, “De κράτος à δημοκρατίη.” Debrunner’s conclusion found its way into Chantraine’s etymological dictionary for Greek, s.v. δημοκρατία, whence they recently have reached Caire, “Entre démocratie et oligarchie.”

¹ As names should often not be understood in their literal senses, the attestation of the name *Damokrates/Demokrates*, noted in “First Attestations and Original Reference: Δημοκρατία” above, does not affect Debrunner’s argument.

object, of the second member: δημοκρατία is “where the *dēmos* has *kratos*” (viz. not “where someone has *kratos* vis-à-vis the *dēmos*”); (2) there is no baseword from which it is derived; (3) the parallel verb in -έω is attested only in the passive.² Ἀριστοκρατία, τιμοκρατία, and πλουτοκρατία are formally and (*mutatis mutandis*) semantically similar to δημοκρατία, but these formations are, according to Debrunner, calqued on δημοκρατία and cannot be invoked to explain it. Since δημοκρατία appears artificial, we must look for a natural template. Debrunner argues that other words for regime types are obvious candidates, especially the word for the regime supplanted by democracy: oligarchy. But ὀλιγαρχία, like δημοκρατία, has no baseword; there is no *ὀλίγαρχος from which to derive it. And as compounds such as τριήραρχος mean “commander of a trireme” etc., *ὀλίγαρχος would have meant “ruling over few people,” which does not match the meaning of ὀλιγαρχία.

In order to explain the artificiality of both δημοκρατία and ὀλιγαρχία, Debrunner turns to μοναρχία, which clearly has a baseword (μόναρχος, “sole ruler”), an active parallel verb (μοναρχέω), as is to be expected with these formations, and its first member is the subject or predicate of the latter (as is normal in compounds with μόνος; Debrunner submits μονογένης = ὅς μόνος γίγνεται as evidence). Therefore, μοναρχία fulfils the criteria for a “natural” formation.

Debrunner proposes that the subject status of ὀλιγ- and δημο- has been calqued on μον- formations, and concludes that ὀλιγαρχ-, having been formed on the template of μοναρχία, constitutes the link (*Zwischenglied*) between μοναρχ- and δημοκρατ-. Δημοκρατία was formed after due substitution of -αρχία for -κρατία, as δημαρχία would have referred to the office of *demarchos*; the pattern provided by ὀλιγαρχία explains the formation’s being δημοκρατία rather than δημοκράτεια < *δημοκρατεσια, which would have been the expected form if δημοκρατία were derived from *δημοκράτης.³

² Debrunner argues that δημοκρατέομαι is passive rather than medial. Whatever the argument’s relevance—which is unclear to me—his arguments do not convince. One argument is that δημοκρατέομαι occurs alongside τυραννεύεσθαι in Herodotus 4.137, which verb is “certainly passive.” This does not prove anything about δημοκρατέομαι. Another piece of evidence is the future passive δημοκρατηθήσεσθαι attested in Thucydides 8.75. Some important manuscripts has a future medium, but the passive is more common. The future passive is probably correct, but as it is well motivated by context and therefore not generalizable, Debrunner is mistaken to invoke it. The context is an oath sworn by soldiers of Samos, which has recently become a democracy; the soldiers swear to *dēmokratēthēsesthai*, i.e. to let the democracy rule them, which means the passive *reading* (“reading” emphasized, as future–passive *meanings* can be conveyed by future–medium forms) is better. In my opinion, a medial reading—the soldiers swearing that they rule *themselves* democratically—is nonsensical. For textual criticism of the passage, see *Thucydides Historiae*, ed. Karl Hude, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1901), 268.

³ Debrunner, “Δημοκρατία,” 20f.

Criticism

Although the article has contributed valuable insights, Debrunner is often misled by his formalist approach to morphology, viz. the tendency to think that morphemes have a grammatical meaning largely independent of the communicative situation. Although morphemes do have meanings, context informs their interpretation. Consider, for instance, adjectives with two endings, which are often accented differently depending on whether they have active or passive meanings: λιθοβόλος means “throwing stones,” λιθόβολος means “lapidated.” This only applies, however, when there is a risk for confusion; if there are extra-linguistic constraints on interpretation—put differently, if one interpretation is illogical—accent is freer: ἵππαρχος does not mean “commanded by horses”; it defies its accent and means “horse commander.” This is because horses are not typical subjects of ἄρχω.⁴ By the same token, certain nouns are unlikely subjects of κρατέω. For example, Debrunner noted that the first elements of ναυκρατία, θαλασσοκρατία, and ἵπποκρατία are objects (or instruments) of the latter verbal element. This is not because the first member of -κρατία compounds *must* be an instrument or object; this interpretation is due to the first elements in these specific formations being either inanimate (ναῦς, θάλασσα) or de facto instruments (ἵππος), meaning that they are unlikely subjects unless the context forces this interpretation (say, if we talk about a republic populated by sentient ships or oceanic gods or talking horses). The question of what would be the more “natural” interpretation of δῆμος in δημοκρατία remains: as subject or object to κρατέω. As we know what δημοκρατία meant, the question is almost redundant, but a linguistic argument for the “naturalness” of this formation is that all rule except popular self-rule is in a sense “over the people,” which means that adding δῆμος to κράτος to say “ruling people” would be redundant and contradict Paul Grice’s maxim of quantity; δημοκρατία as “rule of the people” is, however, congruent with the maxim.⁵ These points undermine Debrunner’s argument that the subject status of δῆμος is calqued on compounds with μονο- and the idea that the meaning of δημοκρατία is formally strange.⁶

But what about the form -κρατία, which, according to Debrunner, shows influence from ὀλιγαρχία? The assumption appears to be that the σ-stem in κράτος has to be visible in the compound to disprove the connection to

⁴ Cf. another exception to the rule, ἡνίοχος, “charioteer,” literally “rein-holder”; the accent is redundant in giving the compound an active sense because reins are always applied *by* humans *to* horses.

⁵ Paul Grice’s maxims of conversation are rules to which we supposedly adhere so as to facilitate understanding in conversation. The maxim of quantity says that we attribute significance to every piece of information we are conveyed: if you ask me what I have had for breakfast and I respond “today, bacon,” “today” suggests that I normally do not eat bacon. See H. Paul Grice, “Logic and Conversation,” in *Speech Acts*, ed. Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan, *Syntax and Semantics 3* (New York: Academic Press, 1975), 45f.

⁶ The subject status of μονο- in μονογένης does not hinge on the semantics of μόνος, as Debrunner supposes, but on γίγνομαι (whence -γένης) being an intransitive verb.

ὀλιγαρχία. But there is no need to assume that. Let us examine another neuter σ-stem, namely ζεύγος, “yoke.” The regular form would have been *ζύγος; the form ζεύγος is influenced by the cognate verb ζεύγνυμι. There are two compounds related to ζεύγος attested in Classical times: ἀρτιζυγία, “recent union,” and συζυγία, “yoking together.” συζυγία is arguably formed from the attested adjective σύζυγος; this adjective differs from ζεύγος in not having a sigmatic stem: the word is σύζυγος, not συζύγης (i.e. σύζυγεσ-). This indicates that the compound was formed from the zero-grade of the root and not from the noun. If compounds are formed from the zero-grade of the root, what is the zero-grade of the root κρατ-? It turns out that κρατ- is the zero-grade: the alpha is a *svarabhakti* vowel added to break up the cluster *κρτ-.⁷ This means that we can explain δημοκρατία as formed from δῆμος and the root of κράτος in the zero-grade. There is no need to explain the lack of sigma in the stem with reference to ὀλιγαρχία.

This invalidates the claim that δημοκρατία was calqued on ὀλιγαρχία, which weakens the hypothesis that the words were formed in the same order as the constitutions supposedly were, that is, μοναρχία > ὀλιγαρχία > δημοκρατία. This hypothesis can be attacked even more. It is, for instance, probably true (but perhaps a bit simplified) that single rule preceded few-man rule, which preceded popular rule.⁸ But it does not follow that the constitutional terms evolved parallel to the constitutions: if single rule is the only rule in existence, why—again invoking Grice’s maxim of quantity—add the redundant morpheme μόνο-? Meier has correctly argued that μοναρχία makes communicative sense mostly when the norm is something else.⁹ This claim can be substantiated with reference to Cos, the only *polis* in which μόναρχος was a de jure title. The *polis* was formed in 366/5 through synecism of two earlier *poleis*; the title μόναρχος suggests “the one archon” as opposed to the previous two (whatever their titles were).¹⁰ Several other passages from Herodotus show that the use of μόναρχος is often motivated by a wish to contrast with a more inclusive previous government. In 5.61, Herodotus mentions an inscription on a votive tripod in Thebes:

⁷ Greek allomorphy is often due to the Greek dialects’ treating zero-grade clusters differently: Att. κράτος, Ion. κάρτος, Aeol. κρέτος (unless this is an ε-grade form); cf. τράπεζα and Myc. *to-pe-za* (reflecting *τόρπεζα), both from *τρπεζα.

⁸ Although Simonton and Caire, as noted before, argue that oligarchy is not the same as old-style few-man rule. See Caire, *Penser l’oligarchie*, 34; and Simonton, *Classical Greek Oligarchy*, 40f.

⁹ Meier, “Die Entstehung des Begriffs ‘Demokratie,’” 547. Cf. Cobet, “König, Anführer,” 52.

¹⁰ For the synecism of Cos, see Gary Reger, “The Aegean,” in *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, ed. Mogens Herman Hansen and Thomas Heine Nielsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 753. For μόναρχος as a title, see Robert K. Sherk, “The Eponymous Officials of Greek Cities: V, The Register,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 96 (1993): 267–295. Robert Drews argues that μόναρχος was a pejorative and must have been established in Cos before it “became the pejorative that it was in Solon’s time.” See *Basileus: The Evidence for Kingship in Geometric Greece* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 119. As the synecism happened in 366/5—well after Solon—Drews is wrong.

Λαοδάμας τρίποδ' ἑαυτὸν ἑὺσκόπῳ Ἀπόλλωνι / μουναρχέων ἀνέθηκε τειν
περικαλλὲς ἄγαλμα.

Laodomas dedicated this very tripod to keen-sighted Apollo when he was monarch, a beautiful gift. (Hdt. 5.61)¹¹

The reason for μουναρχέων—unless forced by meter—is that Laodamas was the first sole ruler succeeding the joint rulers Eteocles and Polyneices, who died in a civil war “looking for bitter monarchy” (πικρὰς μοναρχίας / ἰδόντες, Aesch. *Sept.* 882–883).¹² In Herodotus 7.165, Theron, *mounarchos* of the Acragantinians, is mentioned. As the rule of Theron replaced a more inclusive government, it is likely that μούναρχος is not simply “sole ruler” but rather “the person who has monopolized power.”¹³

Conclusions

If μοναρχία was coined to contrast with more inclusive government, the same must apply to ὀλιγαρχία: if the norm is one-man rule, the rule of an aristocratic elite is not the rule of few but of many.¹⁴ This shows that the terms probably developed differently from the constitutions: first μοναρχία, then δημοκρατία, then ὀλιγαρχία. This diminishes the rationale for supposing that δημοκρατία is a substitute for δημαρχία; as ancient Greek is no stranger to polysemy—we have already noted the “confusing” polysemy of πολιτεία and will soon become acquainted with the confusing polysemy of ἀρχή—the argument that δημοκρατία could not have been δημαρχία is invalidated. The consequence is that -κρατία should not be seen as an approximation of -αρχία, but as positively meaning something in its own right.

To further understand what this “something” is, we must proceed by examining ἀρχή and κράτος more closely.

¹¹ Schweighäuser corrects αὐτόν (codd.) to αὐτός. See the app. crit. in Herodotus, *Histoires*, ed. and trans. Ph.-E Legrand, 2nd ed., vol. 6 (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1961), 103. If correct, αὐτός would highlight the μουν- in μουναρχέων.

¹² Whether this is historically true or not is irrelevant, as long as it was accepted as historical fact.

¹³ Acragas may have been a democracy before Athens: Diodorus Siculus says that after the death of Thrasydaeus, son of Theron, the people ἐκομίσατο τὴν δημοκρατίαν, which Robinson understands as restoring democracy. See *First Democracies*, 78–80. Cf. Tobias Fischer-Hansen, Thomas Heine Nielsen, and Carmine Ampolo, “Sikelia,” in *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, ed. Mogens Herman Hansen and Thomas Heine Nielsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 187.

¹⁴ Compare the words πολυκοιρανίη and πολυαρχία referring to collegial leadership in armies, which are usually led by one man. Cf. also Meier, “Die Entstehung des Begriffs ‘Demokratie,’” 547.

3. *Archē* and *Kratos* Compared

In this chapter, we inquire into the differences between *archē* and *kratos*. We have already discussed connotations of the Greek terms (cf. “Connotation of Ἀρχή and Κράτος” above); here we will begin by addressing the often assumed “institutional” character of *archē*, which Thrasymachus held to be an extension of *kratos* (cf. “The Typology of One, Few, and, Many: Plato” above). We investigate the relationship between *archē* and geography (which decisively proves the concept’s institutional character), the relationship between *kratos* and honor, then how *kratos* and *archē*, when contrasted, relate to rank. Finally, we examine more closely the premise of Thrasymachus’ argument: that *kratos* underpins *archē*.

Institutional *Archē*, Fundamental *Kratos*

Some scholars have emphasized the institutional quality of *archē*.¹ As “institutional” is difficult to define, it is perhaps better to say that *archē* is always “political,” but as “institutional” is established, we will retain it here.² The institutional quality is the one apparent difference between *kratos* and *archē*: ἀρχή, for instance, became the technical term for magistracies (cf. “The Polysemy of ἀρχή” below), whereas *kratos*, although not incompatible with institutional power, often refers to some power that is not strictly institutional, as in the case of the half-snake maiden who has the *kratos* in the “woodland” (Υλαίην καλεόμενην γῆν, Hdt. 4.9). We shall now explore what these characteristics imply about the relationship between *archē* and *kratos*.

¹ E.g. Meier, “Macht, Gewalt,” 824 n. 38. Marrucci argues that ἀρχή has “collective resonance,” which seems similar. See *Kratos e Arche*, 7. Although Spahn argues that ἀρχή does not only refer to “regular and institutionalized” power, his own definition (“government and political leadership in general”) seems like a definition of institutional power. See “Archē,” 60.

² Olga Kozyreva’s (n.b. descriptive) definition of “institution,” based on definitions in encyclopedias and on scholarly use of the term, turns out to be all-encompassing: “[a] social institution is an open social system, in which a social actor is the element and bearer of its properties, which aims to satisfy certain social needs, includes a set of formal and informal norms, values, statuses and roles that are expressed in specific normative, ideal and organizational social structures and relatively stable social practices.” “The Phenomenon of Social Institution and Its Theoretical Definition,” *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast* 42, no. 6 (2015): 221.

Geographical *Archē*

As we have noted, within the polis ἀρχή refers to the magistracy, which is a good example of institutionalized power: it is received through the lot, it has a fixed mandate, a term limit, and it is subject to audit. We will plot the evolution of this magistracy later (specifically “The Athenian Archon and the Magistracy” below). The institutional character *archē* is, however, not limited to the polis: ἀρχή can, for instance, refer to geographical areas. But these geographical areas have in common that they must also be political entities; this is unlike, say, χώρα, which can refer to any geographical area whether they are political entities or not.³ This is clear evidence that *archē* is mostly, if not always, defined by its institutional character.

The first geographical attestation of ἀρχή is found in Pindar and refers to the realm of Zeus.

τὰ δ' ἐν τᾷδε Διὸς ἀρχῆ / ἄλιτρά κατὰ γᾶς δικάζει τις ἐχθρᾶ / λόγον φράσαις
ἀνάγκη

But these crimes committed in the realm of Zeus will be judged by someone in the underworld, delivering his verdict with hateful necessity... (Pind. *Ol.* 2.58–60)

Curiously, political entities on all levels are *archai*: the Persian satrapies are as much *archai* as the entire Persian Empire. This means the foreign-political *archē* does not match any modern concept of sovereign states. The common denominator of these *archai* rather appears to be that they exercise authority over many internally self-governing *poleis*.⁴ When a polis has an *archē* (which is the Greek expression: πόλει ἀρχὴν ἐχούση, Thuc. 6.85), the polis is not seen as part of the *archē* itself:

ἔπειτα καὶ τῆς Καρχηδονίων ἀρχῆς καὶ αὐτῶν ἀποπειράσοντες...

...and then to make an attempt both on the Carthaginian empire and on the Carthaginians themselves... (Thuc. 6.90)

ἀπὸ τῆς ὑμετέρας ἀρχῆς δύναμιν προσλαβεῖν περιοίσεσθε...

[Spoken in the Athenian assembly:] you will allow [the enemies] to raise forces from your empire... (Thuc. 1.35)

³ In Hellenistic times, *chōra* was to some extent defined in opposition to *polis*, often referring to territory controlled directly by the king. See Ste. Croix, *Class Struggle*, 10.

⁴ *Poleis* were largely self-governing even when ruled by an empire. See Mogens Herman Hansen, *Polis: An Introduction to the Greek City-State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 12f, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uu/detail.action?docID=430917>.

Empires, whether Athenian or Carthaginian or Persian, seldom micromanaged their subordinate *poleis*, but were often satisfied with exacting tribute and troops. The boundaries between a de facto imperial relationship and leading an alliance is therefore fluid; “alliance” (συμμαχίς), “leadership” (ἡγεμονία), and “empire” (ἀρχή) form a continuum. The Athenian Empire, for instance, began as an alliance. There are, however, linguistic traces indicating when the alliance is beginning to be perceived as an empire: around 450, the Delian League was referred to in inscriptions as “the Athenian league” (ἡ Ἀθηναίων συμμαχίς) but only two decades later, the *poleis* in this league were referred to as *poleis* “which the Athenians rule” (ἧν Ἀθηναῖοι κρατοῦσι). At about the same time, the Athenians began entering into treaties on behalf of their allies, which is evidence for a *realiter* imperial relationship.⁵

Ἀρχή does not always imply de facto control. Several passages in Thucydides (e.g. 8.6, 8.48, and 8.99) name cities within the Persian *archē*, more specifically within the *archē* (satrapy) of Tissaphernes, that are loyal to Athens and Sparta (or *rebel* against them!). This means that Tissaphernes does not exercise control within his *archē*, which means his *archē* comprises territory claimed but not necessarily controlled by the Persians. Ἀρχή can also denote political hegemony with unclear territorial or imperial implications, as in the following passage.

ἐπὶ γὰρ Δαρείου τοῦ Ὑστάσπεος καὶ Ξέρξεω τοῦ Δαρείου καὶ Ἄρτοξέρξεω τοῦ Ξέρξεω, τριῶν τουτέων ἐπεξῆς γενεῶν, ἐγένετο πλέω κακὰ τῇ Ἑλλάδι ἢ ἐπὶ εἴκοσι ἄλλας γενεάς τὰς πρὸ Δαρείου γενομένας, τὰ μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν Περσέων αὐτῇ γενόμενα, τὰ δὲ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν τῶν κορυφαίων περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς πολεμιόντων.

For in the time of Darius son of Hystaspes and Xerxes son of Darius and Artoxerxes son of Xerxes, these being three successive generations, more disasters happened to Hellas than in the twenty generations preceding Darius. Some befell them because of the Persians, some because of wars of supremacy between the foremost peoples themselves. (Hdt. 6.98)

It is unclear if this ἀρχή entails an empire, or if it is simply a matter of being first among equals; in Thucydides 8.46, Alcibiades’ advice to Tissaphernes that he let the Athenians and Spartans “split the *archē*” (ἔχειν δ’ ἀμφοτέρους ἔαν δίχα τὴν ἀρχήν) and not put *kratos* over land and sea in the same hands appears to use ἀρχή to refer to hegemony.

⁵ Mattingly, “Athenian Imperialism,” 39–41. Cf. Russell Meiggs, “A Note on Athenian Imperialism,” *The Classical Review* 63, no. 1 (May 1949): 9–12, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009840X00094269>. Curiously enough, such treaties differ as to if they use ἄρχω or κρατέω to denote the Athenian relationship vis-à-vis the subordinate cities. Mattingly does not find this significant, simply noting that “there is clearly a language of *symmachia* and a language of *kratos* or *arche*.” See “Athenian Imperialism,” 43. The inscriptions, six in number, all have κρατέω, as does a legal preamble of disputed veracity ([Plut.] *X orat.* 833d). Two passages from Thucydides (5.18, 5.47), however, has ἄρχω. It is unclear why.

The Relationship between *Kratos* and Honor

Kratos tends to imply a supreme position, but as said before, it is not always institutional. In the *Iliad*, the relationship between *kratos* and honor is full of contradictions; it is not as political a quality as honor.⁶

Agamemnon is *primus inter pares* in the Achaean contingent, but the relationship between this position and his *kratos* is not straight-forward. In *Iliad* 9.38–39, Diomedes says that Zeus has granted Agamemnon the privilege to be “valued above all men” (τετιμῆσθαι περὶ πάντων) with the scepter—attributing honor to Agamemnon—but adds that Zeus did not give Agamemnon courage (ἀλκή), “which has the greatest *kratos*” (for scepter as *kratos*, see “Zeus, the Cyclopes, and the Thunderbolt” below).⁷

Even if the previous passage (albeit backhandedly) confirms Agamemnon’s *kratos*, the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon, which is a conflict between *kratos* and honor, is more complicated. In the *Iliad* 1.275–281, shortly after Achilles’ wrath has been brought to the boil, Nestor rebukes Achilles for his anger: Agamemnon, being a scepter-bearing *basileus* to whom Zeus granted “glory” (κῦδος, 279), has extraordinary honor (τιμῆ, 278).⁸ Nestor proceeds to call Achilles καρτερός (280) as opposed to Agamemnon’s φέρτερος (ibid.); the latter adjective, often translated “better,” is due to Agamemnon’s “ruling more people” (πλεόνεσσιν ἀνάσσει, 281). Precisely what lies in these words is unclear, but it is evident that although Agamemnon has *kratos* because of his Zeus-given honor, his nominal subordinate Achilles has a better claim to *kratos*.⁹

On the other hand, two passages in the *Iliad* (1.79, 1.288) has κρατέω refer to supreme military command over the Achaean army, which means that

⁶ For honor, see Naoko Yamagata, “Review of ‘Le système conceptuel de l’ordre du monde dans la pensée grecque à l’époque archaïque: Τιμή, μοῖρα, κόσμος, θέμις et δίκη chez Homère et Hésiode. Éditions Peeters and Société des Études Classiques’ by V. DU SABLON,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 136 (2016): 189.

⁷ Cf. Robert Mondy, “Σκηπτούχοι Βασιλεῖς: An Argument for Divine Kingship in Early Greece,” *Arethusa* 13, no. 2 (Fall 1980): 207.

⁸ For “the tension between achievement and position” in Greek epics, see Donlan, “The Relations of Power in the Pre-State and Early State Polities,” in *The Development of the Polis in Archaic Greece*, ed. Lynette G. Mitchell and P.J. Rhodes (London: Routledge, 1997), 43. For Diomedes and Achilles’ being distinguished by *kratos* as opposed to Agamemnon’s honor, see Jean-Claude Riedinger, “Remarques sur la τιμή chez Homère,” *Revue des études grecques* 89, no. 426/427 (December 1976): 246.

⁹ The difficulty in interpreting the terms is partially due to persons having different epithets depending on with whom they are compared: Agamemnon has *kratos*, but not in relation to Achilles; Achilles is *pherteros* but not in relation to Agamemnon. Elton Barker argues that the “narrator complicates matters still further by describing *Achilles* [sic] as ‘by far the mightiest’ (πολὸν φέρτατος, *Il.* 2.769) in the Catalogue of the Ships,” but Barker does not take into account that the phrase identifies Achilles as the best man in the retinue of Agamemnon and Menelaus (ἄριστος.../ ἀπὸν...οἷ ἄμ’ Ἀτρεΐδῃσιν ἔποντο, *Il.* 2.761–762)—Agamemnon is obviously not a member of his own retinue. See *Entering the Agon: Dissent and Authority in Homer, Historiography, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 48 n. 24, DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199542710.001.0001.

κρατέω in this context is Agamemnon's prerogative.¹⁰ Achilles fears that he will "anger a man who greatly *krateei* all the Argives and whom the Achaeans obey" (ἄνδρα χολωσέμεν, ὃς μέγα πάντων / Ἀργείων κρατέει καὶ οἱ πείθονται Ἀχαιοί, 1.78–79); Agamemnon accuses Achilles for being overambitious, saying that Achilles "wants to be above everyone else, wishes to *krateein* over everyone, to be the *anax* of everyone, to give orders to everyone" (ἐθέλει περὶ πάντων ἔμμεναι ἄλλων, / πάντων μὲν κρατέειν ἐθέλει, πάντεσσι δ' ἀνάσσειν, / πᾶσι δὲ σημαίνειν, 1.287–289). In 16.52–54, Achilles says that he is sorry in his heart when "a man" (viz. Agamemnon) wants to rob "the equal" (τὸν ὁμοῖον, 53) of his prize (γέρας, 54), because he "is more advanced in *kratos*" (ὄ τε κράτει προβεβήκει, 54).¹¹ This appears to confirm Agamemnon's strong claim to *kratos*, but it could also be sarcasm on Achilles' part.¹² As now Achilles, now Agamemnon has the better claim to *kratos*, the *Iliad* is ambiguous on the relationship between *kratos* and social rank.¹³

A possible solution to the conflict can be glimpsed in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. The hymn explains how Demeter received her honors (τιμαί).¹⁴ The goddess arrives in disguise to a human city and asks for employment; she is referred to the men who have the *kratos* of honor (κράτος τιμῆς, 150). This incognito episode, designed for her to receive a position among the humans, mirrors Demeter's struggle to receive honors from the gods.¹⁵ The men with *kratos* of honor are also described as "the first among the people" (δήμου τε προὔχουσιν, 151) and as "guarding the crown of the city with council and straight verdicts" (ιδεὲ κρήδεμνα πόλης εἰρύεται βουλῆσι καὶ ἰθειῆσι δίκησιν,

¹⁰ There are only seven attestations of κρατέω in *Iliad*. Four of these are used about domination on the battle-field (5.175, 16.424, 21.214, 21.315), two of which occur in the formula ὃς τις ὄδε κρατέει καὶ δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ ἔοργε / Τρώας, ἐπεὶ πολλῶν τε καὶ ἐσθλῶν γούνατ' ἔλυσεν: "whoever this is who has *kratos* and has indeed done the Trojans great harm, for he has loosened the knees of many good men." The other three (1.79, 1.288, 16.172) refer to military command.

¹¹ The passage is ambiguous, as ὄ τε is read differently. Some read ὄτε...προβεβήκη as "when he is more advanced..." some as ὄ τε "because he is..." Richard Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, ed. G.S. Kirk, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 323.

¹² Norman Postlethwaite argues that Achilles' awarding the prize to Agamemnon for being the best spearman in *Iliad* book 23.890–894, before the contest has even taken place, is a backhanded insult, which is meant to belittle Agamemnon. In the passage, Achilles says that Agamemnon "is most advanced of all" (προβεβήκας ἅπαντων), and is the best "in *dunamis* and javelins" (δύναμει τε καὶ ἤμασιν ἔπλευ ἄριστος). Postlethwaite finds the omission of κράτει (sc. προβεβήκας) significant, which would have admitted that Agamemnon is indeed the superior in *kratos*. But in bestowing the gift on Agamemnon without contest—and considering that Agamemnon has been a failure at spear-throwing throughout the *Iliad*—Achilles "affirms his own social superiority." See "Agamemnon Best of Spearman," *Phoenix* 49, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 95–103, esp. 98, 103. This interpretation goes against the view that the "advancement in *kratos*" is due to Agamemnon's controlling a larger contingent, found in numerous commentators and in Breuil, "Κράτος et sa famille," 23.

¹³ Cf. Marrucci: "Per il resto, possiamo quindi limitarci a rilevare che *kratos* e *geras* si incrociano nei medesimi contesti, sebbene non siamo in grado di disegnare, con precisione o in termini generali, una correlazione né una interdipendenza tra le due nozioni." *Kratos e Arche*, 22f.

¹⁴ Homer, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, ed. and trans. Helene P. Foley (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 84.

¹⁵ *Hymn to Demeter*, ed. and trans. Foley, 90.

151–152). These are obviously political leaders. As Demeter’s quest is to receive honors, it is intuitive to interpret κράτος τιμῆς, like West does, as an objective genitive (“control privilege”): like Zeus controls the honors in heaven, so do these men control the honors in Eleusis.¹⁶ On the other hand, Demeter only wishes to be employed as a nurse, which is hardly an honor. Other translators coordinate κράτος and τιμῆς (“great power and honor”), but this botches the grammar.¹⁷ The better interpretation seems to be that these men have *kratos* constituted by or derived from honor.¹⁸ The phrase therefore describes their status as political leaders, not their “control of privilege.”

This shows that *kratos* can come from many sources, but, as Diomedes implied when saying that “courage” (ἀλκή) had a better claim to *kratos* than the scepter (cf. “Zeus, the Cyclopes, and the Thunderbolt”), these sources are ranked differently and may be in conflict.¹⁹ *Kratos* materializing in military prowess is real *kratos*, but it must receive proper honors (γέρας) to be recognized as such.²⁰ Honor is an unreliable witness to *kratos*. Perhaps Achilles’ withdrawal, forcing Agamemnon to prove his power to deliver victory, is a call for Agamemnon to substantiate his claim to *kratos*. If it is true that there is a conflict between *kratos* and rank, it is possible that the typological division between -αρχία and -κρατία is a vestige of this conflict.²¹

Kratos Outranks *Archē*

Both κράτος and ἀρχή can refer to supreme power, but when the words (or cognates) occur together, κράτος frequently outmatches ἀρχή. In Herodotus 2.144, the rulers of Egypt are described as “rulers” (ἄρχοντας), among whom there is always one who has *kratos* (κρατέοντα):

τὸ δὲ πρότερον τῶν ἀνδρῶν τούτων θεοὺς εἶναι τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἄρχοντας οἰκέοντας ἅμα τοῖσι ἀνθρώποισι, καὶ τούτων αἰεὶ ἓνα τὸν κρατέοντα εἶναι.²²

Before these men, the gods were the rulers in Egypt, living among these men, and there was always one of them who had *kratos*. (Hdt. 2.144)

¹⁶ Homer, *Homeric Hymns. Homeric Apocrypha. Lives of Homer*, ed. and trans. Martin L. West, Loeb Classical Library 496 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 43.

¹⁷ E.g. *Hymn to Demeter*, trans. Foley, 10.

¹⁸ Cf. ἰσχύος κράτος, “*kratos* from strength” (Soph. *Phil.* 594).

¹⁹ It is perhaps in this light one has to view Diomedes charge that Agamemnon certainly is honoured above all with the scepter, but does not have courage, which has the largest *kratos*. The implication may be that honor has *kratos*, too, but a smaller one (*Il.* 9.39).

²⁰ In Sophocles’ *Ajax*, Ajax says that not being awarded Achilles’ armor was tantamount to pushing away his *kratē*. See “The Conceptual Connections of *Kratos*: Victory” below.

²¹ Somewhat *pace* Marrucci, who argues that *archein* has a conflicted relationship with status and identity. See *Kratos e Arche*, 7. I agree about identity, but status can be questioned.

²² Οἰκέοντας in most important manuscripts, οὐκ ἐόντας (vel sim.) in some manuscripts and in Athenagoras (*Leg.* 28.1). See Herodotus, *Histoires*, ed. and trans. Ph.-E Legrand, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1961), 168. Οὐκ ἐόντας is so much *difficilior* that it appears flawed.

This out-matching is not only found in later Greek pertaining to politics. In the *Iliad* 16.172, κρατέω refers to supreme leadership of an army contingent, while ἄρχω refers to leading a company of warriors within that contingent:

Πεντήκοντ' ἦσαν νῆες θοαί, ἧσιν Ἀχιλλεὺς / ἐς Τροίην ἠγεῖτο Διὶ φίλος· ἐν δὲ
ἐκάστη / πενήκοντ' ἔσαν ἄνδρες ἐπὶ κληῖσιν ἐταῖροι· / πέντε δ' ἄρ' ἠγεμόνας
ποιήσατο τοῖς ἐπεποίθει / σημαίνειν· αὐτὸς δὲ μέγα κρατέων ἦνασσε. / τῆς μὲν
ἱῆς στιχὸς ἦρχε Μενέσθιος αἰολοθώρηξ / υἱὸς Σπερχεῖοιο διυπετέος ποταμοῖο·

There were fifty fast ships which Achilles, dear to Zeus, took to Troy. Each had fifty loyal men on the benches. He appointed five hegemons, whom he trusted to give command. But he himself was lord, greatly *krateōn*. The left flank was commanded by Menesthios with the glancing breastplate, the son of Spercheius, the Zeus-swollen river. (Hom. *Il.* 16.168–174)²³

Although ἄρχω often refers to physical leadership in battle, which κρατέω never does, that interpretation requires the dative case; the genitive case here refers to Menesthios' subordinate position of command under the great *kratos* of Achilles. Without κρατέω contrasting, however, ἄρχω can refer to the supreme leadership of a contingent (e.g. Menelaus vis-à-vis the Lacedaemonians in *Iliad* 2.586).²⁴ Ἀρχή can also have a subordinate meaning when other words than κράτος form a contrast, as in Plato's *Critias*, in which there is a distinction between the king (βασιλέα), and the *archontes* holding dominion (ἀρχή) over many men and vast tracts of land (Pl. *Criti.* 114a, cf. “The Athenian Archon and the Magistracy”).

Kratos Underpins *Archē*

Plato's *Republic* (as noted in “Constitutional Typologies”) and Xenophon's *Memorabilia* both contain arguments that *archē* is always underpinned by *kratos*; in other words: that *kratos* is more fundamental than *archē*. In *Republic* 338, Thrasymachus argues that “justice is nothing other than what benefits the more powerful” (τὸ δίκαιον οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ τὸ τοῦ κρείττονος συμφέρον, 338c). Having established that “some cities are ruled tyrannically, others democratically, others aristocratically” (αἱ μὲν τυραννοῦνται, αἱ δὲ δημοκρατοῦνται, αἱ δὲ ἀριστοκρατοῦνται, 338d), Thrasymachus asks Socrates if this “ruling element does not have *kratos* in each city” (οὐκοῦν τοῦτο κρατεῖ ἐν ἐκάστη πόλει, τὸ ἄρχον; *ibid.*). As each government makes laws to safeguard its power, and laws are by definition right, it is evident in Thrasymachus' view that what

²³ Cf. Herodotus 8.96 differentiating between the *stratego*i having “all *kratos*” on the one hand, and the Persian *archontes* of the tribes on the other; the latter are subordinate to the former.

²⁴ Agamemnon is also said to *archo* his contingent of one hundred ships in 2.576, but the attribute κρείων “lord, master” complicates this passage.

benefits the element with *kratos* is right. Dave Gucker argues that Thrasymachus names tyranny, democracy, and aristocracy—an unusual juxtaposition—because *kratos* inheres in all of them, “either as part of their very nature (tyranny), or as part of their Greek term (democracy, aristocracy).”²⁵ Thrasymachus effectively argues that government is “not mere innocent ἀρχή: it is κράτος.”²⁶ Thrasymachus appears to say that the institutional framework implied by ἀρχή is in the end always backed up by *kratos* (perhaps as the liminal quality drawing on hubris and chaos to create law and order; cf. “Between *Dikē* and Hubris” below).

In Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* 1.2.41–46, Pericles and Alcibiades discuss what constitutes lawful rule, and prove their points by subtly alternating between ἀρχή and κράτος.²⁷ Alcibiades asks Pericles to teach him what law is. Pericles responds that law is whatever the majority decrees after due deliberation. What then, says Alcibiades, when it is not the majority but a minority (ὀλίγοι, 43), as in oligarchies (ὥσπερ ὅπου ὀλιγαρχία ἐστίν, *ibid.*), that makes law?

P. πάντα, φάναί, ὅσα ἂν τὸ κρατοῦν τῆς πόλεως βουλευσάμενον, ἃ χρὴ ποιεῖν, γράψῃ, νόμος καλεῖται. / A. κἂν τύραννος οὖν κρατῶν τῆς πόλεως γράψῃ τοῖς πολίταις ἃ χρὴ ποιεῖν, καὶ ταῦτα νόμος ἐστί; / P. καὶ ὅσα τύραννος ἄρχων, φάναί, γράφει, καὶ ταῦτα νόμος καλεῖται.

Pericles: Everything that the element with *kratos* of the city deliberates upon and proposes that it be done is called law. / Alcibiades: So even if a tyrant rules the city and decrees what the citizens should do, it is still law? / Pericles: Even the things a ruling tyrant proposes are called law. (Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.43)

Note that Pericles uses κρατοῦν about the oligarchic junta.²⁸ When Alcibiades asks if tyrants make law too, Pericles concedes—after all, the conclusions follow from his own premises—but changes Alcibiades’ verb from κρατέω to ἄρχω, which, as ἄρχω is more “benign” than κρατέω, moderates the conclusion, perhaps suggesting that a tyrant indeed makes law as long as his power is channeled through proper institutions.²⁹ Alcibiades now changes strategy;

²⁵ Gucker, “Word Power,” 142 (italics in original).

²⁶ Gucker, 142f.

²⁷ The passage demonstrates Socrates’ dialectic skills by putting a controversial yet convincing argument in the mouth of Socrates’ erstwhile student Alcibiades. See Gabriel Danzig, “Alcibiades Versus Pericles: Apologetic Strategies in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*,” *Greece / Rome* 61, no. 1 (April 2014): 7–28. This means that the opinions are likely not representative of majority opinion (had they been, the argument would not have been impressive).

²⁸ Note that Pericles says that it is *called* law (νόμος καλεῖται) when an oligarchy makes law, whereas Alcibiades uses ἐστί, “is.”

²⁹ The tyrants’ relations to legal institutions varied. Pisistratus ruled Athens with respect for the laws and the established institutions, according to Hignett, *Athenian Constitution*, 115f; and Ostwald, *Nomos*, 147. The idea that Archaic tyrants were criminal usurpers is probably an anachronistic imputation from the Classical era. Greg Anderson has argued that the Pisistratids

he suggests that “violence and lawlessness” (βία καὶ ἀνομία) equate using compulsion without persuasion. Pericles agrees.

A. καὶ ὅσα ἄρα τύραννος μὴ πείσας τοὺς πολίτας ἀναγκάζει ποιεῖν γράφων, ἀνομία ἐστί; / P: δοκεῖ μοι, φάναι τὸν Περικλέα: ἀνατίθεμαι γὰρ τὸ ὅσα τύραννος μὴ πείσας γράφει νόμον εἶναι. / A: ὅσα δὲ οἱ ὀλίγοι τοὺς πολλοὺς μὴ πείσαντες, ἀλλὰ κρατοῦντες γράφουσι, πότερον βίαν φῶμεν ἢ μὴ φῶμεν εἶναι; / P: πάντα μοι δοκεῖ, φάναι τὸν Περικλέα, ὅσα τις μὴ πείσας ἀναγκάζει τινὰ ποιεῖν, εἴτε γράφων εἴτε μὴ, βία μᾶλλον ἢ νόμος εἶναι. / A. καὶ ὅσα ἄρα τὸ πᾶν πλῆθος κρατοῦν τῶν τὰ χρήματα ἐχόντων γράφει μὴ πείσαν, βία μᾶλλον ἢ νόμος ἂν εἴη;

Alcibiades: So what a tyrant, without persuading them, forces citizens to do through decrees is lawlessness too? / Pericles: I agree. So I take it back, what a tyrant decrees without persuading is not law. / Alcibiades: And what the minority decrees, not by persuading the majority but through their power, do we call that violence or not? / Pericles: I think that everything someone forces anyone to do without persuading them, whether they decree it or not, is violence rather than law. / Alcibiades: Then even what the entire multitude, ruling those with money, decrees without persuading them ought to be violence and not law? (Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.44–45)

Alcibiades makes his case through subtle terminological shifts. In the former passage, Pericles held that a tyrant acting through the proper institutions may make law. When Alcibiades factors in compulsion (μὴ πείσας or βία), which is inherent in tyranny, Pericles must retract his words. Alcibiades then equates μὴ πείσαντες with κρατοῦντες. The point is to highlight that any exercise of power, however lawful, rests on compulsion (cf. the discussion about *Prometheus Bound* in “Zeus, the Cyclopes, and the Thunderbolt”). When Alcibiades suggests that even the rule of the multitude is based on *kratos* without persuasion, Pericles calls it sophistry and refuses to go on. This conceptual analysis of κρατέω reveals that *kratos*, although necessary to define law, is defined by lawlessness, an indication that *kratos* exists between *dikē* and hubris (cf. “Between *Dikē* and Hubris”).

That *kratos* is more fundamental than *archē* applies to foreign politics as well. This can be seen in a famous passage from Thucydides’ Melian dialogue:

ἡγούμεθα γὰρ τό τε θεῖον δόξῃ τὸ ἀνθρώπειόν τε σαφῶς διὰ παντὸς ὑπὸ φύσεως ἀναγκαίας, οὗ ἂν κρατῆ, ἄρχειν·

For our opinion is that gods, likely, and men, clearly, are compelled by their nature always to exercise dominion wherever they have *kratos*. (Thuc. 5.105)

were not seen as deviations from the political norm in their own time. See “Before Turannoi Were Tyrants,” 214f.

The precise meaning of οὗ ἄν κρατῆ, ἄρχειν is debated, but it is clear that *kratos* precedes and underlies *archē*.³⁰ Thucydides 8.46 contains the phrases τῆς ἐς γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν ἀρχῆς and τῆς τε γῆς καὶ τῆς θαλάσσης τὸ κράτος, in which ἀρχή refers to political domination or supremacy, κράτος to the military power (recruiting ships and hiring mercenaries) necessary to establish this domination, which fits well with the idea that *kratos* serves as the foundation for *archē*.³¹

Conclusions

There could be no doubt that *archē* is institutional in character, as this is reflected even in the geographical uses of ἀρχή; this is indeed a difference from *kratos*.

We have concluded that *kratos* underpins—is more fundamental than—*archē*, and that *kratos* outranks *archē*. It may well be asked if these qualities are not interconnected: *kratos* outranks, because it is more fundamental, i.e. it goes beyond rank.

A possible bearing on the typological division between -αρχία and -κρατία is perhaps that whereas the -archies are associated with the stratification of society, democracy effectively neutralizes the notion of rank. This is a similar point to the one made by Debrunner and others: that *archē* presupposes subordinates and *kratos* does not, with the (perhaps important) difference that the

³⁰ The interpretation of οὗ ἄν κρατῆ, ἄρχειν is disputed. “Exercise dominion wherever they have power” is from Peter Derow, “Historical Explanation: Polybius and His Predecessors,” in *Rome, Polybius, and the East*, ed. Peter Derow, Andrew Erskine, and Josephine Crawley Quinn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 118, DOI:10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199640904.003.0005. The translation is promoted in Simon Hornblower, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) §5.105. Cf. Benjamin Jowett: “wherever they can rule, they will” in *Thucydides*, trans. and comm. Benjamin Jowett, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1881), <http://data.perseus.org/texts/urn:cts:greek-Lit:tlg0003.tlg001> ad loc. Jowett’s translation appears to neuter κρατῆ and treat it as δυνῆται. Gomme et al. leave the phrase untranslated: “both gods and men (as we all believe in the one case and can see for ourselves in the other) must obey this law of nature, οὗ ἄν κρατῆ, ἄρχειν.” See *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 173. Johannes Classen interprets it as somewhat less specific than Derow: “über das, was sie an Macht übertreffen, die Herrschaft führen.” See Thucydides, ed. Johannes Classen, 3rd ed., vol. 5 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1912), 224. Cf. also Thucydides: “For of those we know about through hearsay, Minos was the first to acquire a fleet, and he dominated [ἐκράτησε] most of what is today the Greek sea and established dominion [ἡρξέ] over the Cycladic islands...” (Thuc. 1.4). Derow’s analysis contradicts Marrucci’s claim that “territorial” ἄρχειν denotes power that has not been acquired “definitely” (“in modo definitivo”), as ἄρχειν in the quoted passage seems to be more permanent—more *established*—than κράτος. See *Kratos e Arche*, 169.

³¹ Cf. Gardiner, *Terms for Power*, 116–118. Gomme et al. appear to understand it similarly: “The danger to the king is that the Greek land power should be able to transport its forces without opposition from a Greek naval power.” See *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 101.

rank distinction implied by *archē* is not necessarily removed, only that its importance is diminished.

We noted the difficulty in understanding how *kratos* relates to rank in the *Iliad*, but the difficulty is perhaps in some ways the point: in light of the monosemy of κράτος—it is neither exactly “power,” “strength,” nor “victory,” but somehow related to all of these (see “State of Research” above and “An Inquiry into *Kratos*” below)—it is tempting to see the conflict in the *Iliad* as a kind of dramatized conceptual analysis or critique of *kratos*: Agamemnon has superior power, which (since power follows from *kratos*) implies he has *kratos*; however, Achilles has superior strength, which implies he, too, has *kratos*; the ensuing failure of the Achaean army to achieve victory, in turn, shows that when these two aspects of *kratos* are divided, the third does not follow. *Kratos* is not only divided; it is nowhere.

4. An Inquiry into *Archē*

In this chapter, we analyze ἀρχή, and how its polysemy should affect our interpretation of *archē* as a political term (“The Polysemy of Ἀρχή”). Then we will trace how ἀρχή came to mean “office,” and how this affected the Greek discourse on supremacy (“The Athenian Archon and the Magistracy”). This will bear on our understanding on -αρχία, and why it was unfit to denote democracy.

The Polysemy of Ἀρχή

Preliminaries

Ἀρχή can mean “beginning” and “principle” as well as “power,” “rule,” “province,” “empire,” “magistracy” and so forth. Henceforth, I shall refer to the latter meanings collectively as the “political” meanings of ἀρχή. The other meanings will be called “temporal”. The geographical senses have already been treated (see “Geographical *Archē*” above).

To determine how these sub-senses relate to each other, we must differentiate between two types of relationship: the *diachronic* and the *synchronic* relationship. The diachronic relationship means how the sub-senses have evolved into one another over time. With ἀρχή, we must establish what came first: “beginning,” “power,” “leadership” or something else; with κράτος, “strength,” “power,” “victory” or something else. The synchronic relationship concerns which meanings were considered at a given point in time to be *core*—what is sometimes called “literal” meanings—and which were considered *dependent*, i.e. metaphoric uses.¹ As the oft-cited example that “man” originally meant “human” (hence *woman* < Middle English *wifman*) shows, diachronically prior is not always the same as synchronically core. If the only core meaning of ἀρχή were “beginning,” it would follow that “leadership,” “rule,” etc., were perceived as extensions of this “beginning” semantic, and “rule” would accordingly be a sort of beginning. Likewise for κράτος: if the

¹ Cf. Alice Deignan, *Metaphor and Corpus Linguistics* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2005), 41f.

core meaning were “strength,” it would follow that “power” and “victory,” etc., were conceived of as metaphorical extensions of “strength.”

Multiple meanings can be core at the same time, which we call polysemy or homonymy, that is, phonetic equivalence but semantic difference.² The difference between polysemy and homonymy is that “polysemy” refers to words that are diachronically related (as are e.g. *crane* “bird” and *crane* “lifting mechanism,” the latter coming from metaphorical use of the former), but homonymy if the words are similar by coincidence, as e.g. *lie*, “deceive” and *lie*, “to rest in a horizontal position.” These relations are often obscure, which means that the difference between polysemy and homonymy is academic.

Determining precise meanings is not easy. Meanings are always inferred from contexts, and contexts are often opaque: in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, a herald (possibly) refers to Agamemnon and Menelaus, returning from Troy, with the word κράτος (ᾄδιον κράτος αἴσιον ἀνδρῶν / ἐκτελέων, 104–105), which some interpreters translate “command” or “commanders.”³ Although κράτος may refer to the Achaean command, one may ask if κράτος thereby means “command(er)” or if it simply identifies the command by metonymy, given that *kratos* is something usually associated with command. At other times, words can seem easy to translate, yet their original cultural context can differ so much that the intuitive translation is flawed. Consider the Sanskrit word *kárman-*, the origin of *karma*.⁴ The word is an action noun formed from the root *kr*, meaning “do”; taken literally, *kárman-* could be translated “deed.” It is, however, rarely translated but often italicized, because this seemingly basic word imports along with it the context in which the concept is situated, including assumptions about outcomes of action, fate, the cosmic cycle, and good and evil. “Deed” simply does not do *kárman-* justice. We should consider what context we import when translating as we habitually do. Take for instance the common translation of κράτος as “strength.”⁵ Does this mean that I can go to the gym to increase my *kratos*? If the answer is “no,” then *kratos* cannot be equated to “strength” without disclaimers.

² For polysemy and homonymy, see Croft and Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 111.

³ E.g. John Denniston and Denys Page: “κράτος, ‘command’, here can signify nothing but ‘the commanders’.” *Agamemnon*, ed. and comm. John Dewar Denniston and Denys Page (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), 77. They appear to take “command” as a literal meaning, applied metonymically for commanders. The truth may, however, be the exact opposite: *kratos* is a quality applicable to commanders, and may through metonymy come to mean command.

⁴ The nominative form of this word is *kárma*, in which form it has spread around the world. (The citation form in Sanskrit is the stem; *karman-* is a neuter *n*-stem [gen. *kármanah*].)

⁵ E.g. Aeschylus, *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus*, trans. and comm. Arthur Woollgar Verrall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889), 10. Cf. Carnes Lord about κρατεῖν: “to conquer through force, to master or control; also rendered ‘to conquer.’ The verb derives from the noun *kratos*, ‘bodily strength’...” See *Politics*, trans. and comm. Carnes Lord, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 241.

Analysis

The original etymology of ἀρχή is uncertain: already in the epics, the verb ἄρχω has both temporal and political senses, and the only attested cognates in other Indo-European languages (Middle High German and Lithuanian) date from the mediaeval era, which means they cannot shed light on any original etymology, whether Proto-Indo-European or Greek.⁶ The diachronic development of the meanings of ἀρχή can, consequentially, only be approached through theoretical speculation. Most likely, the political meanings have evolved from the temporal, if not spatio-temporal, meanings, e.g. “begin” > “go first” > “lead” > “rule.”⁷ In Homer, most attestations of the verb ἄρχω mean either “begin” or “lead” (mostly in combat), but there is a lone occurrence where the verb means “guide,” that is, leading someone physically without implying a social hierarchy. This occurrence represents a clear bridging-context between the meanings “go first” and “lead”:

καὶ δ' ἐκ πασσαλόφι κρέμασεν φόρμιγγα λίγειαν / Δημοδόκου δ' ἔλε χεῖρα καὶ
ἔξαγεν ἐκ μεγάροιο / κήρυξ· ἤρχε δὲ τῷ αὐτὴν ὁδὸν ἦν περ οἱ ἄλλοι / Φαιήκων
οἱ ἄριστοι, ἀέθλια θαυμανέοντες.

And [the herald] hung the clear lyre on the pegs and took Demodocus' hand and brought him out of the hall. And he led him on the same way as the other noble Phaeacians, who were admiring the games. (Hom. *Od.* 8.105–108)

Another possibility is that ἀρχή originally expressed a concept *applicable* to both time and politics, without being temporal or political in itself. “Firstness” is sometimes proposed.⁸ But such broad concepts are often invoked when more concrete explanations fail: their breadth make them abstract, and the abstraction makes them seem like *ad hoc* explanations. This is not to say that the connection between “firstness” and power does not exist: it is on the contrary frequent, as shown by e.g. Latin *princeps*, German *Fürst*. The question is rather if we are cognitively predisposed to think about power in terms of some vaguely defined “firstness,” or if the firstness attributed to power is originally an extension of some spatial or temporal firstness: kings walking first in processions, going first into battles, etc.⁹

⁶ The Middle High German cognate means “to rise, stir,” the Lithuanian “watch.” See Robert S. P. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) s.v. ἄρχω.

⁷ Maciej Roszkowski assumes “going first in war” underlies the political meanings. See “The Significance of the Semantic Range of the Term Ἀρχή in the Thought of the Sixth Century Greek Philosophers Analysed on the Basis of the Meanings of Certain Words Containing the Ἀρχ-Root in Early Greek Poetry,” *Littera Antiqua* 9 (2014): 42–81, esp. 47, 53. See also Schmidt, *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, 3:673.

⁸ E.g. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* s.v. ἄρχω.

⁹ For two different views, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); and Alan Page Fiske, “Four Modes of Constituting

Grammatical constructions can provide clues on the age of certain meanings: whenever ἀρχή is temporal and occurs in prepositional phrases, it lacks articles: ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ἐξ ἀρχῆς, “from the beginning”; κατ’ ἀρχάς, ἐν ἀρχῇ, “in the beginning”; since articles began to develop only in Homeric Greek and were often optional, the lack of an article in these constructions indicates age.¹⁰ “Political” meanings, on the contrary, tend to occur *with* the article in prepositional phrases: ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ, “in power” (Thuc. 2.63).¹¹ This indicates that “beginning” is the older meaning. We should, however, be wary: politics is neither a common *source for* nor a common *subject of* adverbials, which means the source material is biased against it.

Does this hypothesized diachronic evolution of meaning have implications for the synchronic interpretation of ἀρχή? If the meaning “rule” (vel sim.) developed out of “beginning,” did the Greeks consider “rule” a kind of “beginning,” and was power a political “starting point”?¹²

Such ideas are sometimes voiced; a special category in this regard is the interpretation of ἀρχή qua “rule” as the ἀρχή qua “principle” of power.¹³ But although philosophical discourse, as we shall see, sometimes tried to unite these meanings, it is clear that the Greeks normally understood ἀρχή as polysemous and its temporal and political meanings as discrete. The different semantics of the two derived adjectives ἀρχαῖος and ἀρχικός proves this: the former pertains to ἀρχή in its temporal senses (“old, archaic, original”) the

Relationships: Substantial Assimilation; Space, Magnitude, Time and Force; Concrete Procedures; Abstract Symbolism,” in *Relational Models Theory: A Contemporary Overview*, ed. Nick Haslam (New York: Routledge, 2004), 126–293.

¹⁰ Io Manolessou and Geoffrey Horrocks call prepositional phrases “conservative.” See “The Development of the Definite Article in Greek,” in *Μελέτες για την ελληνική γλώσσα. 27, Πρακτικά της 27ης ετήσιας συνάντησης του Τομέα Γλωσσολογίας του Τμήματος Φιλολογίας της Φιλοσοφικής σχολής του Αριστοτελείου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης, 6–7 Μαΐου, 2006 : μνήμη Α.-Φ. Χρηστίδη [A.-F. Christidis] [Studies in Greek linguistics. 27, Proceedings of the 27th Annual Meeting of the Department of Linguistics, School of Philology, Faculty of Philosophy, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 6–7 May, 2006 : in memoriam A.-F. Christidis]*, Studies in Greek Linguistics 27 (Thessaloniki: Institutouto Neoellinikon Spoudon, 2007), 230.

¹¹ When an indefinite reading of political ἀρχή is intended, some other clarifying attribute is added, as in Thucydides: “and they were immensely useful, especially in a naval empire [ἐν ἀρχῇ ναυτικῇ]” (Thuc. 8.96).

¹² Marrucci sees the meanings “begin” and “rule, command” united in expressions such as ἄρχομ’ αἰδεῖν “begin to sing,” saying that ἄρχειν is a call to the participants that they *must* participate. See *Kratos e Arche*, 139. But this command to participate is not due to the semantics of ἄρχομαι (which is always temporal or ordinal), but to the social context of the situation. For more equations between “begin” and “rule,” see e.g. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 222–225; and John L. Myres, *The Political Ideas of the Greeks* (New York: Abingdon, 1927), 158 (quoted in Walter, “Power and Violence,” 350).

¹³ For an argument implying that this equation is correct, see Gourgouris: “In any archaic configuration of power, the *archon* commands authority not only over the domain of rules that govern a society. He also embodies the point of departure of whatever trajectory such rules are to have in their implementation, whether they are to be enforced in principle or not, safeguarded for future generations (of rulers and ruled), or dismantled in favor of another course of rule, another beginning.” “Archē,” 6.

latter pertains to its political senses (“of rule, of leadership,” for example, ἀρχικὴ τέχνη “the art of ruling”). The suffixes are not temporal or political in themselves: ἀρχικός might have been temporal and ἀρχαῖος political. If the political meaning was not seen as conceptually separate from the temporal meaning, we should not have expected different meanings in the adjectives. It follows that at least since the two adjectives were attested, ἀρχή referred to two distinct concepts.

If these morphological arguments appear esoteric, Aristotle and Isocrates can provide further insight. In *Rhetoric* 1412b, Aristotle notes how Isocrates uses ἀρχή in the two different senses “empire” and “beginning” to make puns in *On the Peace* 101.5–6, 105.5, *Philip* 61.2–3, and *Panegyricus* 119.3–4:¹⁴

οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὰ ἀστεῖα, οἷον τὸ φάναί Ἀθηναίους τὴν τῆς θαλάττης ἀρχὴν μὴ ἀρχὴν εἶναι τῶν κακῶν· ὄνασθαι γάρ· ἢ ὥσπερ Ἰσοκράτης τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆ πόλει ἀρχὴν εἶναι τῶν κακῶν· ἀμφοτέρως γὰρ ὁ οὐκ ἂν ᾤηθη τις ἐρεῖν, τοῦτ’ εἴρηται, καὶ ἐγνώσθη ὅτι ἀληθές· τό τε γὰρ τὴν ἀρχὴν φάναί ἀρχὴν εἶναι οὐθὲν σοφόν, ἀλλ’ οὐχ οὕτω λέγει ἀλλ’ ἄλλως, καὶ ἀρχὴν οὐχ ὁ εἶπεν ἀπόφησιν, ἀλλ’ ἄλλως.

Witticisms are such things too, like when one says that “the empire of the sea was not the beginning of misfortunes for the Athenians, for they benefited from it.” Or as Isocrates says: “the empire was the beginning of the city’s misfortunes”. For in both cases he says that what one would not have expected him to say, and it is recognized as true. For to say that the empire was an empire is not clever, but he does not say that but something different. And he does not deny the *archē* he says [viz. in the first quoted instance], but *archē* in another meaning. (Arist. *Rh.* 1412b)¹⁵

These different meanings can be conveyed without any additional modifiers, a heuristic, though uncertain, for determining core meanings.¹⁶ The meanings can even appear near one another, without the author’s commenting on the different senses:

Ἔστι γὰρ τῶν ἀγαθῶν τὰ μὲν τίμια, τὰ δ’ ἐπαινετά, τὰ δὲ δυνάμεις. τὸ δὲ τίμιον λέγω τὸ τοιοῦτον, τὸ θεῖον, τὸ βέλτιον, οἷον ψυχὴ, νοῦς, τὸ ἀρχαιότερον, ἢ ἀρχή, τὰ τοιαῦτα· τίμια γὰρ ἐφ’ οἷς ἡ τιμὴ, τοῖς δὲ τοιοῦτοις πᾶσιν τιμὴ

¹⁴ Isocrates was fond of these “homonymies” (ὁμωνυμία), having played similarly with λόγος, χάρις, αἰτία and ποιεῖ. See *Ad Demonicum et Panegyricus*, ed. J. Edwin Sandys (New York: Arno, 1872), 113 (quoting Otto Schneider). The word “pun” implies the intention is humorous, which appears to be true about these *asteia*. Cf. Plato: “it was possible for those who were *asteiois* then to make fun of all this” (Pl. *Resp.* 452d).

¹⁵ Aristotle calls this ὁμωνυμία.

¹⁶ In Cognitive Linguistics, modifiers are taken to indicate a metaphoric meaning. Conversely, a lack of modifiers indicates core meanings. A classic example is the word *mou*th: if /we wish to express “place where a river debouches into another body of water” we must say *mou*th of the river unless context forces this interpretation. See Deignan, *Metaphor*, 42. The heuristic is not water-proof: *mou*th of the river is obviously a kind of metaphor, whereas, say, *mou*th of the tiger is not, yet they are formally identical. This shows the difficulty in determining core meanings without adding cultural knowledge.

ἀκολουθεῖ. οὐκοῦν καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ τίμιον, ὅταν γε δὴ ἀπ' αὐτῆς σπουδαῖός τις γένηται· ἤδη γὰρ οὗτος εἰς τὸ τῆς ἀρετῆς σχῆμα ἵκει. τὰ δ' ἐπαινετά, οἷον ἀρεταί· ἀπὸ γὰρ τῶν κατ' αὐτὰς πράξεων ὁ ἐπαινος γίνεται. τὰ δὲ δυνάμεις, οἷον ἀρχὴ πλοῦτος ἰσχυρὸς κάλλος·

For some good things are honored, others commended, yet others are potentialities. By “honored” I mean things such as the divine and what is better, for instance soul, mind, the original, the beginning [ἡ ἀρχή], such things, because honorable things are those to which honor belongs: all of them are accompanied by honor. Therefore virtue too is honorable, especially when someone becomes serious because of it, for that man has already attained the appearance of virtue. Others are commended, such as virtues: acting according to them warrants praise. Others are potentialities, such as rule [ἀρχή], wealth, strength, beauty. (Arist. *Mag. Mor.* 1183b)

Note the itemization, which seems to give us two discrete categories with no overlap.¹⁷ This is further evidence that there are at least two different senses of ἀρχή, which may have subsenses of their own.¹⁸ Therefore, we can conclude that the major subsenses normally ascribed to ἀρχή match conceptual differences perceived by the Greeks: even if the meaning “rule” originally developed out of the meaning “beginning,” rule was eventually not a type of beginning, nor was beginning a type of rule.¹⁹ A glimpse at the distribution of attestations is evidence that both meanings are “core” from a synchronic perspective: there are about 5,000 occurrences of ἀρχή in Archaic and Classical times, some 1,700 of which are political, the remainder temporal.²⁰ About half of the occurrences come from Aristotle, who treats both politics and epistemology—fields in which ἀρχή was a technical term—extensively.

The meaning “principle” seems to unite the temporal and political meanings of ἀρχή—a principle qua *starting point for an inquiry* is a “beginning,” but a principle qua *basic rule* is a “ruler”—which threatens the hypothesized polysemy. Anaximander (fl. 550), a student of Thales, is often considered the first philosopher to have used ἀρχή in the sense “principle,” but opinions

¹⁷ Franz Dirlmeier translates the first instance of ἀρχή as “das Richtunggebende.” Aristotle, *Magna Moralia*, comm. and trans. Franz Dirlmeier, 4th ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979), 189. Perhaps his translation alludes to “principle.”

¹⁸ For instance, ἀρχή in the senses “empire,” “realm,” and “province” as possible subsenses of “rule” comes to mind.

¹⁹ The polysemy could of course sometimes be exploited for non-humoristic purposes. Cf. K.J. Dover, on how parents and grandparents are referred to as ἀρχή (“origin”) when filial devotion is being discussed in Lycurgus’ *Against Leocrates* 94 and Isaeus 7.32: “Neither speaker considers the question, ‘Why should I subordinate myself to my *arkhē*?’, and both perhaps exploit the inclusion of ‘command’ and ‘rule’ within the semantic field of *arkhē*, thus profiting from general acceptance of the rule, ‘Obey the officers and magistrates whom the community has appointed.’” *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 218.

²⁰ The numbers should not be taken at face value; they include occurrences whose authenticity may be disputed, testimonia of unclear provenience, etc. But the order of magnitude is reliable.

vary.²¹ Claus Joachim Classen argues that Homer’s use of ἀρχή prefigures that of the philosophers.²² Heinz Ambronn is undecided on how ἀρχή was used by the pre-Socratics.²³ Malcolm Schofield argues that ἀρχή in the earliest philosophy meant “origin”: when Anaximander said that the infinite (ἄπειρον) was the *archē*, he meant that the infinite was the origin of everything. The Aristotelian tradition, says Schofield, reinterpreted ἀρχή as “principle,” something engendering but also determining the processes that existence and everything in it undergo.²⁴ This is tantamount to saying that ἀρχή meant “origin,” but was reinterpreted in technical discourse in light of the meaning “rule.”²⁵ Aristotle, for instance, tended to treat “principle” as a subsense of “rule”:

τῶν δ’ ἀρχῶν ὅσαι τοιαῦται, ὅθεν πρῶτον αἱ κινήσεις, κύριαι λέγονται, μάλιστα δὲ δικαίως ἀφ’ ὧν μὴ ἐνδέχεται ἄλλως, ἦν ἴσως ὁ θεὸς ἄρχει.

For the principles from which movements first arise, are called “ruling principles,” which is especially justified about those that do not allow other outcomes. Surely, it is in this way that God rules. (Arist. *Eth. Eud.* 1222b)

In *Metaphysics* 1013a, Aristotle tries to find a conceptual core common to all uses of ἀρχή. As the foremost common denominator, he notes “a point where or from which something exists or comes into being or becomes known” (ὅθεν ἢ ἔστιν ἢ γίγνεται ἢ γιγνώσκεται). Having mentioned a few species of this genus, he concludes:

ἡ δὲ οὗ κατὰ προαίρεσιν κινεῖται τὰ κινούμενα καὶ μεταβάλλει τὰ μεταβάλλοντα, ὥσπερ αἱ τε κατὰ πόλεις ἀρχαὶ καὶ αἱ δυναστεῖαι καὶ αἱ βασιλεῖαι καὶ τυραννίδες ἀρχαὶ λέγονται καὶ αἱ τέχναι, καὶ τούτων αἱ ἀρχιτεκτονικαὶ μάλιστα. ἔτι ὅθεν γνωστὸν τὸ πρᾶγμα πρῶτον, καὶ αὕτη ἀρχή

²¹ Anaximander is attested only in testimonia. Theophrastus appears to credit Anaximander for this use of ἀρχή: “Among those who said [the *archē*] is one, moving and unlimited, Anaximander son of Praxiades of Miletus, who was a follower and student of Thales, has said that the *archē* and element of existence is the unlimited, and was the first to give this name to the *archē*” (Theophr. *Phys. op.* 2.1). It is difficult to know precisely what parts of the terminology Theophrastus attributes to Anaximander. Ἄπειρον is usually considered *ipsissima verba*. Cf. André Laks and Glenn W. Most, eds., *Early Greek Philosophy, Volume II: Beginnings and Early Ionian Thinkers, Part 1*, Loeb Classical Library 525 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 282, DOI: 10.4159/DLCL.anaximander-doctrine.2016.

²² C. Joachim Classen, “Ἀρχή - Its Earliest Use,” *Scripta Classica Israelica* 1996, no. XV (1996): 24.

²³ Heinz Ambronn, *Apeiron - eon - kenon: Zum Arché-Begriff bei den Vorsokratikern* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1996), 45.

²⁴ Malcolm Schofield, “APXH,” in *Hyperboreus: Studia Classica*, vol. 2 (St Petersburg: Bibliotheca Classica Petropolitana, 1997), 218. This article is, to my knowledge, the best treatment of how the sense “principle” evolved. See also Adolf Lumpe, “Der Terminus ‘Prinzip’ (ἀρχή) von den Vorsokratikern bis auf Aristoteles,” *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, no. 1 (1955): 104–116.

²⁵ Ἀρχή in the sense “principle” can take ἀρχικός as an attribute, which shows that the meaning “principle” somehow straddles the temporal and political meanings.

λέγεται τοῦ πράγματος, οἷον τῶν ἀποδείξεων αἱ ὑποθέσεις. ἰσαχῶς δὲ καὶ τὰ αἷτια λέγεται· πάντα γὰρ τὰ αἷτια ἀρχαί.

...and that [sc. *archē*] according to whose intention what moves moves and what changes changes; for this reason *archai* in cities, dynasties, kingships, and tyrannies are called *archai*, and the arts, and of these pre-eminently the art of the master-builder. Then there is [the *archē*] from which a thing first becomes known, and this *archē* is called the *archē* of a thing, for instance the hypotheses of inquiries. Causes have the same number of meanings, for all causes are *archai*. (Arist. *Metaph.* 1013a)²⁶

Malcolm Schofield argues that Aristotle “builds ‘out of’ or ‘from’ into his definition,” sc. of every subsense of ἀρχή, except into “governing principle,” for which reason it seems Aristotle tried to subsume all senses of ἀρχή under the general meaning “beginning” but failed.²⁷

Aristotle explains the label ἀρχή in the case of magistrates with reference to their being prime movers of things that happen in cities. This has also been identified as a main characteristic of political offices (ἀρχαί) by Mogens Herman Hansen, who has argued that Athens gave the power of initiative to the offices and the power of decision-making to the assembly.²⁸ Although it is possible that the political meanings of ἀρχή originally developed out of the meaning “beginning,” and leaders thus were once seen as “initiators,” the distinctions between initiating and other functions of power were probably blurred early on. There is no strong reason to ascribe to the archons in the Archaic era the role of initiating only, which means that if they primarily had this function in democratic Athens, it is due to historical contingencies, not because this function was always intended by the word ἀρχή.

As for register, ἀρχή ranges from the everyday to the technical. Unlike many other philosophical or political terms (for example κράτος, δίκη, εὐνομία, and θέμις), ἀρχή was seldom personified, which is striking, given how often the Greeks personified concepts and how prominent a place ἀρχή had in philosophical discourse.²⁹ It thus appears to be a rather dry, not very elevated term.³⁰

²⁶ Ἀρχή sometimes differs from αἷτιον in Aristotle in being “the first in a series of causes . . . but much more often they are treated as synonymous.” *Metaphysics*, ed. and comm. W.D. Ross, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958), 291.

²⁷ Schofield, “APXH,” 231.

²⁸ Hansen, “Initiative and Decision: The Separation of Powers in Fourth-Century Athens,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, no. 22 (1980): 345–370.

²⁹ There is a hapax personification in Plato’s *Laws* 775d, but it seems more like a proverb than a proper personification. It is not mentioned in either T.B.L. Webster, “Personification as a Mode of Greek Thought,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17, no. 1 (1954): 10–21; or Emma Stafford, “Personification in Greek Religious Thought and Practice,” in *A Companion to Greek Religion*, ed. Daniel Ogden (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 71–85.

³⁰ It occurs in poetic plurals in tragedy, but this applies to all political words. An example from *King Oedipus*: “now that I happen to have the *archai* which that man had before” (Soph. *OT* 259). Other instances include Euripides’ *Phoenician Women* 1586 and *Orestes* 897.

Conclusions

In conclusion, ἀρχή was clearly a polysemous word to the Greeks, which means its political meanings, no matter its diachronic relationship to the temporal meanings, should not be understood synchronically as an extension of the temporal meanings. The meaning “principle” is in some sense a philosophical attempt to unite the political and temporal meanings under one heading. The term apparently belongs to technical vocabulary, which probably contributes to its having a neutral connotation for the most part.

Let us now investigate how ἀρχή became polysemous even as a term referring to power, and how this polysemy became a *topos* in Greek political discourse.

The Archon: from Supremacy to Nothing

Background

The non-temporal attestations of ἀρχή or ἄρχω in the Iliad refer to military leadership. Ἄρχω is either constructed with the dative or the genitive; although these uses often appear to overlap, the dative constructions refer to the physical leadership of soldiers in combat (i.e. spearheading the troops), whereas the genitive refers to having a position of command.¹ The first attestation of ἄρχω or ἀρχή as a properly political term refers to Alcinous, the king of the Phaeacians (Ἀλκίνοος δὲ τότε ἦρχε, Hom. *Od.* 6.12).² Despite the unclear prerogatives of “kings” (βασιλεῖς) in the epics—there are often many “kings” in the same community—Alcinous is presented as the successor of Nausithous, who made the Phaeacians settle in their homeland, divided the lands, constructed the temples, and so on; that is, the context suggests that Nausithous and Alcinous were the pre-eminent political leaders. Ἀρχή thus referred to “suprem-

¹ I aim to show this in forthcoming work. For now, let us just quote the *Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, which offers that the genitive usually means “command” and that the dative rarely does. See Franco Montanari, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, ed. Madeleine Goh and Chad Schroeder (Leiden: Brill, 2015) s.v. ἄρχω. The dative instances cited, however, either denote commanders who physically lead in battle and are therefore ambiguous (*Il.* 2.805, *Od.* 14.320; the latter features an adverbial phrase beginning with εἰς, clearly showing that ἄρχω refers to movement) or has a locative dative referring to place (βάσσαισι ἄρχειν, “ruling in the glens,” Pind. *Pyth.* 3.4).

² Cf. Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 166.

acy.” But as centuries passed, political developments weakened the connection between ἀρχή and supremacy.³ This is clear in the evolution of the original magistrate, the archon (ἄρχων).⁴ The word ἄρχων was originally a participle of ἄρχω: the participle may refer to the office’s temporary character, which can be contrasted with the Archaic nominal ἀρχός, simultaneously a tribal military leader, priest, and judge, whose tenure was more permanent in character.⁵ Ἀρχός disappeared from the language after the epics, which coincides with the presumed disappearance of hereditary rulers. Eventually, ἄρχων became the technical term for the “eponymous” magistracy in many cities, which means the tenure-holder lent his name to the year(s) of his tenure in the official calendar.⁶ It is unclear if the title appeared in many places independently or if it originated in one place and spread from there. Some of its prevalence is probably due to Attic Greek’s spreading far and wide in its *koine* guise during the Hellenistic era, but the semantic connection between “being first” and “having power” is cross-linguistically so common that it is unnecessary to assume a unique moment of coining.⁷

The Athenian Archon and the Magistracy

For centuries, the archon was the most powerful individual office in Athens. Tradition has it that there were first archons for life, then decennial archons, then annual archons. This development sits right on the border between myth and reconstructible history, for which reason the details are obscure. But as the archon was the eponymous office—Athenian events were dated with the formula ἐπὶ τινος ἄρχοντος “when x was archon”—there are somewhat trustworthy lists of office-holders going back to the early seventh century.⁸ There is no record of the office ever changing its name; had this happened, tradition would have preserved it. It is therefore probable that a political office called *archē*, whose holder was the archon, existed some decades after 700 at the

³ Contrast Meier: “Mit der Entwicklung von Ämtern scheint der Begriff ἀρχή aufgekommen zu sein, der dann bald zugleich etwa die Herrschaft des Tyrannen oder Macht und Herrschaft überhaupt zu bezeichnen begann.” “Macht, Gewalt,” 822. This appears to reverse the causality. The truth depends in part on what Meier means by “Ämtern”: is the supreme office an “Amt”?

⁴ Scholars generally refer to this office as the “archon eponymous,” but this practice apparently only began with Philo of Alexandria (c. 25 BCE–40 CE; see *Abr.* 10.4). The term used by the contemporaries is simply *archon*.

⁵ For participles indicating temporary character, see August Pauly, *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. Georg Wissowa, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlerscher Verlag, 1896) s.v. Archontes. An argument that the *archoi* were *basileis* themselves can be found in Karl-Wilhelm Welwei, *Polis und Arché: Kleine Schriften zu Gesellschafts- und Herrschaftsstrukturen in der griechischen Welt*, ed. Mischa Meier (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), 32f.

⁶ Sherk, “Eponymous Officials,” 277.

⁷ Cf. Fiske, “The Four Elementary Forms of Sociality: Framework for a Unified Theory of Social Relations,” *Psychological Review* 99, no. 4 (1992): 689–723; and “Four Modes.”

⁸ A thorough attempt to reconstruct the list of archons is T.J. Cadoux, “The Athenian Archons from Kreon to Hysichides,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 68 (1948): 70–123.

latest. Even later, ἀρχή without qualifiers is the technical term for the office of the archon:

ὅσοι μὴ ἐπεποιήντο φησὶν ὅτε Σόλων εἰσήει εἰς τὴν ἀρχήν, ἐξεῖναι αὐτοῖς διαθέσθαι ὅπως ἂν ἐθέλωσιν

Those who were not adopted, it says, when Solon became archon, are allowed to bequeath as they would like. ([Dem.] *Leoch.* 68)

τῷ δὲ πέμπτῳ μετὰ τὴν Σόλωνος ἀρχήν οὐ κατέστησαν ἄρχοντα διὰ τὴν στ[άσι]ν, καὶ πάλιν ἔτει πέμπτῳ διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰτίαν ἀναρχίαν ἐποίησαν.

On the fifth year after the archonship of Solon, they did not install an archon because of unrest, and on the fifth year after that they let the position be vacant for the same reason. (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 13.1.4)

καὶ ἄλλοι τε αὐτῶν ἤρξαν τὴν ἐνιαύσιον Ἀθηναίοις ἀρχήν καὶ Πεισίστρατος ὁ Ἴππίου τοῦ τυραννεύσαντος υἱός, τοῦ πάππου ἔχων τοῦνομα, ὃς τῶν δώδεκα θεῶν βωμὸν τὸν ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἄρχων ἀνέθηκε καὶ τὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐν Πυθίου.

Among those who had the annual archonship in Athens we note Pisistratus, the son of Hippias the tyrant, with the same name as his grandfather, who during his archonship set up the altar to the twelve gods in the agora and in the precinct of the Pythian Apollo. (Thuc. 6.54)

The archon was created, perhaps on the initiative of the aristocracy, to take over functions from the king (βασιλεύς).⁹ The traditional scholarly view of the king is that he was the supreme official in political, military, and religious affairs.¹⁰ When Linear B was deciphered, however, it turned out that the *basileus* was a minor office in the Mycenaean states, which has prompted extensive speculation on how the *basileus* could assume such extensive powers as are traditionally ascribed to him.¹¹ The majority opinion seems to be that the *basileus* was the highest surviving office after the so-called Bronze-Age Collapse had destroyed centralized royal authority.

Karl-Wilhelm Welwei connects the development of magistracies (presumably including the archonship) in about 700 to population growth, which prompted a less personal and more formalized government apparatus.¹² This

⁹ Cf. Ehrenberg, *Greek State*, 65.

¹⁰ Ehrenberg, 65.

¹¹ Cf. e.g. Fritz Gschnitzer, “Βασιλεύς: Ein terminologischer Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte des Königtums bei den Griechen,” in *Festschrift L.C. Franz*, ed. Osmund Menghin and Hermann M. Ölberg, vol. 2, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft (Innsbruck: Sprachwissenschaftliche Institut der Leopold-Franzens-Universität, 1965), 100–105; John Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 70; and Drews, *Basileus*, 109f.

¹² Welwei, *Polis und Arché*, 10.

led to the king's power's sifting away to the magistrates. The original division of duties between archon and king is unclear: Arthur Ledl argues that the archon must have assumed the military leadership as well as the domestic executive power for his title to properly represent his duties.¹³ Charles Hignett assumes, *pace* Ledl, that the king supervised military affairs until the creation of the polemarch (πολέμαρχος, literally “war-leader”), while the archon had civilian, domestic duties; Hignett’s argument is however based on the example of Sparta (where kings lost most of their civilian powers but remained generals), which does not bear on Athens.¹⁴

Whatever the precise division of roles at the onset, the king eventually mainly exercised ceremonial power, and the archon took over the brunt of the work.¹⁵ As Athenian politics became more complex, government became more collegial: the polemarch was created to take over military duties, and the archon, polemarch, and king were joined by six thesmothes (θεσμοθέται, “law-givers”).¹⁶ This committee was referred to as “the nine rulers” (οἱ ἐννέα ἄρχοντες or simply οἱ ἐννέα). Up until the sixth century, they ruled both *de jure* and *de facto*: when Solon introduced substantial political reforms, he did it as archon, and when the Pisistratids held sway as tyrants in Athens in the latter part of the sixth century, they did so through controlling the appointment of the archon (Thuc. 6.54); the earliest attestation of ἀρχή as a political term is an inscription on the Altar of the Twelve Gods commemorating the archonship of Pisistratus the younger in 522/1:

Μνημα τόδ’ ἦς ἀρχῆς Πεισίστρατος Ἰππίου υἱός / θῆκεν Ἀπόλλωνος Πυθίου ἐν τεμένει.

To commemorate his rule, Pisistratus son of Hippias set this up in the precinct of Apollo Pythius. (*IG I² 761*)¹⁷

When tyrants exercised their power through the archons, without being archons themselves, the highest office began to be perceived as abstracted in

¹³ Artur Ledl, *Studien zur älteren athenischen Verfassungsgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1914), 256.

¹⁴ Hignett, *Athenian Constitution*, 42f. In *Politics* 1285b, Aristotle says that the Spartan kingship is essentially a hereditary military command (στρατηγία).

¹⁵ The Athenian king is conventionally referred to as the *archon-basileus* or the “king-archon” in English, but like “archon eponymous” it is an anachronism. The Athenians referred to him only as *basileus*.

¹⁶ The Aristotelian *Athenian Constitution* says that the non-ancient duties of the archon indicates that the archon was created after the polemarch (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 3.3). This is not necessarily the case. The prime minister of Sweden performs the ancient task of running the country, whereas the king (among other things) is the protector of young institutions such as the Royal Automobile Club, yet the office of king is perhaps a thousand years older, if not more. Hignett argues (correctly) that if the archon really were the younger office, then the archon would have received a less vague title. See *Athenian Constitution*, 42.

¹⁷ Cf. Spahn, “Archē,” 68f. The entire inscription is also attested in Thucydides 6.54.6. The original is partially obliterated but still legible.

practice from the function it legally had and which was implied by its name. Ἀρχή could then both mean “office of archon” and “rule,” without these coinciding.¹⁸ The following passage from the *Athenian Constitution* contains the two parallel senses of ἀρχή or ἄρχω:

Πεισίστρατος μὲν οὖν ἐγκατεγήρασε τῇ ἀρχῇ, καὶ ἀπέθανε νοσήσας ἐπὶ Φιλόνεω ἄρχοντος...

Pisistratus, then, grew old ruling and died of sickness when Philoneus was archon... (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 17.1)

In Athenian democracy, this semantic ambiguity increased as ever more magistracies, all subsumed under the terms ἀρχή, ἀρχαί, and ἄρχοντες, were added to the roll, which diminished the power of the individual magistrates; this may have been the aim of the reform, as it made the resurgence of tyranny less probable.¹⁹ With the introduction of the lot, less able men occupied the positions; they came under the scrutiny of the council, itself appointed by lot, and lost their independence.²⁰

In the fourth century, the magistrates numbered around seven hundred, now resembling bureaucrats with prosaic duties like supervising wells and maintaining roads more than they did leaders.²¹ Although some magistrates were considered more important, the assignment of offices by lot precluded any proper hierarchy outside the military, for which reason there could not be any *cursus honorum* as among the Romans.²² All were audited by the *euthuna* and discharged by the assembly. Their organic development and their exercise of different functions, which had little in common and were abstracted from the etymologically implied sense of “leadership,” made the offices difficult to define without resorting to convention. Aristotle tried:

ἔστι δὲ οὐδὲ τοῦτο διορίσαι ῥάδιον, ποίας δεῖ καλεῖν ἀρχάς· πολλῶν γὰρ ἐπιστατῶν ἢ πολιτικῆ κοινωνία δεῖται, διόπερ <οὐ> πάντας οὔτε τοὺς αἰρετοὺς οὔτε τοὺς κληρωτοὺς ἄρχοντας θετέον, οἷον τοὺς ἱερεῖς πρῶτον (τοῦτο γὰρ ἕτερόν τι παρὰ τὰς πολιτικὰς ἀρχὰς θετέον)· ἔτι δὲ καὶ χορηγοὶ καὶ κήρυκες [δ³] αἰροῦνται καὶ πρεσβευταί. εἰσὶ δὲ αἱ μὲν πολιτικαὶ τῶν ἐπιμελειῶν, ἡ

¹⁸ Cf. Spahn, 69.

¹⁹ Hignett, *Athenian Constitution*, 221–223. For democracies’ weakening the magistracy through expanding it, see Plato’s *Statesman* 303a.

²⁰ Ehrenberg, *Greek State*, 68. Cf. Hignett, *Athenian Constitution*, 230f. See also Ober, *Mass and Elite*, 77, 85. Greg Anderson has argued that the lot was not egalitarian, but served to assure that *politai* and not *idiotai*—that is, citizens not as private persons but in their generic capacity as citizens—occupied the offices. See *Realness of Things Past*, 196.

²¹ Hansen, *Athenian Democracy*, 228. Hansen has also produced a comprehensive list of magistrates, which closely follows the *Constitution of the Athenians*, in “Seven Hundred Archai in Classical Athens,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, no. 21 (1980): 155.

²² Ulrich Kahrstedt, *Studien zum öffentlichen Recht Athens: Untersuchungen zur Magistratur in Athen*, Geisteswissenschaftliche Forschungen 10 (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1936), 4, 6.

πάντων τῶν πολιτῶν πρὸς τινα πράξιν, οἷον στρατηγὸς στρατευομένων, ἢ κατὰ μέρος, οἷον ὁ γυναικονόμος ἢ παιδονόμος· αἱ δ' οἰκονομικαὶ (πολλάκις γὰρ αἰροῦνται σιτομέτρως)· αἱ δ' ὑπηρετικαὶ καὶ πρὸς ἅς, ἂν εὐπορῶσι, τάττουσι δούλους· μάλιστα δ' ὡς ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν ἀρχὰς λεκτέον ταῦτα· ὅσαις ἀποδέδοται βουλευσασθαί τε περὶ τινῶν καὶ κρίναι καὶ ἐπιτάξαι, καὶ μάλιστα τοῦτο· τὸ γὰρ ἐπιτάττειν ἀρχικώτερόν ἐστιν.

And defining which things should be called magistrates is not easy. For although a political community needs many supervisors, not every one of them—whether elected or appointed by lot—should be considered a magistrate; this applies primarily to priests (priests should be considered something different, alongside the political magistrates); then you have the choir-leaders and the heralds, who are elected, and the ambassadors. Some of these duties are political, and either concern all citizens for some enterprise (such as the general when on campaign) or a part of the citizenry (such as the women's guardian or the children's guardian). Others are domestic (as you know, the bread-measurers are often elected). Others are servile and to these you assign slaves if you have the means. But in general, one should simply say that magistrates are those who are entitled to advise, judge and give orders with regard to certain things, and especially the latter, for giving orders is rather associated with the magistracy. (Arist. *Pol.* 1299a)

Aristotle ends up tentatively defining magistrates as those entitled to advising, judging, and giving orders, but the inclusion of the adverb μάλιστα (“in general”) shows that even this definition is not fully applicable.

Recent attempts at defining *archē* qua magistrate also fail. Ulrich Kahrstedt's definition, like Aristotle's, excludes priests and ambassadors *ad hoc*.²³ Hansen defines the magistrates with reference to Aeschines' *Against Ctesiphon* 14–15, but it is unclear whether his definition identifies essential or accidental characteristics of the *archai*.²⁴ The explanation for this definitional conundrum is that the magistrates never were defined; they developed organically from the original archonship.²⁵ The exclusion of priests, heralds, and chorus-leaders is easily explained: they either predated the expansion of the magistracy, meaning they were terminologically distinct from the beginning,

²³ Kahrstedt, 1–4.

²⁴ Hansen's criteria of a magistrate are “(a) a citizen of more than thirty years of age who was (b) elected either by lot or by a show of hands, (c) liable to *dokimasia* before assumption of office, (d) appointed for a period of more than thirty days, (e) empowered to preside over a court (ἡγεμονία δικαστηρίου), (f) empowered to impose minor fines (ἐπιβολὰς ἐπιβάλλειν), (g) empowered to manage public money and to supervise public works and public buildings, (h) liable to audit on the expiration of his office (εὔθυνα).” See “Seven Hundred Archai,” 153. These are excellent heuristic criteria for identifying a magistrates, but the question is to what extent these rules *created* magistrates as opposed to their being applied to an *existing* set of magistrates. Criteria (e), (f), and (g) appear more essential than the others. Cf. also Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 212f.

²⁵ In Sparta, where the kings remained the highest office, ἄρχων never became an official term for magistrates. See Lukas Thommen, *Lakedaimonion Politeia: Die Entstehung der spartanischen Verfassung* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), 81.

or their prominence helped them preserve a distinct identity.²⁶ The latter point explains why the council (in Aristotle’s definition an *archē*) is often excluded from the magistracy.²⁷

The evolution and dilution of the *archai* is mirrored in the use of ἀρχή in tragedy. Aeschylus tends to use ἀρχή to refer to supreme rule, often in exalted circumstances: Zeus has the “heaven-holding *archē*” (οὐρανοῦχον ἀρχάν, Aesch. *Cho.* 960); he has “reserved the *archē*” for himself (διεστοιχίζετο / ἀρχήν, Aesch. *PV* 230–231).²⁸ In *Prometheus Bound*, ἀρχή is a euphemism for τυραννίς:²⁹

Π: ...νῦν δ’ οὐδέν ἐστι τέρμα μοι προκείμενον / μόχθων πρὶν ἂν Ζεὺς ἐκπέσῃ
 τυραννίδος. / Ιο: ἦ γὰρ ποτ’ ἔστιν ἐκπεσεῖν ἀρχῆς Δία;

Prometheus: ...but now there is no set end to my suffering, before Zeus falls from tyranny. / Io: What? Will Zeus one day fall from his rule? (Aesch. *PV* 755–757)³⁰

Up until Euripides, any references to ἀρχή in the plural—which in prose signal public offices—are poetic plurals: in Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers* 864, when Orestes sets out to win his ancestors *polis*-ruling *archai*, it is either a poetic plural, or denotes Mycenae’s dominion over many cities.³¹ In Euripides, however, there are some instances where ἀρχαί refers to public offices—supreme rule has been diluted:

κακ τοῦδ’ ἐχώρει ρόθιον ἐν πόλει κακόν, / ἀρχαῖσι τ’ ἐπληροῦτο βουλευτήρια
 / ἰδίᾳ θ’ ὅσοι θεοῦ χρημάτων ἐφέστασαν / φρουρὰν ἐτάξαντ’ ἐν περιστύλοις
 δόμοις.

²⁶ Priestdom is an ancient institution. Heralds have had important ceremonial duties at least since Homeric times. See F. E. Adcock and D. J. Mosley, *Diplomacy in Ancient Greece* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 152f. Peter Wilson proposes that the *chēregia* was created either by the tyrants or by Cleisthenes. See *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia: The Chorus, the City and the Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13. In the former case (arguably in the latter, too), the *chorēgia* predates the expansion of the magistracy.

²⁷ Cf. Hansen, *Athenian Democracy*, 227. See also Lysias: “...no one will be able to prove that I sat on the council [βουλευσαντα] or held any office [ἀρχὴν οὐδεμίαν ἄρξαντα]” (Lys. 25.14). For Aristotle’s definition of council as a magistracy, cf. Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 212.

²⁸ Cf. Sophocles’ *King Oedipus* 905, in which Zeus’ *archē* is called “immortal” (ἀθάνατον).

²⁹ τυραννίς was a neutral term in the Archaic era, and is often used as such in the tragedies. But this passage, featuring Zeus’ harsh treatment of Prometheus, reflects Classical usage.

³⁰ The authorship of *Prometheus Bound* is disputed. I keep “Aeschylus” because of tradition.

³¹ Πολισσονόμους τε ἀρχάς appears in M, the best and oldest codex. The phrase is marked with a crux in Page, *Aeschylus*, 1972 ad loc. Paley keeps the phrase. See *The Tragedies of Aeschylus*, ed. and comm. F. A. Paley, 4th ed. (London: Whittaker, 1879), 561. Gilbert Murray changes the phrase to dative. See *Aeschyli septem quae supersunt tragoediae*, ed. Gilbert Murray (Oxford: Clarendon, 1947) ad loc. (not paginated). The different readings do not appear to alter the sense of the phrase.

And because of this a horrible tumult spread through the city, the council-chambers were filled with magistrates, and the stewards of the god's possessions posted a guard in the peristylic halls on their own account. (Eur. *Andr.* 1096–1099)

θηρώμεθ'· ἀρχαὶ δ' ἀπιχώριοι χθονὸς / ζητοῦσιν αὐτὴν ὡς θάνη πετρουμένη.

Let us go hunting! The local authorities of the land seek her to have her executed through stoning. (Eur. *Ion* 1111–1112)³²

The occurrences in the tragedies are so few that nothing can be said for certain, but it does appear as if there is a shift from ἀρχή “supremacy” to ἀρχή “office,” that is, to something less fixed, more fluid, and more negotiable.³³ Sophocles and Euripides were more or less contemporaries, but in these respects, Euripides is more aligned with the times.³⁴ In *Iphigenia in Aulis* 336–346, the use of ἀρχή and ἄρχειν seems almost parodic to a modern reader: Menelaus lambasts Agamemnon for his change in personality after he has received the command of the Greek expedition to Troy. Agamemnon does not resemble a king but a modern politician on the campaign trail:³⁵

οἶσθ', ὅτ' ἐσπούδαζες ἄρχειν Δαναΐδαις πρὸς Ἴλιον, / τῶι δοκεῖν μὲν οὐχὶ
χρήζων, τῶι δὲ βούλεσθαι θέλων, / ὡς ταπεινὸς ἦσθα, πάσης δεξιᾶς
προσθηγάνων / καὶ θύρας ἔχων ἀκλήιστους τῶι θέλοντι δημοτῶν / καὶ διδοὺς
πρόσρησιν ἐξῆς πᾶσι, κεῖ μὴ τις θέλοι, / τοῖς τρόποις ζητῶν πρίασθαι τὸ
φιλότιμον ἐκ μέσου, / καίτ', ἐπεὶ κατέσχευς ἀρχάς, μεταβαλὼν ἄλλους τρόπους
/ τοῖς φίλοισιν οὐκέτ' ἦσθα τοῖς πρὶν ὡς πρόσθεν φίλος, / δυσπρόσιτος ἔσω τε
κλήθρων σπάνιος;

Do you know that when you were eager to lead the Danaids to Ilium, and pretended not to want it, but intensely wished for it, you quite humbled yourself, shaking every right hand and having your door unlocked for any commoner

³² P.T. Stevens comments on the *Andromache* quote that ἀρχαὶ “presumably [means] the civic authorities.” For the use of ἀρχαὶ to refer to ἄρχοντες, he refers to the quoted passage from *Ion*. See *Andromache*, ed. and comm. P.T. Stevens (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 224. For ἀρχαὶ ἀπιχώριοι, “local magistrates,” cf. the technical term ἀρχαὶ ἔνδημοι, “idem,” as opposed to ἄ. ὑπερόριοι “magistrates operating outside of the polis.”

³³ Cf. Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 7. The meaning “supremacy” (vel sim.) is often intended when ἀρχή has the definite article. Cf. Lévy, “Archè chez Hérodote,” 92.

³⁴ Marrucci notes that Euripides’ use of ἀρχή reflects the democratic polis. See *Kratos e Arche*, 209. Cf. Mastrorarde: “...social and political tensions are brought to the surface more often in Euripides [sc. than in Aeschylus and Sophocles]....” *The Art of Euripides: Dramatic Technique and Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 309. The wish to make political tension explicit makes it more likely that the vocabulary is affected by contemporary political parlance.

³⁵ Cf. Paley: “This description of a candidate for office is admirable. We seem in every particular to be reading an active canvassing in our own times.” *Euripides*, comm. F.A. Paley, vol. 3 (London: Whittaker, 1860), 471. Given that Paley wrote in the middle of the nineteenth century, the epithet “modern” is perhaps generous. Marrucci notes that ἀρχή in this passage unites the Archaic meaning “command” with “more modern” (which I take to mean “Classical”) democratic and institutional characteristics. See *Kratos e Arche*, 209 n. 623.

who wanted to come, and you greeted everybody in turn, even if they did not want it, seeking thereby to buy distinction from the middle, and then, when you had your command, you exchanged your manners for others and was not the same friend to your previous friends as you had been, being hard to approach and rarely at home? (Eur. *IA* 337–345)

Ἀρχή has hereby become provisional and matches the *archai* in Athens at the time of the play's production (c. 405). The roughly contemporaneous (411–410) *Phoenician Women*, relating the power struggles between Eteocles and Polyneices in Thebes, is affected by discourse on ἀρχή of its time. Eteocles and Polyneices have agreed that one of them should rule for a year at a time, while the other brother is exiled; at the year's end, they should swap places. But Eteocles, having been installed on the "seat of the rule" (ζύγοις... ἀρχῆς, 74–75), stays on the throne and forces Polyneices to remain in exile. In Euripides' account of the myth, the yearly rotation resembles the Athenian practice regarding the magistrates, and the voluntary exile—a necessity for safeguarding the political structure—resembles the institution of ostracism serving a similar purpose.

The wing-clipping of the magistracy is also reflected in political thought. In *Critias*, Plato tells of Atlantis, which was ruled by ten sons of Poseidon; the sea-god appointed the oldest son to be king (βασιλέα), while the rest became archons (ἄρχοντες) with dominion (ἀρχή) over many men and vast tracts of land (Pl. *Criti.* 114a).³⁶ This construes the archons as real holders of power, but they appear as subordinates to the king, i.e. not as the supreme leaders of the state.³⁷ One could here compare Plato's *Republic* 463a, which offers that the "rulers" (ἄρχοντες) in most cities are called *despotai*, but in democratically ruled cities, they are called *archontes*.

The multiplication of the *archai* did not lead to the reconceptualization of rule as decentralized and divided between the office holders. It led to the *archai* being seen as powerless.³⁸ This change is visible in the grammar: ruling titles take the genitive, e.g. Μακεδόνων βασιλεύς; the same applies to the participle ἄρχων when it means real political rule, e.g. Ἄτρεϋς γὰρ ἄρχων τῆσδε γῆς "for when Atreus ruled this land" (Aesch. *Ag.* 1583), ἄρχων Αἰγύπτου about the Persian viceroy of Egypt (Hdt. 4.166). But if the participle is used to refer to the archon in Athens, it occurs not with genitives but with datives and locatives: ἐπὶ...Πυθοδώρου...ἄρχοντος Ἀθηναίοις (Thuc. 2.2),

³⁶ Cf. Herodotus. 2.144, relating how the rulers of Egypt are *archontes*, among which there is always one who is *ho krateōn* (discussed in "*Kratos* Outranks *Archē*" above).

³⁷ This possibly reflects the original subordination of the archon to the king.

³⁸ Cf. Ehrenberg: "[the] principle of 'specialization'... meant a change in the concept of office, which ceased to express political leadership and became the conscientious performance of a set task." *Greek State*, 65. Marrucci appears to think that some quality already inherent in ἀρχή made this word proliferate in democracies. See *Kratos e Arche*, 154f.

ἐπι...Ἀλκαίου δ' ἄρχοντας Ἀθήνησι (Thuc. 5.25), Καλλιιάδεω ἄρχοντας Ἀθηναίοισι (Hdt. 8.51).³⁹

Second, the synonyms to ἀρχή changed in the late 300s: in Demosthenes' *On the Crown* 321, ἐξουσία, "permission," is used in the meaning "public office," reflecting that a public office was no longer seen as a source of power but as a "permission" (or "delegation") to oversee matters of public interest granted by the community.⁴⁰

With this development, the rift between name and function in the *archai* became striking. Herodotus, writing at the peak of Athens' "radical democracy" (cf. "The Concept Democracy..." above) in the 440s, punned on the matter in a passage about the deposed Spartan king Demareteus:

μετὰ τῆς βασιλείης τὴν κατάπαυσιν ὁ Δημάρητος ἦρχε αἰρεθεὶς ἀρχὴν. ἦσαν μὲν δὴ γυμνοπαιδία, θεωμένου δὲ τοῦ Δημαρήτου ὁ Λευτυχίδης, γεγονῶς ἤδη βασιλεὺς αὐτὸς ἀντ' ἐκείνου, πέμψας τὸν θεράποντα ἐπὶ γέλῳ τε καὶ λάσθῃ εἰρώτα τὸν Δημάρητον ὁκοῖόν τι εἶη τὸ ἄρχειν μετὰ τὸ βασιλεύειν. ὁ δὲ ἀλγήσας τῷ ἐπειρωτήματι εἶπε φᾶς αὐτὸς μὲν ἀμφοτέρων ἤδη πεπειρηῆσθαι, ἐκείνον δὲ οὐ· τὴν μὲντοι ἐπειρώτησιν ταύτην ἄρξειν Λακεδαιμονίοισι ἢ μυρίας κακότητος ἢ μυρίας εὐδαιμονίας.

After being deposed as king, Demareteus was elected to serve as a magistrate. So came the Gymnopaedic festival, and as Demareteus was in the audience, Leotychides, who had now himself become king in Demareteus' stead, sent a servant to ask him, both as a joke and as an insult, how it was to be a magistrate after having been king. Demareteus took offence to the question and responded by saying that he himself had tried both, but Leotychides had not; and this question would certainly be the beginning of either a myriad of disasters or a myriad of successes for the Lacedaemonians. (Hdt. 6.67)

Herodotus calls this "both joke and insult" because ἄρχειν has two different senses: the joke is that, since ἄρχειν can mean "rule," Leotychides asks how it is to rule after having been king.⁴¹ The insult is that ἄρχειν can mean "serve in an office," which differs from being a king in that it does *not* mean rule:

³⁹ Recall how in the *Iliad* [ἄρχω + GENITIVE] refers to a position of command, whereas [ἄρχω + DATIVE] refers to physical spearheading in combat. The commanders do not always spearhead the troop: the individual non-commanding soldier spearheads if he is the first to make contact with the enemy. This indicates that in the *Iliad*, the dative does not imply authority.

⁴⁰ The semantic development seems to have gone both ways: the perhaps spurious Platonic dialogue *First Alcibiades* contains a passage in which ἀρχή is used as a near-synonym to ἐξουσία in the sense "permission": "Then it is not permission [ἐξουσίαν] or authority [ἀρχήν] to do what you want that you have to secure for yourself or the city, but righteousness and temperance" (Pl. *Alc.* 1 134c). The construction [ἀρχή + INFINITIVE] meaning "authority/permission to X" is influenced by [ἐξουσία + INFINITIVE] and belongs to the late Classical era at the earliest.

⁴¹ The story resembles Herodotus 1.129, in which general Harpagus asks the deposed king Asyages how it is (ὄ τι εἶη) to be a slave after having been king.

relative to the king, magistrates are powerless.⁴² Less comic and more reflective is Aristotle, who in yet another passage from the *Politics* attempts to define magistrates, this time as a means to define citizens:

πολίτης δ' ἀπλῶς οὐδενὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὀρίζεται μᾶλλον ἢ τῷ μετέχειν κρίσεως καὶ ἀρχῆς. τῶν δ' ἀρχῶν αἱ μὲν εἰσι διηρημέναι κατὰ χρόνον, ὥστ' ἐνίας μὲν ὄλως δις τὸν αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἄρχειν, ἢ διὰ τινῶν ὀρισμένων χρόνων· ὁ δ' ἀόριστος, οἷον ὁ δικαστὴς καὶ <ὁ> ἐκκλησιαστὴς. Τάχα μὲν οὖν ἂν φαίη τις οὐδ' ἄρχοντας εἶναι τοὺς τοιοῦτους, οὐδὲ μετέχειν διὰ ταῦτ' ἀρχῆς· καίτοι γελοῖον τοὺς κυριωτάτους ἀποστερεῖν ἀρχῆς. ἀλλὰ διαφερέτω μηδέν· περὶ ὀνόματος γὰρ ὁ λόγος· ἀνώνυμον γὰρ τὸ κοινὸν ἐπὶ δικαστοῦ καὶ ἐκκλησιαστοῦ, τί δεῖ ταῦτ' ἄμφω καλεῖν. ἔστω δὴ διορισμοῦ χάριν ἀόριστος ἀρχή. τίθεμεν δὴ πολίτας τοὺς οὕτω μετέχοντας.

A citizen is simply defined by nothing else than his participation in decision and the magistracy. Magistrates are sometimes limited in time, to the effect that some are generally impossible for the same person to have twice, except at given intervals. But there are unlimited magistrates, for instance the judge and the assemblyman. Someone could say such men are not magistrates and do not partake in the *archē* for this reason, but it is ridiculous to deny that the most powerful men are magistrates. But let it not make a difference, because it is a question of name, and the common denominator of a judge and assemblyman—i.e. what one ought to call them both—does not have a name. Let it, then, for the sake of definition, be “unlimited magistrate,” and duly define as citizens those who participate in this way. (Arist. *Pol.* 1275a)

The judge and the assemblyman are formally not magistrates (*archai*), but they perform the literal function of *archē* as de facto rulers.⁴³ Like Herodotus, Aristotle shows that ἀρχή qua “office” in practice slipped away from its etymology because offices became less associated with power. But whereas Herodotus simply points out that ἀρχή in certain contexts no longer means “rule,” Aristotle finds this problematic and attempts to redefine “magistrate” to better integrate the definition of “magistrate” with the literal meaning of ἀρχή, “rule.”

Let us now say something about the constitutional typology. We have previously concluded that δημοκρατία was not calqued on μοναρχία, which implies the form was not a substitute of δημαρχία (see “Debrunner’s ‘Δημοκρατία’” above). Can we, based on the investigation above, say something about the nature of -αρχία, and why, perhaps, δημοκρατία was not a πολυαρχία?

Although πολυαρχία (vel sim.) could *prima facie* have been a fitting name for democracy because of its multiplication of *archai*, there are arguments

⁴² Lévy finds in this passage the difference between ἡ ἀρχή, “sovereign rule,” and ἀρχή, “a rule” ~ “office” significant. See “Archè chez Hérodote,” 92. How & Wells propose that Demaratus was an ephor. See *A Commentary on Herodotus*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936), 90. Note that Demaratus replies with a pun himself: “would be the beginning” (ἄρξειν).

⁴³ Aristotle defines ἀρχή in terms of κύριος, which is sometimes glossed as “being sovereign.”

against this. The first is the dating of δημοκρατία: as only μοναρχία preceded δημοκρατία, there was no established pattern of -αρχία for δημοκρατία to conform to (cf. “Debrunner’s ‘Δημοκρατία’” above). Besides, if δημοκρατία was first used about the regime supplanting the tyrants, then δημοκρατία referred to a government in which the archons were still nine in number, hardly a polyarchy except insofar any non-monarchic government was. The expansion of the magistracy only happened in the fifth century. It is in this period of expansion that ὀλιγαρχία makes sense: it represented a reaction against the multiplication of the magistracy. But as ἀρχή was still polysemous and could mean either “magistrate” or “rule,” ὀλιγαρχία could be used about two different types of opposition to democracy, one being “the idea that the magistrates should be fewer in number” (what scholars sometimes call “moderate oligarchy”), the other being “the idea that a few people should hold supreme power.”⁴⁴

Πολυαρχία was, however, an unlikely name not only because of its anachronism. There is a connection between polyarchy and anarchy, which appears to be intrinsic to the former concept.⁴⁵ The following passage from Thucydides identifies this connection:

μέγα δὲ βλάψαι καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν στρατηγῶν καὶ τὴν πολυαρχίαν (ἦσαν γὰρ πέντε καὶ δέκα οἱ στρατηγοὶ αὐτοῖς) τῶν τε πολλῶν τὴν ἀξύντακτον ἀναρχίαν. ἦν δὲ ὀλίγοι τε στρατηγοὶ γένωνται ἔμπειροὶ καὶ ἐν τῷ χειμῶνι τούτῳ παρασκευάσωσι τὸ ὀπλιτικόν, οἷς τε ὅπλα μὴ ἔστιν ἐκπορίζοντες, ὅπως ὡς πλείστοι ἔσονται, καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ μελέτῃ προσαναγκάζοντες, ἔφη κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς κρατήσῃν σφᾶς τῶν ἐναντίων, ἀνδρείας μὲν σφίσιν ὑπαρχούσης, εὐταξίας δ’ ἐς τὰ ἔργα προσγενομένης·

They were greatly harmed by the multitude of generals and their polyarchy—they had fifteen generals—and the disordered anarchy of the multitude. But if they should be a few experienced generals and prepare their hoplites during that winter, and provide with arms those who lacked them so that as many as possible could have them, and compel them to other drills, he said that they would probably conquer their enemies as they had courage, and they would add order to their practice. . . (Thuc. 6.72)

⁴⁴ Cf. Caire, *Penser l’oligarchie*, 34.

⁴⁵ Gourgouris reaches the same conclusion from a philosophical reading of the expression ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι: “...the mutual alterity between the positions of ruler and ruled does not disintegrate to mere opposition but, rather, remains involved in a mutual complicity where any primordial notion of *archē* as singular authority or singular origin of power is irreparably disrupted. This exposes the whole business of ruling as a veritably *an-archic* [sic] condition, in the sense that rule, although not abolished, is provisionally constituted on no other ground than the equal sharing of power among a people who occasionally perform the position of ruler and occasionally perform the position of ruled but are in essence always, *politically*, acting in both positions simultaneously. *In this very sense, anarchy is the archē of democracy.*” See “Archē,” 8 (italics in original). Marrucci argues similarly that “such a notion of authority dissolves” (“Una simile nozione di autorità si svincola”). See *Kratos e Arche*, 226.

In fact, Plato's charging democracy with innate anarchy (ἀναρχίαν ἐμφυομένην) in *Republic* 562d–e is premised precisely on democracy's polyarchy:

Τοὺς δὲ γε, εἶπον, τῶν ἀρχόντων κατηκούς προπηλακίζει ὡς ἐθελοδούλους τε καὶ οὐδὲν ὄντας, τοὺς δὲ ἄρχοντας μὲν ἀρχομένοις, ἀρχομένους δὲ ἄρχουσιν ὁμοίους ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ δημοσίᾳ ἐπαινεῖ τε καὶ τιμᾷ. ἄρ' οὐκ ἀνάγκη ἐν τοιαύτῃ πόλει ἐπὶ πᾶν τὸ τῆς ἐλευθερίας ἰέναι; / Πῶς γὰρ οὐ; / Καὶ καταδύεσθαι γε, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὃ φίλε, εἰς τε τὰς ἰδίας οἰκίας καὶ τελευτᾶν μέχρι τῶν θηρίων τὴν ἀναρχίαν ἐμφυομένην.

[A democratically ruled polis], said I, reviles those who obey the rulers as willing slaves and nobodies, and praises and honors rulers who are like subjects and subjects who are like rulers, in private and in public. Isn't freedom bound to go all-in in such a city? / Certainly. / And, said I, isn't this innate anarchy, my friend, bound to creep into the private homes and end up even in the animals?" (Pl. *Resp.* 562d–e).

This connection did not arise with democracy either. It appears to inhere even in what is sometimes (rather exaggeratedly) cited as the first criticism of democracy, Agamemnon's rebuke of *polukoironiē*, interpreting *polu-* as "everyone":

οὐ μὲν πως πάντες βασιλεύσομεν ἐνθάδ' Ἀχαιοί· / οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη·
εἰς κοίρανος ἔστω...

For every Achaean cannot be king here! Many lords is no good thing, let there be one master... (Hom. *Il.* 2.203–204).

Conclusions

Ἀρχή, although originally referring to supreme rule, had its meaning diluted by the political developments in Greece, which the developments in the Athenian magistracy illustrates. It is uncertain if this development applies everywhere; our sources are Athenocentric. The example of Sparta, where some traditional royal structures survived into the Classical era and where magistrates were not called *archai*, indicates that the meaning "magistracy" is applicable to certain cities that had undergone similar political developments as Athens had. A possible piece of evidence for this is *Republic* 463a, which says that *archontes* is the title of the rulers specifically in democratic cities. This dilution of power is reflected well in the shifting usage of ἀρχή in tragedy. The discourse surrounding ἀρχή also suggests that its polysemy as a term for power was a problem that had to be overcome by thinkers. The polysemy of ἀρχή explains the ambiguity of ὀλιγαρχία, which could either be moderate democracy or a "monarchy (viz. tyranny) of the few."

Πολυαρχία was clearly a slur against democracy—which is why it would have made little sense, at least as a constitutional self-designation of democracy. It also appears as though the intrinsic connection between polyarchy and anarchy ruled out interpreting πολυαρχία along the lines of μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία, viz. as “a tyranny of the many.”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Pace the point about *polloi-archia* in Ober, “Original Meaning of ‘Democracy,’” 8.

5. An Inquiry into *Kratos*

In this chapter we will inquire into how the monosemy of κράτος must affect our interpretation of *kratos* as a political term (“The Monosemy of Κράτος”). As the monosemy of *kratos* makes it difficult to understand fully in translation, we will then closely read passages containing κράτος and cognates in order to see how the concept *kratos*, for lack of a better word, operates within the Greek mentality, tracing its conceptual connections. Given the rather few attestations of κράτος in Classical prose, we will focus mostly on the epics and poetry, which will give our inquiry a character of cultural history. We will then conclude by discussing the attestations of κράτος in prose, and explain why it became gradually less common, so as to eventually vanish from prose. Finally, we will attempt to use our insights to draw conclusions about the meaning of δημοκρατία and the discourse surrounding it.

In the epilogue, the use of κράτος in Herodotus and in Attic prose will be examined, in order to understand the register of κράτος.

The Monosemy of κράτος

Κράτος is often understood as “power,” “strength,” and “victory” from Homer onwards. In theory, any of these meanings may develop into the other through metonymy: strength decides who wins, the winner comes into power, and so on.¹ The Indo-European etymology is unclear and of little help: κράτος has a cognate in Sanskrit *kratu-* “will, strength, magic”; some propose a relationship with English *hard*, German *hart*, etc.² Most scholars who have investigated κράτος, however, view its sub-meanings not as different meanings in the sense

¹ For *kratos* as means to victory, cf. Gardiner, *Terms for Power*, 117f. Also Marrucci: “In Tucidide, *kratos* si trova non di rado ad indicare la superiorità che garantisce la vittoria in guerra.” *Kratos e Arche*, 95.

² For an overview, see Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* s.v. κράτος. Cf. however Frisk: “Eine genaue Entsprechung zu κράτος u. Verw. gibt es nirgends.” *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1960) s.v. κράτος. Breuil attributes the different semantics in the Indo-European languages to different specializations of “prevalence.” See “Κράτος et sa famille”; and “De κράτος à δημοκρατίη.” Benveniste argues that κράτος denotes “prevalence” but that e.g. κρατύς is from a different lemma meaning “hard.” See *Pouvoir, droit, religion*, 82f. Paul Cartledge says anachronistically that κράτος is “derived etymologically from the Greek verb meaning ‘to grip’ or ‘to grasp’” in *Democracy: A Life*, 3. The meaning “grip” develops only in post-Classical times.

that ἀρχή has different meanings; instead, they tend to view κράτος as one unitary concept which can be applied in different situations. J.H.H. Schmidt attempts to systematize terms that translate German *Kraft* (i.e. ῥώμη, ἴς, ἰσχὺς, σθένος, δύναμις, κράτος, ἀλκή, βία, and cognates), and finds that κράτος is the least strength-like and the most abstract term.³ He concludes that κράτος signifies what he calls *Obmacht*, which might be glossed as *decisive power* (“die Macht welche den Ausschlag gibt”).⁴ He paraphrases this as power that makes others submit.⁵ It follows that seemingly concrete senses of the word—for instance “strength”—are in fact instances of *Obmacht* but occurring in ambiguous contexts. Jean-Luc Breuil, studying the usage in Homer, finds that all Homeric attestations suggest hierarchical relationships and concludes that κράτος signifies “prevalence” (*prévalence*). “Prevalence” could then apply to socio-political contexts (“power”), the body (“strength”), and war (“victory”), etc. Only after Homer did meanings such as “power” (*pouvoir*) and “strength” (*~force physique*) develop fully; in Homer, says Breuil, these meanings are only “in preparation.”⁶ Having then studied κράτος in Herodotus, Breuil similarly notes that all the different senses that could be read into Herodotus’ use of words with the root κρατ— for instance “prévalence, supériorité, victoire, devenir ou être maître de, force,” etc.—is due to context (“imputables au contexte plutôt que d’acceptions indépendantes les unes des autres”), which means that there was no polysemy even in the time of Herodotus, according to Breuil.⁷

Among scholars who are primarily interested in the political connotations of κράτος, Marrucci examines the difference between κράτος and ἀρχή, arguing among other things that κράτος is more permanent, more connected to identity, more connected to territory, more reliant on force and less on collective resonance, and so forth.⁸ Tudor Gardiner analyzes κράτος in Thucydides as signifying “overwhelming force or its shadow, sovereignty.”⁹ David Glucker says that one cannot separate the meanings “strength” and “power.”¹⁰ Wallach remarks that κράτος signifies “power that...faces determined (not natural) resistance”; democracy has its name because “*demokratia* constantly has to overcome and resist oligarchical tendencies in society, even as it also was said by many to produce the most possible political good.”¹¹

³ Schmidt: “Das Wort gehört mehr der entfernteren als der näheren Abstraktion an...und bezeichnet immer die Macht insofern sie den Vorrang gegen andere verschafft, diese zum weichen und nachgeben [sic] zwingt (Sieg) oder in untergeordnete Stellung bringt (Herrschaft).” *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, 3:668.

⁴ Schmidt, 3:668. Cf. Meier, “Macht, Gewalt,” 824 n. 5.

⁵ Schmidt, *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, 3:668.

⁶ Breuil, “Κράτος et sa famille,” 48.

⁷ Breuil, “De κράτος à δημοκρατία,” 84.

⁸ Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*.

⁹ Gardiner, *Terms for Power*, 172f.

¹⁰ Glucker, “Word Power,” 143.

¹¹ Wallach, “Platonic Power,” 30. Marrucci expresses a similar idea in *Kratos e Arche*, 14.

The observation that κράτος does not correspond exactly to “power” has prompted attempts to match it to other concepts. During the early decades of the twentieth century, it was popular for scholars of religion and anthropologists to compare κράτος to *mana*, a Polynesian concept. The etymology of *mana* is disputed; a recent suggestion is “supernatural power, associated with spirits of the ancestors and the forces of nature.”¹² The interest in *mana* was underpinned by the theory that human societies pass through the same stages from primitiveness to civilization, which means the origins of cultural universals could be found in allegedly primitive cultures. Gilbert Murray proposes that what Hesiod called κράτος τε βία τε (sic) equates *mana*, on which depends the success of the “Medicine-King” (i.e. the βασιλεύς), as well as good harvest, welfare, and martial prowess.¹³ Jane Ellen Harrison remarks that the personifications *Kratos* and *Biē* from Hesiod’s *Theogony* appear as “shadow-figures in a mature, flesh and blood theology,” and that Hesiod is “haunted by spirits of ghostly *mana* and *orenda* and Wa-kon’-da and *bráhma*.”¹⁴ She compares *mana* with κράτος in how *mana* could refer to natural phenomena as well as power, likening this to how κράτος could refer to Zeus’ thunderbolts.¹⁵ Although it is probably hermeneutically crude to understand an unfamiliar concept through another unfamiliar concept—to say nothing about the ethics of the underpinning worldview—it is at least an interesting attempt to challenge routine understandings of κράτος, instead aiming for monosemous readings.

The scholars assuming that κράτος is monosemous have a point. The cognates of κράτος are not split semantically like ἀρχαῖος and ἀρχικός, which would betray polysemy. Some conceptual confusion in philosophy also points to monosemy. In Plato’s *Gorgias* 488b–489a, Socrates asks what the difference is between being *kreittōn* (an adjective derived from κράτος), stronger (ἰσχυρότερος), and better (βελτίων). He asks if it is possible to be better but *hētton* (the antonym of *kreittōn*) and weaker (ἄσθενέστερον); and if it is possible to be *kreittōn* but more wicked (μωχθερότερον). Callicles replies that it is impossible. If it is impossible to be *kreittōn* without being stronger, and also impossible to be *kreittōn* without being better, it is also impossible to be both *kreitton* and not *kreitton*: if you are stronger but not better, or better but not stronger, you are not *kreitton*. With ἀρχή, one could say “the *archē* is not an *archē*” without this being a contradiction, because the word has two senses;

¹² For more on the etymology of *mana*, see Juliette Blevins, “Some Comparative Notes on Proto-Oceanic *mana: Inside and Outside the Austronesian Family,” *Oceanic Linguistics* 47, no. 2 (December 2008): 253–274.

¹³ G.G.A. Murray, “The Early Greek Epic,” in *Anthropology and the Classics*, ed. R.R. Marett (London: Frank Cass, 1909), 74ff. (Sic): Hesiod has Βίη.

¹⁴ Jane Ellen Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 73.

¹⁵ Harrison, 73. Contrast Hermann Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums*, 2nd ed. (München: C.H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962), 88 n. 14, in which Fränkel argues that *mana* was most closely matched by κῦδος.

as this is impossible with κράτος, it seems to have only one sense—a quality common to excellence and strength.¹⁶

Admittedly, there are instances where κράτος occurs twice in close proximity in what seems to be different senses, which could point to different core meanings:

καὶ δ' ἔχει ἡβης ἄνθος, ὃ τε κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον. / εἰ γὰρ ὀμηλικὴ γε
γενοίμεθα τῶδ' ἐπὶ θυμῷ / αἴψα κεν ἡὲ φέροιτο μέγα κράτος, ἡὲ φεροίμην.

And he has the flower of youth, the *kratos* of which is the greatest; yes, had we been of equal age and I had had my courage, either he or I could swiftly carry away great *kratos*. (Hom. *Il.* 13.484–486)¹⁷

Translators tend to treat the first κράτος as “strength,” the second as “victory.”¹⁸ But must *kratos* achieved in combat be different from *kratos* that belongs to youth and is an asset *in* combat? It seems polysemy is assumed because we lack a concept that corresponds to Greek monosemy. In both of these instances of κράτος, age is a relevant factor (“flower of youth” and “of equal age”), which suggests that both instances refer to the same quality. Neither “strength” nor “victory” can be generalized here: to say that the “victory” of *hēbēs anthos* is the greatest does not make sense. Conversely, it is difficult to see how strength can be “carried away,” especially how this strength can be carried away at the expense of someone else.

If *kratos* does not correspond well to any English concept, it should be approached in a somewhat different manner: through exploring its relationship to other Greek concepts. The following discussions will also deepen our understanding of *kratos* as a monosemous concept.

¹⁶ Remember Glucker’s comment on Thrasymachus: “Thrasymachus has chosen his word carefully. As against ἀρχή or ἡγεμονία, κράτος clearly designates political *power*. As against δύναμις or ἰσχύς, κράτος is no mere strength, but power *over others*. Thus κράτος and its cognates unite in one concept the idea of government and the idea of superior force.” “Word Power,” 143.

¹⁷ Some manuscripts have κλέος rather than κράτος for the second line. See Homer, *The Iliad*, ed. and comm. Walter Leaf, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1960), 37. This is perhaps because some scribe thought that it was strange for *kratos* to be “carried off.” This variant reading does not exist for the similar line 18.308, which indicates that it is a mistake.

¹⁸ Cf. Breuil: “Remarquons la souplesse d’emploi de κράτος, dont le sens fondamental de ‘prévalence’ s’actualise de manière très différente à deux vers d’intervalle: en N 484, le mot désigne la prévalence exercée par une chose, et s’oriente vers le sens de ‘force’; en N 486, il désigne la prévalence exercée par une personne, et s’oriente vers le sens de ‘victoire’.” “Κράτος et sa famille,” 25. In the end, however, Breuil rejects polysemy and renders both instances as “prévalence.”

The Conceptual Connections of *Kratos*

Kratos and Deceit

Sometimes, the interpretation “strength” is given credence because κράτος is frequently contrasted with δόλος, “deceit”:

τὸν Λυκόοργος ἔπεφνε δόλω, οὐ τι κράτει γε, / στεινωπῶ ἐν ὀδῶ ὄθ’ ἄρ’ οὐ
κορόνη οἱ ὄλεθρον / χραῖσμε σιδηρεΐη· πρὶν γὰρ Λυκόοργος ὑποφθᾶς / δουρὶ
μέσον περόνησεν, ὃ δ’ ὑπτίος οὐδεὶ ἐρείσθη· / τεύχεα δ’ ἐξενάριξε, τὰ οἱ πόρε
χάλκεος Ἄρης.

Lycurgus killed [Areithous] with deceit, and not at all with *kratos*, in a narrow passage where the iron mace did not ward off his death, for Lycurgus got beforehand and pierced his middle with a spear, and he lay flat on the ground; and Lycurgus stripped him of the armor of bronze that Ares had given him. (Hom. *Il.* 7.142–146)

But equating κράτος to “strength” because of this contrast with deceit was criticized by J.H.H. Schmidt already in the nineteenth century.¹ Schmidt comments that if κράτος is “strength,” then the passage makes little sense, especially given the strong qualifier οὐ τι...γε (“not at all”): “...kann man den jemanden mit der Lanze durchboren one [sic] Anwendung seiner körperlichen Kraft?”² In line with his understanding of κράτος as *Obmacht*, Schmidt proposes that κράτος signifies “superior force” (*überlegene Kraft*); although force is involved, it does not prove decisive.³ The point of the passage appears to be that *kratos* in contest-like situations (cf. “Victory” below) can only be measured when the playing-field is level, which makes *kratos* similar to the quality of being “best.” Compare *Theogony* 435–438:

ἔσθλη δ’ αὐθ’ ὀπότ’ ἄνδρες ἀεθλεύωσιν ἀγῶνι· / ἔνθα θεὰ καὶ τοῖς παραγίνεται
ἠδ’ ὀνίνησι· / νικήσας δὲ βίη καὶ κάρτει καλὸν ἄεθλον / ρεῖα φέρει χαίρων τε,
τοκεῦσι δὲ κῦδος ὀπάξει.

[Hecate] is also good whenever men compete in a contest; then the goddess stands beside them and helps them: he who wins with force and *kratos* easily gets the prize and rejoices, and honor accompanies the parents. (Hes. *Theog.* 435–438)

¹ Cf. Breuil: “κράτος ayant pour antonyme δόλος, ‘la ruse’, évoque la force.” 21. He notes that the future meaning “force” is “en germe” here.

² Schmidt, *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, 3:667. Eustathius of Thessalonica’s comment does not take this into account: “The phrase ‘δόλῳ, οὐ τι κράτει γε’ is redundantly double, for it is obvious that he who kills with a ruse does not use *kratos*.” See *Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes*, ed. M. van der Valk, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 428, <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/Cite?4083:001:3012717>.

³ This observation led Schmidt to the conclusion that *kratos* was *Obmacht* without exception.

In other passages where κράτος can be interpreted as strength, the interpretation ultimately hinges on some other word—which is often assumed to be a synonym—supplying this meaning. In Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* 594, for instance, there is the phrase ἰσχύος κράτος “the *kratos* of strength.” This undeniably refers to the exertion of force: the phrase is contrasted to “through persuasion” (πέισαντες).⁴ But if we assume that ἰσχύς and κράτος are effectively synonymous, the interpretation becomes awkward. R.C. Jebb has argued correctly that κράτος and ἰσχύς need to be separated conceptually:

[I]σχύς is the physical strength at the disposal of the captors; κράτος, the mastery which this strength will give them. Thus the gen. defines the source of the κράτος.⁵

Another genitive phrase occurs in *Iliad* 11.9, where men pull boats up on the shore “trusting their manhood and the *kratos* of their hands” (εἴρυσαν ἠνορέη πῖσνοι καὶ κάρτει χειρῶν; cf. “*Kratos* and Manhood” below), clearly an exercise of strength. There are several ways in which to interpret the genitive phrase; I dare say that the most straight-forward interpretation of κράτος is “strength.” Breuil, whose hypothesis is that κράτος is “prévalence,” proposes that this is an instance of the hands “prevailing” over the ships.⁶ Pace Jebb, the phrase ἰσχύος κράτος does not necessarily mean that strength is the source of *kratos*. As the phrase strictly only means “the *kratos* of or pertaining to strength,” an equally justified interpretation is that *kratos* is materialized in strength, an interpretation less committed to attributing causality to strength. The difference between the interpretations is not so much in the material facts, but in the metaphysics surrounding them. This leads to the interpretation of κράτος χειρῶν as a kind of kenning: the *kratos* of hands, which is strength.⁷ In other words: *kratos* is not strength, strength is a type of *kratos*.

Other contexts in which κράτος *prima facie* refers to strength are collocations such as κράτος καὶ βία and κράτος καὶ σθένος. These are probably not pairings of synonyms, but hendiadyses coordinating two elements, “either of

⁴ Cf. μὴ πείσαντες, ἀλλὰ κρατοῦντες (Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.45; discussed in “*Kratos* Underpins *Archē*” above).

⁵ Sophocles, *The Philoctetes*, ed. and trans. R.C. Jebb, 1st ed., *The Plays and Fragments with Critical Notes, Commentary, and Translation in English Prose*, IV (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890), 101. Jebb compares this with Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* 212–213 (ὡς οὐ κατ’ ἰσχὸν οὐδὲ πρὸς τὸ καρτερόν / χρεῖη, δόλω δὲ τοὺς ὑπερσχόντας κρατεῖν): “where κατ’ ἰσχὸν expresses the available strength, and πρὸς τὸ καρτερόν the triumphant exertion of it.” *Ibid.*

⁶ Breuil, “Κράτος et sa famille,” 24f.

⁷ In Ingrid Waern’s definition, a kenning is “an expression consisting of two or more words for a person or thing which could be rendered by a single word, but which for reasons of effect, metrics, and so on, is described periphrastically.” According to her classification, κάρτος χειρῶν would be a descriptive kenning: not containing a metaphor, “but is a descriptive periphrase which agrees with reality...” *Γῆς ὁστέα: The Kenning in Pre-Christian Greek Poetry*. (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells boktryckeri, 1951), 7.

which could be logically and grammatically subordinate to the other.”⁸ These expressions could then mean βίαιον κράτος and κρατερὰ βία; σθεναρὸν κράτος and κρατερόν σθένος. In other words, κράτος καὶ βίη is not “strength and force,” but *kratos* manifested in force vel sim.

The opposition between κράτος and δόλος mentioned above is not unique to the *Iliad* 7.142–146. In Euripides’ *Hecuba* 883–885, Agamemnon asks Hecuba how the women shall get *kratos* over men. Hecuba answers that numerical superiority is a “wicked thing” (δεινόν) that is unconquerable when infused “with deceit” (σὺν δόλῳ). Agamemnon answers that it is indeed wicked, but that he still “despises” (μέμφομαι) the female race (cf. the discussion in “*Kratos* and Manhood” below).⁹ The last remark delegitimizes this purported *kratos* through deceit: such *kratos* is not true *kratos*.

In Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* 837–842, the Achaean sailors urge Neoptolemus to steal the bow of Philoctetes, who lies sound asleep: it has been prophesied that the bow will defeat the Trojans. The sailors tell Neoptolemus to seize the moment, saying that “great *kratos*” can be won through swift action (<πολύ τι> πολὺ παρὰ πόδα κράτος ἄρνυται). Neoptolemus dismisses the bequest of the sailors, saying that only if Philoctetes comes along will the prophecy be fulfilled: “the wreath belongs to him” (τοῦδε γὰρ ὁ στέφανος); besides, it is “shameful and a disgrace to boast of failures accompanied by fraud” (κομπεῖν δ’ ἔργ’ ἀτελῆ σὺν ψεύδεσιν αἰσχρὸν ὄνειδος). The failure would consist in bringing home the bow without Philoctetes; the fraud, in stealing the bow from Philoctetes: neither is consistent with *kratos*.¹⁰

Manuel Baumbach and Alexander Rudolph have noted that in the *Theogony*, attempts to take power through deceit alternate with attempts to take power through strength: Cronus deceitfully takes power from Uranus, Zeus overthrows Cronus with strength; then Prometheus deceitfully (and unsuccessfully) challenges Zeus, who is then challenged—again unsuccessfully—by the Titans using strength.¹¹ What Baumbach and Rudolph call “strength” can probably be glossed as *kratos*, which implies that the distinction between *kratos* and deceit is of cosmic importance. Perhaps something similar can be seen in Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* 209–213, in which Prometheus talks about the events related in the *Theogony*:

⁸ David Sansone, “On Hendiadys in Greek,” *Glotta* 62, no. 1/2 (1984): 19 (italics in original).

⁹ Paley’s “I distrust, I have no opinion of” appears too tame. See *Euripides*, comm. F.A. Paley, vol. 2 (London: Whittaker, 1858), 538. Alois Jenni corrects γένος, “race” in the manuscripts to σθένος, “strength.” See *Hecuba*, trans. and comm. Christopher Collard (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1991), 175. If one considers κράτος and σθένος synonyms, this is the *lectio facillior* and therefore suspicious.

¹⁰ Kamerbeek simply takes κράτος as “victory,” as does Jebb. See J.C. Kamerbeek, *The Philoctetes*, The Plays of Sophocles: Commentaries 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 121; and *Philoctetes*, ed. and trans. R.C. Jebb, 137.

¹¹ Manuel Baumbach and Alexander Rudolph, “Helping Zeus by Tricking Him? Prometheus and the Poetics of Succession in Hesiod’s *Theogony* 538–541,” *Antike und Abendland* 60, no. 1 (November 2014): 23f.

ἔμοι δὲ μήτηρ οὐχ ἅπαξ μόνον Θέμις / καὶ Γαῖα, πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφή μία,
/ τὸ μέλλον ἦι κρανοῖτο προυτεθεσπικεῖ, / ὥς οὐ κατ' ἰσχὺν οὐδὲ πρὸς τὸ
καρτερόν / χρεῖη, δόλωι δὲ τοὺς ὑπερσχόντας κρατεῖν.

My mother, Themis and Earth, one form having many names, did many times foretell the future that would prevail: that it was not by strength or the *krateron*, but through deceit that the supreme would have *kratos*. (Aesch. *PV* 209–213)

The events in this version of the myth appear to differ from the events in the Titanomachy. Prometheus retells the prophecy above to the Titans, while Cronus is still in power, but they do not heed it, “thinking they will be lords effortlessly through violence” (ὄϊοντ' ἀμοχθὶ πρὸς βίαν τε δεσπόσειν, *PV* 208). This implies that it is really Zeus who takes power through deceit (although the details in *Prometheus Bound* are unclear), after which he establishes what Prometheus considers a cruel tyranny. In aligning future *kratos* with deceit, the prophecy thus implies that the future will be disorderly.

Victory

Lexica often offer “victory” as a specific sense of κράτος.¹² One could be tempted to infer that the relationship between *kratos* and victory is something like cause and effect: whether we understand κράτος as “strength” or anything else, it is clearly a means to defeating enemies in combat and opponents in sports.¹³ This causal relationship could then spill over into the semantics, either as an incidental poetic device or as permanent semantic change, so that κράτος comes to mean “victory.” But this is a simplification: *kratos* is not only the *cause* of victory, it is also as its *effect*.

First as to *effect*. In the *Iliad*, there are two passages (13.486, 18.308), which contain κράτος in the context of duels, one of which was cited above. In both passages, one of the contestants says something to the effect that “we shall see who will carry off [φέρειν, φέρεσθαι] great *kratos*, him or I.” It is clear that κράτος φέρειν is connected to victory, but this is not proof that κράτος φέρειν literally means “carry off victory.” It is true that victory, expressed by νίκη, can be carried off (cf. Pind. *Isthm.* 7.21), but for the most part it is prizes that are carried off: the LSJ lists as objects of φέρω/φέρομαι in the context of victory such things as τὰ πρῶτα, “first prize,” νικητήρια, “prize for victory,” τρίποδα, “tripod (as a prize in a contest),” τιμή, “worth, honor.”¹⁴ There is an adjective νικηφορος, formed from νίκη and φέρω, which is used once as an attribute of κράτος (Soph. *Trach.* 186), but as the phrase occurs in

¹² Cf. Marrucci on κράτος in the *Iliad*: “Il *kratos* è la vittoria rispetto al nemico...” *Kratos e Arche*, 16.

¹³ Cf. the translations “Überlegenheit” and “siegreiche Gewalt,” i.e. supremacy and victorious power, in Fränkel, *Dichtung*, 568 n. 2. See also Gardiner, *Terms for Power*, 117f.

¹⁴ As mentioned in “The Monosemy of *Kratos*” n. 17, some manuscripts have a mistaken κλέος instead of κράτος.

the dative (κράτει νικηφόρῳ), the long final syllable of which prevents an accented antepenultima, we do not know if νικηφόρῳ reflects νικηφόρος (“carrying off victory”) or νικήφορος (carried off *in* victory).¹⁵ If νικηφόρῳ suggests νικήφορος, φέρειν κράτος would mean “carry off *kratos* (as a quasi-prize)” as opposed to “carry of victory.” Sophocles’ *Ajax* 443 arguably has κράτος as a prize; this is at least how LSJ interprets it. There is an argument over who is to receive the armor of the late Achilles. Ajax complains that he, being the worthiest remaining Achaean, ought to get it:

εἰ ζῶν Ἀχιλλεὺς τῶν ὀπλῶν τῶν ὧν πέρι / κρίνειν ἔμελλε κράτος ἀριστείας τινί,
/ οὐκ ἄν τις αὐτ’ ἔμαρπεν ἄλλος ἄντ’ ἐμοῦ. / νῦν δ’ αὐτ’ Ἀτρεΐδαι φωτὶ
παντουργῶ φρένας / ἔπραξαν, ἀνδρὸς τοῦδ’ ἀπόσαντες κράτη.

If Achilles had lived and was to award the *kratos* for valor to anyone claiming his weapons, no one else would have touched them but me. But now the Atrids have dealt them to a man without scruples, pushing away the *kratē* of Ajax. (Soph. *Aj.* 442–446)

Note the phrase κράτος ἀριστείας, which Jebb translates as “first place for prowess/valour.”¹⁶ Ἀριστεία is properly “bestness”; being awarded the “first place in bestness” amounts to tautology. Rather, being the best makes one worthy of *kratos*. In granting the arms to Odysseus (the “man without scruples”), the Atrids are pushing away the *kratē* of Ajax. One may perhaps read it as a poetic way to say that if the victories (κράτη) of Ajax are not recognized through the award of the arms, then they are undone. But it may be understood more concretely: the armor is in itself the *kratos* to be awarded: *kratos* is a prize.¹⁷ This interpretation is tempting, as both *kratos* and weaponry are also means to victory.

Similarly, there is the phrase κράτος νέμοι γυναίξιν (“may he distribute *kratos* to the women”) in Aeschylus’ *Suppliants* 1068–1069.¹⁸ Κράτος νέμοι is often understood as “may he grant victory.” But the argument that applied to φέρω applies to νέμω as well. Νίκη is never the object of νέμω. In fact, the one time in Classical literature where these words occur in the same context

¹⁵ Cf. Kamerbeek’s pertinent commentary: “σὺν κράτει νικηφόρῳ: Heracles’ κράτος ‘mastery’ νίκην φέρεται; he is accompanied by his κράτος; in the concrete the words also refer to the train of captives and other booty he will bring home, the visible sign of his triumphant mastery.” *The Trachiniae*, *The Plays of Sophocles: Commentaries* 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1959), 67. His interpretation actually suggests that νίκη has brought home κράτος. The accents were, of course, added by editors in Hellenistic era and onwards, which compounds the epistemological problem.

¹⁶ Sophocles, *The Ajax*, ed. and trans. R.C. Jebb, *The Plays and Fragments with Critical Notes, Commentary, and Translation in English Prose* 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896), 75. “Valour” in the translation, “prowess” in the commentary.

¹⁷ Kamerbeek hints at this possibility (although he probably takes κράτος as victory): “[t]his κράτος applied to the concrete situation means the obtaining of the arms of Achilles.” *The Ajax*, *The Plays of Sophocles: Commentaries* 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1953), 98.

¹⁸ Cf. Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 39.

(Bacchyl. *Ep.* 7.8–9), it is not victory that is to be distributed, but its spoils (γέρας).¹⁹ Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* 838, mentioned above, is a bit more difficult:

πρὸς τί μενοῦμεν πράσσειν; / καιρός τοι πάντων γνώμαν ἴσχων / <πολύ τι>
πολὺ παρὰ πόδα κράτος ἄρνυται.

Why do we hesitate to act? Timing, which holds the verdict in everything, very often gains *kratos* instantly. (Soph. *Phil.* 836–838)

Ἄρνυται means “achieve” or “get.” A search through the TLG corpus indicates that ἄρνυμαι indeed can have words for victory as its objects: there are two (possibly three) occurrences of νίκη in close proximity to ἄρνυμαι.²⁰ More often, however, the objects of ἄρνυται are phenomena accompanying victories: τίμη (four instances), κῦδος (twenty-one instances ranging from Homer to Herodotus), εὖχος (four instances, except two quotes of Homer in Aristotle), κλέος (nine instances, from Homer to Plato), all roughly meaning “glory.”

This shows that *kratos* can be achieved through victory, but *Iliad* 17.596–627 shows that it is possible to win *without* getting *kratos*, which shows decisively that *kratos* is not victory. Idomeneus the Cretan is about to be killed by Hector, who throws a spear at him. The spear misses Idomeneus and hits his follower Coeranus instead. Homer says that if Idomeneus had died, it “would have given great *kratos* to the Trojans” (καί κε Τρῶσι μέγα κράτος ἐγγυάλιξεν, 17.613).²¹ This is at first sight easily interpreted as “victory,” but the Trojans already had victory in their hands: some twenty lines earlier, Zeus “gave victory to the Trojans and put the Achaeans to flight” (νίκην δὲ Τρῶεσσι δίδου, ἐφόβησε δ’ Ἀχαιοὺς, 17.596). This means the *kratos* which the Trojans could have gained by killing Idomeneus was not victory. The passage continues. As the dead Coeranus drops the reins, one Meriones picks them up and tells Idomeneus to whip the horses good until he reaches the ships, “for you know, too, that the Achaeans do not have the *kratos* any more” (γιγνώσκεις δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὅ τ’ οὐκέτι κάρτος Ἀχαιῶν, 17.623). As the focus shifts to Menelaus and Ajax a few lines later, Homer says that “it did not escape the notice of great-hearted Ajax and Menelaus that Zeus gave balance-tilting victory to the Trojans” (οὐδ’ ἔλαθ’ Αἴαντα μεγαλήτορα καὶ Μενέλαον / Ζεὺς, ὅτε δὴ Τρῶεσσι δίδου ἑτεραλκέα νίκην, 17.626–627). To

¹⁹ Other objects of νέμω in this sense include ἰσχύς, τιμή, μοίρα.

²⁰ E.g. σὺν κείνοις νίκην τε καὶ ἀγλαῶν εὖχος ἀρέσθαι (Hes. *Theog.* 628); ἀλλ’ εἰ μὲν ταχυτήτι ποδῶν νίκην τις ἄροίτο (Xenophanes frag. 2.1 West); possibly: δὸς νίκην Αἴαντι καὶ ἀγλαῶν εὖχος ἀρέσθαι (Hom. *Il.* 7.203), depending on whether νίκην is an object of δός or of ἀρέσθαι; the similar example from Hesiod points to the latter.

²¹ Leaf appears to take καί κε Τρῶσι μέγα κράτος ἐγγυάλιξε as “presented a victory to the Trojans”. See *The Iliad*, ed. and comm. Walter Leaf, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1960), 256. Although Breuil sorts this instance under the heading “prevalence d’un groupe sur un individu,” this is one instance where he cannot translate the passage with “prevalence”: “qui mettrait grand avantage aux mains des Troyens.” See “Κράτος et sa famille,” 20. Marrucci interprets it as victory as well. See *Kratos e Arche*, 15 n. 31.

Meriones, the Trojan victory is evidence that the Achaeans do not have *kratos* anymore, yet the Trojans did not get that great *kratos* they could have attained if they had killed Idomeneus. *Kratos* is lost in defeat, yet is not victory, but rather a possible prize that can be attained through victory.

Now for *kratos* as *cause* of victory. This could be inferred from the previous passage: the Achaeans flee because it is evident that they do not have the *kratos* anymore, which means that victory is impossible, but is also more clearly demonstrated in *Iliad* 11. 670–762, which contains Nestor’s recollections of his prowess as a young man, and evidence for how *kratos* generates victory (without therefore being “strength” as we understand it). Nestor’s Pylian compatriots and their Epeian enemies join battle (11.737). Nestor kills the Epeian leader Mulius, hijacks his chariot, and proceeds to eliminate some fifty other chariots and their drivers. At this moment (11.753), Zeus grants great *kratos* to the Pylians, who force the Epeians back, killing them and looting them as they go, until they reach the hill of Alesium where Nestor makes his final kill before going back to Pylos. Zeus grants the Pylians *kratos* in recognition of Nestor’s feats; this *kratos* is not victory per se, but the force producing the onslaught in which victory is materialized.

In summary, *kratos* is not victory: it is a force which produces victories, but which is also reinforced by these victories, for which reason *kratos* is often regarded as a prize. It is something akin to how, in the mind of a gambler, success makes the gambler “be on a roll,” which in turn generates future successes.

Before concluding this examination on the relationship between *kratos* and victory, it should be noted that the Greek view of cause and effect surrounding victory in general appears counter-intuitive and should be studied closer. Compare for instance the phrase νικαφόρον ἀγλαίαν (Pind. *Ol.* 13.14). Ἀγλαία is “splendor” or “glory,” which most readers would probably understand as an effect of victory, yet the accent of νικαφόρος suggests that this splendor causes victory.²²

Does this dual cause-and-effect characteristic of *kratos* apply in politics? It is difficult to say. Although victory and κράτος is sometimes coupled in political contexts (e.g. Tyrtaeus frag. 4 West, cited above), understanding *kratos* as both cause and effect of victory in my view does not solve any problems; it just adds a layer of understanding in which we can choose to believe or not believe without any specific consequences. This also applies to the formation δημοκρατία and its meaning.

On a more general level, it appears correct to assume a relationship between power and victory. If it is correct that the Achaeans cannot defeat the Trojans

²² W.J. Verdenius offers that ἀγλαία means “victory” in some passages. He does not comment on this specific passage, in which that interpretation would have been tautological. *Commentaries on Pindar*, vol. 2, Supplements to Mnemosyne (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 132. See also *Commentaries on Pindar*, vol. 1, Supplements to Mnemosyne (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 111f.

because *kratos* is fractured (see the conclusions to “*Kratos and Archē Compared*” above), it appears as if *kratos* of victory relates to *kratos* of power (i.e. to politics), at least in myth or in the epics. If there is a connection between *kratos* in the political arena and victory that is specific to democracy, it is perhaps to be found in the military prowess in the *dēmos*, who manned the navy, the crowning glory of the Athenian empire and the cause of Athens’ victory in Salamis and of her empire. The following passage from the Old Oligarch, probably one of the earliest texts on democracy, says this explicitly:

πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τοῦτο ἐρῶ, ὅτι δικαίως <δοκοῦσιν> αὐτόθι [καί] οἱ πένητες καὶ ὁ δῆμος πλεον ἔχειν τῶν γενναίων καὶ τῶν πλουσίων διὰ τὸδε, ὅτι ὁ δῆμός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλαύνων τὰς ναῦς καὶ ὁ τὴν δύναμιν περιτιθεὶς τῇ πόλει, καὶ οἱ κυβερνῆται καὶ οἱ κελευσταὶ καὶ οἱ πεντηκόνταρχοι καὶ οἱ προφῶται καὶ οἱ ναυπηγοί, —οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ τὴν δύναμιν περιτιθέντες τῇ πόλει πολὺ μᾶλλον ἢ οἱ ὀπλίται καὶ οἱ γενναῖοι καὶ οἱ χρηστοί.

Let me first say that it is right that the poor and the *dēmos* are better off than the nobles and rich people, because the *dēmos* is the one driving the ships and giving power to the city, and the helmsmen and boatswains and pentecontarchs and oarsmen and shipwrights, these are the ones giving power to the city, much more so than the hoplites, the nobles and the wealthy. ([Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.2)

The Old Oligarch connects military prowess to political influence: as the *dēmos* outmatches the wealthy in the former, they deserve political influence. Aristotle likewise ascribes a large role to the military importance of the *dēmos*, saying that “the present democracy” came about by accident (ἀπὸ συμπτώματος):

τῆς ναυαρχίας γὰρ ἐν τοῖς Μηδικοῖς ὁ δῆμος αἴτιος γενόμενος ἐφρονηματίσθη καὶ δημαγωγοὺς ἔλαβε φαύλους ἀντιπολιτευομένων τῶν ἐπιεικῶν

For as the *dēmos* was the cause for the naval supremacy in the Persian wars, it became proud and picked bad leaders when the respectable men opposed them. (Arist. *Pol.* 1274a; cf. 1304a)

Perhaps this relationship between victory and power, inherent in *kratos*, is intended in the formation δημοκρατία. At the very least, the relationship between *kratos* and victory can help us understand Solon’s depiction of himself and of his achievements as archon:

δήμῳ μὲν γὰρ ἔδωκα τόσον γέρας, ὅσον ἀπαρκεῖ, / τιμῆς οὐτ’ ἀφελῶν οὐτ’ ἐπορεζάμενος / οἱ δ’ εἶχον δύναμιν καὶ χρήμασιν ἦσαν ἀγήτοί, / καὶ τοῖσ’ ἐφρασάμην μηδὲν ἀεικέες εἶεν / ἔστην δ’ ἀμφιβαλὼν κρατερὸν σάκος ἀμφοτέροισι, / νικᾶν δ’ οὐκ εἶασ’ οὐδετέρους ἀδίκως.

I gave to the *dēmos* as much privilege as sufficed, neither taking away their honor nor adding to it. And for those who had power and were admired for

their wealth I did not devise anything inappropriate: I stood up, holding a *krateron* shield around them both, and did not let either of them win unjustly. (Sol. 5 Diehl)²³

We will return to how Solon in effect likens himself to Zeus in this fragment (cf. “Zeus, the Cyclopes, and the Thunderbolt” below). For now, let it just be noted that in this fragment, the Zeus-like Solon is using his “*krateron* shield”, i.e. his shield of *kratos*, to grant and withhold victory in the political arena, much like Zeus apportioning *kratos* on the battlefield to grant victory.²⁴

Linking *Dikē* and *Hubris*

Yielding to *Kratos*

Kratos is at times associated with justice (δίκη), at times with transgression (ὑβρις). The connection between *kratos* and justice is recurrent in poetry; *kratos* is sometimes portrayed as a union between justice on the one hand and physical force (whether expressed by ἰσχύς, βία or σθένος) on the other.

In Solon’s fragment 36 West, Solon praises the reforms he saw through as archon of Athens: the cancellation of debts, the emancipation of indentured servants or slaves of Athenian stock, and the promulgation of laws applying equally to “good” and “bad,” etc., Solon says that he “did this with *kratos*, in uniting force and justice” (ταῦτα μὲν κράτει / ὁμοῦ βίην τε καὶ δίκην ξυναρμόσας / ἔπραξα, 15–17; this also in effect likens Solon to Zeus; cf. “Zeus, the Cyclopes, and the Thunderbolt” below).²⁵ Βίη and δίκη are often rendered as “force” and “justice,” but βίη also has connotations of “trespass.” These concepts are often opposed to one another and defined in terms of one another,

²³ Plutarch’s *Life of Solon* 18.5, quoting this poem, has κράτος instead of γέρας. See Plutarch, *Vies: Tome II; Solon-Publicola – Thémistocle-Camille*, ed. and trans. Robert Flacelière, Émile Chambry, and Marcel Jumeaux (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1961), 31. This was the only known version of the poem until the discovery of the Aristotelian *Athenian Constitution*, which also quotes Solon (Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 12.1). Plutarch’s version should be seen as faulty because it is later and, given the traditional view of Solon as the founder of democracy, because the reading κράτος is the *lectio facilior*. See Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 29–31; and Noussia-Fantuzzi, *Solon the Athenian: The Poetic Fragments*, 285. See also Elizabeth Irwin, *Solon and Early Greek Poetry: The Politics of Exhortation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 235–237. Ernest Diehl’s version differs little from Aristotle’s. See *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1936), 34f.

²⁴ Also Marrucci considers the juxtaposition between κρατερὸν σάκος and νικᾶν significant, arguing that Solon reinterprets Homeric *kratos*—which usually implies defeat— as a factor of balance, to better fit it with his eunomic ideals. See *Kratos e Arche*, 28f.

²⁵ Regarding the interpretation, Noussia-Fantuzzi argues that “ξυναρμόσας and ἀρμόσας are coincident aorist participles that define a specific nuance or a modification of the action expressed by the leading verb.” *Solon the Athenian: The Poetic Fragments*, 475. If correct, it was in the moment of uniting violence and justice that Solon achieved this with *kratos*.

as in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.²⁶ Their union is therefore quite striking. Elizabeth Irwin has argued that the collocation is “apparently alien to the poetic tradition,” which is true if we delimit the claim specifically to the word βίη.²⁷ Similar ideas are at times expressed with near-synonyms of βίη, lacking the “trespass” connotation. A fragment of Aeschylus, quoted in a scholium to the *Iliad* 16.541–542, asks rhetorically: “wherever strength [ισχύς] and justice [δίκη] are yoked together, what team is more powerful [καρτερωτέρα] than theirs?”²⁸ Καρτερωτέρα equals “having more *kratos*.” The commented passage, a necrology for Sarpedon the Lycian, shows the same conceptual connection:

κεῖται Σαρπηδὼν Λυκίων ἀγὸς ἀσπιστάων, / ὃς Λυκίην εἴρυτο δίκησι τε καὶ
σθένει ᾧ·

Sarpedon the leader of Lycian shield-men is fallen, who guarded Lycia with verdicts of justice and his strength. (Hom. *Il.* 16.541–542)

If we allow Sarpedon, being royalty, to stand as an emblem of *kratos*, these three passages express the same idea: there is an intimate connection between *kratos*, justice and physical force, the latter of which is (at least potentially) a means to transgression.²⁹

But *kratos* can also be hubristic, lacking the connection to *dikē*. In the *Odyssey*, “yielding” (εἴκων) to *kratos* and violence (βίη) is mentioned twice. Yielding to something is never good: one can yield to such different phenomena as hesitation (ἄσπετος), folly or indecision (ἀφραδία), poverty (πενία) as well as shame/respect (αἰδώς). Most of these are negative qualities. Although respect is mostly positive, yielding to it is bad:

μηδὲ σύ γ' αἰδόμενος σῆσι φρεσὶ τὸν μὲν ἀρείω / καλλεῖπειν, σὺ δὲ χεῖρον·
ὀπάσσειαι αἰδοῖ εἰκῶν / ἐς γενεὴν ὀρόων, μηδ' εἰ βασιλευτέρως ἐστίν.

²⁶ See Athanassios Vergados, “Defining δίκη in Hesiod’s *Works and Days*,” in *Ἐγκλημα και τιμωρία στην ομηρική και Αρχαϊκή ποίηση: Από τα Πρακτικά του IB’ Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου για την Οδύσσεια. Ιθάκη, 3–7 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013*, ed. Menelaos Christopoulos and Machi Païzi-Apostolopoulou (Ithaca: Κέντρο Οδυσσειακών Σπουδών, 2014), 367–378. Contrast Sinclair: “Yet force was necessary to keep warring factions apart; and so βία and δίκη are not irreconcilable opposites, as Hesiod thought; they must be made to work together in the cause of Good Order.” *Greek Political Thought*, 24. Cf. Fabienne Blaise, “Solon. Fragment 36 W: Pratique et Fondation Des Normes Politiques,” *Revue Des Études Grecques* 108, no. 1 (1995): 29.

²⁷ Irwin, *Solon and Early Greek Poetry*, 223. Irwin, portraying *biē* in Homer as a negative phenomenon, does not consider the fact that many kings and heroes are addressed respectfully with βίη, e.g. βίη Ἡρακλείη (*Il.* 2.658). Compare “Oh, my beloved Aegisthus [φίλτατ’ Αἰγίσθου βία], you are dead!” (Aesch. *Cho.* 893).

²⁸ The scholiast comments: “they save, the former by restraining the city and its inhabitants, the latter by restraining the enemies.” Hartmut Erbse, ed., *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem (Scholia Vetera)*, vol. 4 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 272.

²⁹ Leaf: “εἴρυτο, of the protection given to his country by a king... The addition of δίκησι shews that in this connexion the word really means no more than ‘govern.’” *Iliad*, 2:194.

[Agamemnon to Diomedes, on whom to bring along as a companion:] Don't you out of respect think to leave the better behind, nor bring along the worse, yielding to respect when looking to birth; do not do it even if he is more kingly! (Hom. *Il.* 10.237–240)

Yielding to *biē* thus suggests something else than Solon's controlled union of *biē* with justice. In *Odyssey* 13.143–144, Zeus tells Poseidon to deal with Odysseus as he wishes, if Odysseus “yields to his *kratos* and violence” (βίη καὶ κάρτεϊ εἴκων) and does not “give you your due” (σε / οὐ τι τίει). In *Odyssey* 18.139, the expression βίη καὶ κάρτεϊ εἴκων reappears: the disguised Odysseus tells the suitor Amphinomus that he was set to become a happy man, but committed “many wicked things” (πολλὰ...ἀτάσθαλα) yielding to his *kratos* and violence, “trusting my father and brothers” (πατρί τ' ἐμῶ πίσυνοσ καὶ ἐμοῖσι κασιγνήτοισι, 18.140).³⁰ Ἀτάσθαλα (“wicked”) is often coupled with the verb ὑβρίζω (“trespass”) and the noun ἀνόσιος (“unsanctioned by the gods”).³¹ Both of these passages clearly refer to transgressive behavior.

As for hubris, in Pindar's *Pythian* 8, Peace “harshly resists the *kratos* of the enemies” (τραχεῖα δυσμενέων ὑπαντιάζαισα κράτει, 11) and “scuttles Hubris” (τιθεῖσ ὕβριν ἐν ἄντλῳ, 11–12). Sophocles' *Antigone*, likewise, offers an example of *kratos* as a capacity for hubris. Antigone has let Ismene in on her plans to bury her brothers. Ismene opts out, saying that transgressing against the will (ψῆφος) or *kratē* of the tyrant will only make matters much worse (60).³² When Antigone succeeds in burying her brothers, Creon complains, repeatedly stressing that Antigone is a transgressor and ties this to her *kratē* (see also the discussion of this passage in “*Kratos* and Manhood” below):

αὕτη δ' ὑβρίζειν μὲν τότ' ἐξήπιστατο, / νόμους ὑπερβαίνουσα τοὺς
προκειμένους; / ὕβρις δ', ἐπεὶ δέδρακεν, ἦδε δευτέρα, / τούτοις ἐπαυχεῖν καὶ
δεδρακυῖαν γελαῖν. / ἦ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἀνὴρ, αὕτη δ' ἀνὴρ, / εἰ ταῦτ' ἀνατὶ
τῆδε κείσεται κράτη.

This girl was already well-practiced in hubris when she transgressed the laws at hand. But now that she has done that, here is another trespass: that she is boasting about it and that having done it brings her to laughter. I truly am no man, but she is a man, if she will have these *kratē* without being punished for it. (Soph. *Ant.* 480–485)

³⁰ Cf. W.B. Stanford: “Note the *Tautology* for emphasis on the hybristic...act that violates the traditional restraints of αἰδώς and δέος.” *The Odyssey of Homer*, ed. and comm. W.B. Stanford, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1948), 204 (italics in original).

³¹ For ἀνόσιος, see Saskia Peels, *Hosios: A Semantic Study of Greek Piety* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

³² Kamerbeek: “νόμος, ψῆφος, κράτη, it is all one and the same thing to the mind of Ismene. κράτη: the powers of authority.” *The Antigone*, *The Plays of Sophocles: Commentaries* 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 47.

Euripides' *Andromache*, finally, contains a prayer that: "no *kratos* shall have power (δύνασθαι) beyond justice (ἔξω δίκας) in the inner chambers nor in the *polis*" (Eur. *Andr.* 787–788) viz. in private or public.³³

Judging from this, it seems as if *kratos* has no intrinsic positive connection to *dikē*. The passages referring to such a connection are normative, saying what type of *kratos* is the best. Since hubristic acts follow when someone yields to *kratos*—paradoxically, a kind of *akrateia*—the connection between *kratos* and hubris appears stronger. We shall see later that *kratos* is strongly connected to masculinity ("Democracy and Manhood"), which is also sometimes represented as a capacity for hubris: although masculinity is a good thing, one can also be overly manly, ὑπερηνόρεος. As Karen Bassi notes, this word is used in the *Odyssey* to describe mainly the suitors of Penelope, who transgress both the social and political norms of Ithaca during their stay in Odysseus' household; the noun is also used once to describe the Cyclopes (emblematic antisocials) to relate their savagery against the Phaeacians (*Od.* 6.5).³⁴ Given how *kratos* is connected to masculinity, yielding to *kratos* appears tantamount to being *hyperēnoreos*: destructively masculine.

The Cyclopes, however, are interesting for another reason: as the creators of Zeus' thunderbolt, which is also his *kratos*. As we shall see, this fact deepens our understanding of *kratos* as potentially linking *dikē* and *hubris*.

Zeus, the Cyclopes, and the Thunderbolt

Many gods are associated with *kratos*, but Zeus more so than the others.³⁵ His *kratos* is "the greatest" (μέγιστον, Hom. *Od.* 5.4), "the highest" (ὑπάτον, Thgn. 376) and the most perfect *kratos* among the perfect (τελέων / τελειότατον κράτος, Aesch. *Supp.* 525–526), because *kratos* is Zeus' special prerogative. Persons or beings with *kratos* have a special bond with Zeus: *kratos* belongs to kings, who are "fostered by Zeus" (διοτρεφέων βασιλῆων, e.g. *Il.* 1.176); even the eagle, "dearest of birds to Zeus" (φίλτατος οἰώνων, Hom. *Il.* 24.293, 24.311) and his own special emissary, has the greatest *kratos* among birds (*ibid.*).³⁶

Similar to many other Greek concepts, *kratos* was in mythmaking made into a god. In the *Theogony*, which relates the creation of the Cosmos and the ascent to power of Cronus and Zeus, Hesiod portrays Kratos as the child of

³³ Paley argues that κράτος δύνασθαι is practically a cognate accusative (viz. μηδεμίαν δύναμιν δύνασθαι). See *Euripides*, 1858, 2:275. Stevens agrees: "κράτος, to be taken with δύνασθαι, is apparently an extension of the cognate accusative." See *Andromache*, 189.

³⁴ Karen Bassi, "The Semantics of Manliness," in *Andreia: Studies in Manliness and Courage in Classical Antiquity*, ed. Ralph M. Rosen and Ineke Sluiter, Mnemosyne, Supplements Series (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 35.

³⁵ Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 24, 40ff.

³⁶ For special bond with Zeus, see Citti, "Κράτος e Βία," 319; and Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 24, 38–43. For birds, see Karin Johansson, *The Birds in the Iliad: Identities, Interactions and Functions* (Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 2012), 207.

Styx and Pallas the Titan (Hes. *Theog.* 383–388).³⁷ Kratos had three siblings: Biē (“Violence, Trespass”), Zēlos (“Zeal, Emulation”) and Nikē (“Victory”). The genealogical relationship is not coincidental. Suzanne Lye has noted that Styx’ control of the powers of oath is reflected in her being a river, i.e. a natural boundary: her river-nature defines geographical structures much like her powers of oath “define the societal structures which create the structured universe.”³⁸ Like their mother, the children of Styx also define the societal structures of the universe in being manifestations of Zeus’ power. This is most apparent in the case of Kratos and Biē. In Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound*, Zeus has recently been installed as the king of the gods. Prometheus has trespassed by giving fire to mankind, and Kratos and Bia (the Attic form of Biē) effect his punishment by forcing Hephaestus to fetter Prometheus to a Caucasian rock. Kratos speaks while Bia is silent in the background, ready to step up should Hephaestus fail to comply, which illustrates that Kratos’ power is not violence per se, but is founded on the threat of violence (cf. the discussion in “Benign *Archē*, Harsh *Kratos*” above).³⁹

As we have seen, humans can yield to their *kratos* and transgress against the gods, which means humans can have *kratos* on their own. But there are no passages in which a human uses their *kratos* to challenge Zeus, the final judge on who is to receive *kratos*, the closest example being *Iliad* 17.319–332. Apollo intervenes to stop the Argives from driving the Trojans back to Ilion and winning glory “even beyond what Zeus has apportioned, through their *kratos* and strength” (καὶ ὑπὲρ Διὸς αἴσαν / κάρτεϊ καὶ σθένει σφετέρω, 321–322). Apollo thwarts this by asking Aeneas if it would be possible to defend Ilion despite what a god wishes, saying he “certainly” (ὡς δῆ, 328) has seen other men holding on to their land “without fear” (ὑπερδέα, 330), “trusting their *kratos*, strength, manhood and numbers” (κάρτεϊ τε σθένει τε πεποιθότας ἠνορέη τε / πλήθει τε σφετέρω, 329–330).⁴⁰ But now, Zeus wishes that the Trojans win, much more than he does the Greeks. The introductory particle δῆ is ironic or sarcastic or indignant, which means that Apollo considers challenging Zeus in terms of *kratos* folly.⁴¹ This is only to be expected, if all *kratos* (whether belonging to kings or to those about to win in battle) eventually emanates from Zeus.

³⁷ For the structure of the *Theogony* see Hesiod, *Theogony*, ed. and comm. M.L. West (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), 17f.

³⁸ Suzanne Lye, “The Goddess Styx and the Mapping of World Order in Hesiod’s ‘Theogony,’” *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne* 27, no. 2 (2009): 12.

³⁹ Cf. Mark Griffith: “*Kratos* (Power) and *Bia* (Violence) embody the military basis of Zeus’ newly-won tyranny.” *Prometheus Bound*, ed. and comm. Mark Griffith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 81. See also Citti, “Κράτος ε Βία,” 318.

⁴⁰ Ὑπερδέα was emended by Brooks to ὑπὲρ Δία, which Mark W. Edwards calls “unnecessary (despite its good fit with 321 and 327).” See *The Iliad: A Commentary*, ed. G.S. Kirk, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 94.

⁴¹ For ironic δῆ, see Evert van Emde Boas et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 687. See also Denniston, *The Greek Particles*, 229–236.

Since Zeus had *kratos* as his prerogative, some claims to *kratos* may have been covert references to Zeus. We have previously discussed Solon's frag. 36 West (cf. "Between *Dikē* and Hubris" above). Fabienne Blaise has argued that when Solon in that fragment claimed to have joined the two opposites violence and justice in his *kratos*, Solon in effect likened himself to Zeus, as Zeus is the father of *Dikē* and the lord of *Kratos* and *Biē*.⁴² Zeus thereby unites justice, violence, and *kratos* in his being.

As concerns democracy, *Dēmos* (the personification of the *dēmos*) was sometimes portrayed artistically as Zeus.⁴³ Aristophanes' *Wasps* 620–630 sarcastically refers to the idea that *Dēmos* in democracy is Zeus incarnate: juror Philocleon argues that he holds an office (*ἀρχή*, 620) no smaller than that of Zeus, because he "hears the same things as Zeus does" (*ὅστις ἀκούω ταῦθ' ἄπερ ὁ Ζεῦς*, 621). By this, he means that when the jury is making noise, people pass by it and comment "King Zeus, how the court thunders!" (*οἷον βροντᾶ τὸ δικαστήριον / ὃ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ*, 624–625). This is a variant of the observation made by Aristotle (see "The Athenian Archon and the Magistracy" above): that the jurymen are really the lowliest men in the city, but despite this command massive power as a collective (which is, as we have seen, the reason for Aristotle's attempt to redefine *archē* to include the juries). Likening a jurymen to Zeus points out the absurdity in likening the collective *dēmos* to Zeus, which apparently inheres in the idea of democracy (whether this was an aim of the coiner of *δημοκρατία*, or simply a byproduct). (For Aristophanes' criticism of democracy, see also the argument in "Kratos and Manhood" below.)

The *kratos* of Zeus is manifested in his thunderbolt: in Sophocles' *King Oedipus*, the choir prays to Zeus, who "controls the *kratē* of fire-carrying lightning" (*τᾶν πυρφόρων / ἀστραπᾶν κράτη νέμων*, 200–201) to destroy the murderer of Laius with his thunderbolt.⁴⁴ Pindar once describes the blazing thunderbolt as "fitting in all *kratos*" (*ἐν ἅπαντι κράτει / αἶθωνα κεραυνὸν ἀραρότα*, Pind. *Ol.* 10.82–83).⁴⁵ The strength of the connection between *kratos* and the thunderbolt is symbolized in the cohabitation of *Kratos* (and his siblings) and Pegasus, the flying horse tasked with delivering the thunderbolt. The connection borders on identification, making phrases such as "yours is

⁴² Blaise, "Solon. Fragment 36 W," 29. Cf. Noussia-Fantuzzi, *Solon the Athenian: The Poetic Fragments*, 476.

⁴³ Amy C. Smith, *Polis and Personification in Ancient Greek Art* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 99.

⁴⁴ J.T. Sheppard argues that the word *κράτη* and the invocation of Zeus prepare "our emotion for the significant contrast between the transient earthly authority of Oedipus and the permanent sway of the only true King of gods and men." *The Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles*, trans. and comm. J.T. Sheppard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 115.

⁴⁵ Verdenius discusses earlier interpretations, arguing that the "thunderbolt is a means... of victory," and that it is "closely joined to every kind of victory, i.e., that it easily achieves any victory." See *Commentaries on Pindar*, 1988, 2:80f (italics in original). Lewis Richard Farnell's interpretation, "specially suited to the hands of Omnipotence," appears to take *ἅπαντι* as "absolute." See *The Works of Pindar: Critical Commentary* (London: Macmillan, 1932), 85f. Fränkel argues that *κράτος* as good as always (in Pindar indeed always) denotes supremacy and victorious violence/power. See *Dichtung*, 568 no. 2. Cf. n. 13 above.

the *kratos* of heaven” (σὸν μὲν οὐρανοῦ κράτος, Archil. frag. 177.1 West) ambiguous: does this refer to Zeus’ rule, the thunderbolt, or because these imply each other, to both?⁴⁶ Compare *Theogony* 706–710:

σὸν δ’ ἄνεμοι ἔνοσιν τε κονίην τ’ ἐσφαράγιζον / βροντὴν τε στεροπὴν τε καὶ
αἰθαλόεντα κεραυνόν, / κῆλα Διὸς μεγάλοιο, φέρον δ’ ἰαχὴν τ’ ἐνοπὴν τε / ἐς
μέσον ἀμφοτέρων· ὄτοβος δ’ ἄπλητος ὀρώρει / σμερδαλέης ἔριδος, κάρτευσ δ’
ἀνεφαίνετο ἔργον.

The winds stirred up quakes and dust and thunder and lightning and a blazing bolt, shafts of great Zeus, and carried the wail and the roar into their midst. And the horrible clamor of baneful strife arose, and the deed of *kratos* was revealed. (Hes. *Theog.* 706–710)

This is the passage leading up to Zeus’ defeat of the Titans: he smashes into their host with thunder and lightning. The “deed of *kratos*” is simultaneously the crack of thunder and the crushing of the Titans: both are manifestations of the power of Zeus.⁴⁷ *Theogony* 71–73, which summarizes Zeus’ ascent to power, can be read in the same way:

ὁ δ’ οὐρανῷ ἐμβασιλεύει, / αὐτὸς ἔχων βροντὴν ἢ δ’ αἰθαλόεντα κεραυνόν, /
κάρτει νικήσας πατέρα Κρόνον·

He is enthroned in heaven, the sole owner of thunder and the blazing bolt, having defeated his father Cronus with *kratos*. (Hes. *Theog.* 71–73)

In this passage, the thunderbolt forms the bridge between Zeus’ rule in heaven and his having defeated his father Cronus “with *kratos*.” As we saw in *Theogony* 706–710, the means to defeating Cronus was literally the thunderbolt, which means Hesiod implies synonymy between *kratos* and the thunderbolt. Similarly, Robert Mondi has noted a possible (folk-etymological?) link between the royal scepter (σκῆπτρον) and the thunderbolt (σκηπτός). In Mondi’s view, the scepter is not a mere symbol of kingship: “it *is* the kingship.”⁴⁸ In the episode with Diomedes and Agamemnon previously mentioned (cf. “The Relationship between *Kratos* and Rank” above), Diomedes said that Agamemnon indeed was honored with the scepter but did not have courage, which has the greatest *kratos*. Although this appears to contradict the point that the scepter is *kratos*, it should also be kept in mind that Diomedes is rebuking Agamemnon for wishing to abandon the war effort; delegitimizing the scepter as a source for *kratos* is necessary to convince Agamemnon to stay and fight.

⁴⁶ Cf. Harrison, *Themis*, 73.

⁴⁷ West compares the line to 677–678: χειρῶν τε βίης θ’ ἅμα ἔργον ἔφαινον / ἀμφοτέροι. See *Theogony*, ed. and comm. West, 348.

⁴⁸ Mondi, “Σκηπτοῦχοι Βασιλεῖς,” 208.

If the scepter is the kingship and the thunderbolt is the scepter, it follows that the thunderbolt is the *kratos*. Mondi argues that this is illustrated at the beginning of Pindar's *Pythian* 1: Zeus is at rest, the lightning-bolt (here, however, not σκηπτός but κεραυνός, 5) is extinguished and Zeus' eagle is asleep on top of his scepter: all aspects of *kratos* are tranquil.⁴⁹

As noted above, the Cyclopes created thunder and lightning, and gave these to Zeus (Hes. *Theog.* 139–141). The Cyclopes certainly have *kratos* themselves—in *Odyssey* 1.70–71, Polyphemus is described as having the greatest *kratos* of all Cyclopes—but they also lack anything resembling a political order. They are the emblematic unpolitical beings: although they inhabit a fertile island, they do not practice agriculture, which has traditionally been seen as the foundation of civilization; they do not respect societal fundamentals such as hospitality; they even lack assemblies and laws (cf. Hom. *Od.* 9.112–115).⁵⁰ In the *Odyssey* 6.5–6, the Cyclopes' barbarism is contrasted with the civilization of the Phaeacians, who broke up from their homes to found a new semi-utopian society on Scheria because the Cyclopes kept harassing them. But as creators of Zeus' *kratos*, which upholds divine order and serves as the template of tellurian political order, the Cyclopes are co-creators of the cosmic order, notwithstanding their disorganized barbarism. This is an interesting variation on the common mythological theme of order born from Chaos, and yet another indication that *kratos* is the foundation of order, but exists outside this order. This also ties in with Thrasymachus' argument and the point of *kratos* as underpinning *archē* (cf. “*Kratos* Underpins *Archē*” above).

Archaic mentions of *kratos* outside of the epics usually refer to exceptions from the aristocratic–egalitarian (but often conflicted) polis common to that era: when Solon had *kratos* as the archon of Athens, this referred to his being given a *carte blanche*; he was essentially made king, albeit for a short period of time, and was even asked to step up as tyrant (cf. Plut. *Sol.* 14). Except for Solon's attributing *kratos* to himself, references to *kratos* are often transgressive. Alcaeus' (fl. sixth century) fragment 141 Lobel and Page speaks of a man who in his desire for the great *kratos* (τὸ μέγα κρέτος, 3) will “topple” (ὀντρέπει, 4) the city. This is often taken as a reference to would-be tyrants. Greg Anderson, however, has argued compellingly that Alcaeus was no opponent to tyranny as such; he was rather “driven by personal animus” toward Pittacus, a specific tyrant.⁵¹ At this stage in history, tyranny was rather “a conventional, if unusually dominant style of leadership that flourished in early Greek oligarchies.”⁵² If Anderson's analysis is correct, then that city-toppling

⁴⁹ Mondi, 210f.

⁵⁰ Gschnitzer: “Das ist das Bild eines Naturvolkes, das all das nicht kennt, was für ein Kulturvolk charakteristisch ist.” “Zur homerischen Staats- und Gesellschaftsordnung: Grundcharakter und geschichtliche Stellung,” in *Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung: Rückblick und Ausblick*, ed. Joachim Latacz, Colloquia Raurica 2 (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1991), 199.

⁵¹ Anderson, “Before Turanoi Were Tyrants,” 205.

⁵² Anderson, 177.

kratos represents something going beyond archaic tyranny, but a throwback to *actual monarchy* as it existed in the collectively imagined distant past. The would-be monarchs, then, sought to revive that *kratos* which had disappeared with the traditional, Zeus-fostered kingship.

In this sense we may also read Theognis 43–46, which offers that “bad men, when they take a liking to hubris” (ὅταν ὑβρίζειν τοῖσι κακοῖσιν ἄδη, 44) corrupt the people and destroy justice “for their own gain and *kratos*” (οἰκεῖων κερδέων εἵνεκα καὶ κράτεος, 45).⁵³ In other passages, Theognis praises the *kratos* of Zeus or the gods (171, 373–376), but in the context of Archaic-era human politics, *kratos* is transgressive and threatens the stability of society (cf. the argument in “Yielding to *Kratos*” above). The lack of Archaic sources using κράτος about human politics means that any conclusion regarding how to interpret δημοκρατία will be speculative, but the normal association of *kratos* with kings and its status as a dangerous capacity in the Archaic era should carry some weight in how to interpret the possible late Archaic-era coining of the word δημοκρατία.

Kratos and Legitimacy?

It is normally assumed that *kratos* within a community belongs to individuals exercising their power over said community. But the strange grammar in a passage from the *Odyssey* indicates that *kratos* may well belong to the community, in which case a construction like ἔχω κράτος τιῶν should not be interpreted as “I have *kratos* over X,” but rather as “I have the *kratos* belonging to X.”

In *Odyssey* 6.197, Alcinoos, the king of the Phaeacians, is described by his daughter Nausicaa as the leader of the Phaeacians with the Greek phrase τοῦ δ’ ἐκ Φαιήκων ἔχεται κάρτος τε βίη τε (*Od.* 6.197). The phrase is ambiguous: the verb (ἔχεται, or tmetic ἐκ...ἔχεται?) is vague, and the relationship of the two genitives to the main verb is somewhat elusive. The straight-forward interpretation of the phrase would take τοῦ as possessive genitive, and Φαιήκων as the object of the verb.¹ Read as such, the passage offers “[Alcinoos], whose *kratos* and violence depend on the Phaeacians.” A.T. Murray’s translation of *Odyssey* has the reverse: “upon whom depend the might and power of the Phaeacians,” which seems to take τοῦ as the object of ἐκέχεται.² George Dimock’s corrected (sic) version of Murray’s translation apparently reads the

⁵³ When Theognis mentions “regular” aristocratic power, he (like all Archaic poets) normally uses δύναμις (e.g. “the rich man has the largest power [δύναμιν] in everything,” 718).

¹ However, word order in these constructions is complicated. See Carlota Viti, “Coding Spatial Relations in Homer: Preverbs vs. Prepositions,” *Historische Sprachforschung / Historical Linguistics* 121 (2008): 114–161.

² Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. A.T. Murray, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), <http://data.perseus.org/texts/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg002.perseus-eng1> ad loc. Murray’s translation is supported by the commentary in *The Odyssey of Homer*, ed. and comm. W.B. Stanford, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1948), 315.

genitives in the same way, but transposes the semantics: “in whom are vested the power and might of the Phaeacians.”³ The different readings concern to whom *kratos* ultimately belongs. In A.T. Murray’s uncorrected version, the Phaeacians have *kratos* and violence because of Alcinoos—which seems to say that it is “his” in the end—whereas mine and Dimock’s readings say that the *kratos* and violence ultimately belong to the Phaeacians. On the other hand, when Alcinoos defends his position in the community vis-à-vis his usurping wife (see “*Kratos* and Manhood” below), he says that the “*kratos* in the land” (κράτος ἐνὶ δήμῳ, 11.353) belongs to him.⁴ But this does not contradict the reading of 6.197; after all, that passage said that Alcinoos has *kratos*, although he had it *because* of the community. We may interpret this either as *kratos* welling up from the community into the king—a delegation to him, as it were—or as the king being the physical embodiment of the community’s *kratos*, or a combination of the two (cf. the discussion on the rider to the *Rhetra* in “The Concept Democracy and the Concept Δημοκρατία” above).

This type of *kratos* is hereditary and tied up in the household: Alcinoos has inherited it from his father Nausithoos. In Sophocles’ *Antigone* 173–174, Creon says that he has *kratos* in Thebes on account of his “close kinship” (κατ’ ἀγγιστεῖα, 174) with the deceased Eteocles and Polyneices. The conflicts involving the suitors on Ithaca concern Telemachus’ *kratos* in the household (more in “Democracy and Manhood”), but implicated in this fight over *kratos* in the household is the *kratos* in Ithaca: the suitors, in wooing Penelope, vie for *kratos* in the community, but they are willing to compromise and let Telemachus be the lord of his own household (κτῆματα δ’ αὐτὸς ἔχοις καὶ δόμασι σοῖσιν ἀνάσσοις, Hom. *Od.* 1.402), while praying that Zeus does not make Telemachus king on Ithaca (μὴ σέ γ’ ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκῃ βασιλῆα Κρονίων / ποιήσειεν, *Od.* 1.386–387): the distribution of *kratos* is Zeus’ prerogative (cf. “Zeus, the Cyclopes and the Thunderbolt” above); only he can separate the rule over Odysseus’ household from the lordship over Ithaca.

It should be noted that *kratos*, as a property of the household, appears not to be simply “political power” inherited from father to son or usurped by some pretender to the throne, because *kratos* does not necessarily coincide with the political power: it passes along according to a separate set of rules. This can be seen in Aeschylus’ *Libation Bearers*. Electra and Orestes meet at the grave of Agamemnon, furious with their mother and hell-bent on killing her and her lover-accomplice Aegisthus. The siblings and the choir then participate in a

³ Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. A.T. Murray and George E. Dimock, 2nd ed., vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library 104 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 235, DOI: 10.4159/DLCL.homer-odyssey.1919.

⁴ Marrucci interprets δήμῳ as denoting physical and social location at the same time, yet also claims somewhat inconsistently that *kratos* in Homer is not connected to notions of space or territory. See *Kratos e Arche*, 16, 25. The first claim is supported by Donlan, “Changes and Shifts,” 382. Larsen has proposed (somewhat *contra*) that country or land was the earliest meaning of δῆμος. See “Cleisthenes,” 45.

necromantic ritual: they call for the dead Agamemnon to “side with his family” (ξυγγενοῦ πάτερ φίλοις, 456), to come to the light and join them against the foes (ἔς φάος μολών, / ξὺν δὲ γενοῦ πρὸς ἐχθρούς, 459–460). Orestes asks Agamemnon to answer his prayers and “grant the *kratos* of your halls” (δὸς κράτος σῶν δόμων, 480), and begs Earth to send his father up to “watch my battle” (ἐποπτεῦσαι, 489); Electra joins in the plea, asking Persephassa, i.e. Persephone, to grant “beautiful” *kratos* (ἔυμορφον κράτος, 490).⁵ Although Aegisthus and Clytemnestra control Mycenae at this moment, the *kratos* “of these halls” still belongs to (or per the example of Alcinous: *is still with*) Agamemnon, who can apparently pass it on even after death. This *kratos* is clearly not political power: Orestes asks to be allowed to kill his mother and then die (νοσφίσας ὀλοίμαν, 438), which means that he does not expect to live to rule Mycenae.⁶ The context suggests that Orestes must have the *kratos* of the house in order to kill Clytemnestra, hence his wish that Earth send up Agamemnon to watch over his battle, rephrased by Electra as Persephassa granting beautiful *kratos*. The fact that Orestes needs Agamemnon’s *kratos* to win probably reflects the general relationship between *kratos* and victory (cf. “Victory” above), which, in a sense, is further testimony to the synonymy between κράτος as seemingly referring to power and κράτος as seemingly referring to victory.

Similarly, Sophocles’ *Electra* 417–430 retells a nightmare foreshadowing Clytemnestra’s fate. She dreams Agamemnon will come back to life, grab his scepter, and plant it by the hearth in his palace. A branch then shoots up from the scepter and grows so large that it overshadows the Mycenaean lands. Later on, the chorus paraphrases the contents of the dream as “prophetic Justice will come, carrying just *kratē* in her hands” (εἶσιν ἅ πρόμαντις Δίκα δίκαια φερομένα χεροῖν κράτη, 475–476).⁷ This seems to say that Agamemnon’s scepter, his *kratos* (cf. “Zeus, the Cyclopes, and the Thunderbolt” above), will be reunited with his house (symbolized by the hearth) through Agamemnon’s posthumous agency. This *kratos* will effect the death of Clytemnestra and cause many sorrows for Mycenae.

⁵ As to the *kratos* of the halls, George Thomson and Walter Headlam comments that Orestes wants “possession of his father’s house,” which does not convey the importance of *kratos* in killing Clytemnestra. See *The Oresteia of Aeschylus*, ed. and comm. George Thomson and Walter Headlam, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1966), 150.

⁶ Page inserts a σ’ after νοσφίσας, altering the meaning to “having left you [viz. Agamemnon], let me die!” See *Aeschylus*, 1972 ad loc. Most editors have the version without σ’, e.g. *Aeschyli Tragoediae*, ed. Ulrich Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (Berlin: Weidmann, 1914), 263; and *Aeschyli Tragoediae*, ed. West, 302. It appears as if Page thought it strange that νοσφίσας did not have an explicit object, and concluded that the final σ of νοσφίσας had led to the deletion of an original σ’. Aeschylus uses νοσφίσας in the sense “kill” in *Eumenids* 211.

⁷ Jebb argues that the words literally mean “bearing away just triumphs of prowess,” while noting that others translate “just victory.” Sophocles, *The Electra*, ed. and trans. R.C. Jebb, *The Plays and Fragments with Critical Notes, Commentary, and Translation in English Prose* 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1894), 71.

The complex connection to inheritance differentiates *kratos* from *archē*.⁸ At times, this gives the impression that *kratos* is connected to legitimacy, which is paradoxical, as most scholars who attempt to differentiate between *kratos* and *archē* on the grounds of legitimacy tend to ascribe legitimacy to *archē* (cf. “State of Research”).⁹ In Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* 1583–1585, Aegisthus says that Atreus, his uncle, was “questioned in *kratos*” (ἀμφίλεκτος ὢν κράτει, 1585) when he “ruled” (ἄρχων, 1583) Mycenae, for which reason he expelled Thyestes, his own brother and Aegisthus’ father.¹⁰ Atreus had first been a co-steward of Eurystheus’ power, in Eurystheus’ absence, with his brother Thyestes. But when Eurystheus died, Atreus seized the opportunity and expelled Thyestes from Mycenae. Although Atreus did *rule* (ἄρχων), it is uncertain if he did have *kratos*, which means that *kratos* cannot be reduced to having political power. In a sense, this deepens our understanding of the relationship between *kratos* and *archē* as noted in “*Kratos Underpins Archē*” above. That argument might have been taken as saying that “political institution presupposes raw power”; this analysis rather says that political control can exist without *kratos*, but is then built on sand.

In Sophocles’ *King Oedipus* 577–593, Oedipus is angry with Creon, who has proposed that Oedipus look into the murder of Laeus. This investigation will prove Oedipus’ undoing, and he is beginning to notice. He thinks Creon is pushing for the throne and questions his motives. Creon defends himself by asking if Oedipus “has married Creon’s sister” (ἀδελφὴν τὴν ἐμὴν γήμας ἔχεις, *OT* 577), and then asks rhetorically if Oedipus “does not rule with control of the land equalling hers” (ἄρχεις δ’ ἐκείνη ταῦτὰ γῆς ἴσον νέμων, 579).¹¹ When Oedipus concedes this, Creon asks if he is not “the third, equal to the two of you” (οὐκ οὖν ἴσοῦμαι σοῦ ἐγὼ δυοῖν τρίτος, 581). Creon then talks about power: would anyone “choose to rule with fear rather than abide in peace, especially if he shall have the same *kratē*” (εἴ τιν’ ἂν δοκεῖς / ἄρχειν ἐλέσθαι ξὺν φόβοισι μᾶλλον ἢ / ἄτρεστον εὐδοντ’, εἰ τὰ γ’ αὐθ’ ἔξει κράτη, 584–586), thereby contrasting *archein* with *kratē*. He himself does not prefer “being a tyrant [i.e. ruler] to doing tyrannical things” (οὔτε... ἱμείρων ἔφον / τύραννος εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ τύραννα δρᾶν, 587–588); no, he “gets everything” from Oedipus without fear (πάντ’ ἄνευ φόβου φέρω, 590). But if he himself were to rule (εἰ δ’ αὐτὸς ἦρχων, 591), he would have to do many things unwill-

⁸ Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 7.

⁹ Citti, however, calls κράτος in tragedy “il legitimo potere.” “Κράτος e Βία,” 319.

¹⁰ For ἀμφίλεκτος ὢν κράτει, Verrall has “being questioned in his sovereignty.” *The Agamemnon of Aeschylus*, 173.

¹¹ This translation takes ἴσον as an adverb, “equally,” not as a neuter noun, “equal share.” Jebb translates it similarly, taking νέμων as “with...sway.” See *The Oedipus Tyrannus*, ed. and trans. R.C. Jebb, 2nd ed., *The Plays and Fragments with Critical Notes, Commentary, and Translation in English Prose*. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1887), 85. Kamerbeek agrees: “perhaps...it is easier to regard ἴσον as adverbial than as subst. neuter in Soph.” See *The Oedipus Tyrannus*, *The Plays of Sophocles: Commentaries* 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 130.

ingly. So, how could tyranny be sweeter to him than “painless rule and influence?” (ἀρχῆς ἀλύπου καὶ δυναστείας, 593). Note how this passage begins with a reference to Oedipus’ being married to Creon’s sister Iocasta: this establishes Oedipus’ claim to *kratos*, and because of his relationship to Iocasta, Creon has the same *kratos* as Oedipus, yet he continually disavows *archē*, except if it is “painless.”¹²

As we can see, *kratos* in these contexts possibly constitutes, if not an emic concept of legitimacy outright, then at least an emic criterion for such legitimacy, if a proper Greek theory on legitimacy could be discovered. It is, however, unclear whether this is a feature of *kratos* in Classical prose, or restricted to the Archaic era and tragedy. The example of Persian Queen Atossa in Herodotus 7.3, who as the daughter of Cyrus had the *kratos* in appointing the successor to her husband Darius, is perhaps evidence for this (cf. “*Kratos* in Classical Prose and Comedy” below). But if the meaning is not readily found in prose, this is not necessarily because this is a poetic feature; it may rather be that the sense of *kratos* changed as an effect of the establishment of democracy.

If it is correct, as mentioned at the end of “Zeus, the Cyclopes, and the Thunderbolt” above, that most references to *kratos* in the Archaic era either refer to proper kings and gods, or to transgressive usurpers of power, one interpretation could well be that these usurpers did not lay claim only to power, but also laid claim to *kratos* qua a political capacity that lay dormant after the disappearance of traditional kings. The attribution of *kratos* to the *demos* could then be either pejorative: the *dēmos* makes transgressive political claims to power; or positive: the *dēmos* has successfully resurrected *kratos*, which legitimates their rule. Lacking sources in this regard, we are resigned to speculation.

Kratos and Manhood

The fusion between *kratos* and deceit (δόλος) in Euripides’ *Hecuba* 883–884 (noted in “*Kratos* and Deceit” above), is effectively an attempt to subvert the notion of *kratos*. But the passage also shows another type of subversion: the appropriation of *kratos* by women.¹³ As we shall see, Agamemnon’s question (“how shall women get *kratos* over men?”) is incredulous, because *kratos* is obviously the domain of men.

¹² This is somewhat *pace* Schmidt who argues that *archē* is power from descent in *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, 3:672. Note that Creon does not say explicitly that Iocasta has *kratos*, whether this is because she is a woman (merely acting as a conduit of *kratos* from Laeus) or because Sophocles aims for *variatio*.

¹³ Marrucci argues similarly that *archē* and *kratos* are often employed for constructing or deconstructing gender identities, but the case for *archē* is not convincing. *Kratos e Arche*, 237f; see also 90 n. 231.

Since the *Iliad*, *κράτος* has been coupled with words such as *ἡγορέη*, “manhood” (*Il.* 8.226, 11.9; cf. also the argument on *huperēnoreos* in “Zeus, the Cyclopes, and the Thunderbolt” above); since the *Odyssey*, women challenging male *kratos* has been a topos.¹⁴ This can be seen in episodes with Telemachus (*Od.* 1), son of Odysseus, and Alcinous, king of the Phaeacians (*Od.* 11; cf. also “*Kratos* and Legitimacy?” above). Telemachus wants to restore his inherited authority over his household and the Ithacan community. Alex Gottesman has argued that this authority is negotiated through a struggle over who directs traditional social practices such as marriage, sendoff and hospitality.¹⁵ When Phemius the poet sings of Troy to entertain the guests, Penelope begs him to stop, because it fills her heart with sorrow. This prompts Telemachus to tell his mother to go ply the loom and tend to the servants: “but the story shall concern all men, and me most of all, for I have the *kratos* in the household” (μῦθος δ’ ἄνδρεςσι μελήσει / πᾶσι, μάλιστα δ’ ἐμοί· τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἔστ’ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ, *Hom. Od.* 1.358–359). “Astonished” (θαμβήσασα), Penelope does as she is told. This theme is repeated in *Odyssey* 21, when Odysseus returns disguised as a beggar. He asks if he can try out his old bow, and Penelope hands it to him. Telemachus interrupts her: he says that no one is “better”—*κρείσσων*, the comparative adjective related to *κράτος*—than him to give the bow away (21.345). He then repeats nearly verbatim what he said in 1.358–359: the “bow shall concern all men, and me most of all, for I have the *kratos* in the household” (τόξον δ’ ἄνδρεςσι etc., 21.352–353). Penelope is once again instructed to go ply the loom, and in another fit of astonishment she goes away.

Alcinous the Phaeacian is similarly responsible for the sendoff of Odysseus, this being the prerogative of the king.¹⁶ When he procrastinates, his wife queen Arete begins administering the sendoff, but Alcinous rebukes her in much the same words as Telemachus had Penelope: “the sendoff shall concern all men, and me most of all, for I have *kratos* in the land” (πομπὴ δ’ ἄνδρεςσι etc., *Od.* 11.352–353). As Gottesman notes, control of the sendoff and the bow “is symbolic of masculine male authority.”¹⁷

These passages thus comprise appropriations of a male host’s responsibilities by women. The repeated use of a stock phrase gives the impression that female challenges to *kratos* was a common poetic theme. The theme (but not the stock phrase) was also employed by all three major tragedians. Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* 258–260 includes the one time that a non-divine woman has *kratos*, but her having *kratos* is due to her husband:

¹⁴ Cf. Bassi: “ἡγορέη manifests itself as an externally recognized attribute or action that shares the semantic field of *alkē*, *sthenos*, and *kartos*.” “The Semantics of Manliness,” 36. The comment refers to the *Iliad* 17.328–330.

¹⁵ A. Gottesman, “The Authority of Telemachus,” *Classical Antiquity* 33, no. 1 (April 2014): 33, <https://doi.org/10.1525/ca.2014.33.1.31>.

¹⁶ Gottesman, 44f.

¹⁷ Gottesman, 55 n. 48.

ἦκω σεβίζων σόν, Κλυταιμήστρα, κράτος· / δίκη γάρ ἐστι φωτὸς ἀρχηγοῦ τίειν
/ γυναῖκ' ἐρημωθέντος ἄρσενος θρόνου.

[Argive Elder:] I come with respect for your *kratos*, Clytemnestra. For it is right to honor the woman of the leading man when her husband's throne is empty. (Aesch. *Ag.* 258–260)¹⁸

In Aeschylus' *Suppliants* 950–953, treating the forced marriage of Egyptian refugee women (cf. “Greek Terms for Constitutions” above), a herald comes to Argos asking to have the women back. The king of Argos rebukes him:

Κῆρυξ: ἔοιγμεν ἤδη πόλεμον ἀρεῖσθαι νέον· / εἶη δὲ νίκη καὶ κράτη τοῖς
ἄρσεσιν. / Βασιλεύς: ἀλλ' ἄρσενάς τοι τῆσδε γῆς οἰκήτορας / εὐρήσεται, οὐ
πίνοντας ἐκ κριθῶν μέθυ.

Herald: We seem already to have started a new war. But may victory and *kratē* belong to the men! / King: Well, you will find that men live in this land, no drinkers of barley beer. (Aesch. *Supp.* 950–953)

Although the herald's optative entertains the possibility that *kratos* may belong to women, the king's response that men and no barley-beer drinkers (viz. women) happen to live in Argos reinforces the notion that *kratos* belongs to whoever is manlier. The play ends after the threat of forced marriage has been averted. The runaway brides pray that Zeus let them avoid future forced marriages and that he “give *kratos* to the women” (καὶ κράτος νέμοι γυναῖ/ξιν, 1068–1069). This is but a few lines after they have lamented that forced marriage is part of the intransgressible will of Zeus, and that any attempt to avoid it is tantamount to “conjure something unconjurable” (θέλγοις ἄν ἄθελκτον, 1055), viz. achieve the impossible. If avoiding forced marriage is conjuring the unconjurable, and it takes *kratos* for women to avoid it, it appears as if it is borderline impossible for women to have *kratos*. In Sophocles' *Antigone*, Antigone wishes to bury her brothers, Eteocles and Polyneices, despite King Creon's decree that they be left unburied. When Creon finds out that Antigone has succeeded in burying them, he complains that “in truth I am no man, but she is a man if she is to have these *kratē* with impunity” (ἦ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἀνὴρ, αὐτὴ δ' ἀνὴρ, / εἰ ταῦτ' ἀνατεῖ τῆδε κείσεται κράτη, 484–485). Antigone's grabs at *kratē* threatens Creon's *kratē* and challenges his identity as a man.¹⁹ Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* also construes *kratos* as a masculine

¹⁸ Denniston and Page argue that this is a backhanded insult betraying “hostility and contempt.” *Agamemnon*, 93.

¹⁹ Cf. Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 68 n. 182. Kamerbeek identifies in this male-female political antagonism an “important motif” in *Antigone*. He takes κράτη as “trionphe” (quoting Mazon). See *Antigone*, 101. Jebb paraphrases κράτη as “victory” but mentions that it may also mean “deeds of might, and so prevalence, victory.” See Sophocles, *The Antigone*, ed. and trans. R.C. Jebb, 2nd ed., *The Plays and Fragments with Critical Notes, Commentary, and Translation in English Prose 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), 95.

quality, but differs from the previous examples in lacking references (whether explicit or implicit) to femininity. Ismene, Oedipus' daughter, has traveled to Colonus to find her exiled father. She tells him that his sons (Eteocles and Polyneices) grasp for rule and tyrannical *kratos* (ἀρχῆς λαβέσθαι καὶ κράτους τυραννικοῦ, 373) in Thebes. She adds that the people of Thebes think that Oedipus is the key to their safety. Oedipus does not believe her: he asks of what use a man such as himself can be. Ismene answers that the people say that their *kratē* depend on Oedipus. He answers: “when I am no longer, am I then a man?” (ὄτ’ οὐκέτ’ εἰμί, τῆνικαὐτ’ ἄρ’ εἴμ’ ἀνήρ; 393).²⁰ The point is that Oedipus considers himself dead, thus as not being a man; but if he has *kratos*, he must be a man. Ismene subverts male *kratos*, not in appropriating *kratos* for herself, but in renegotiating its terms: only through not being a man, in the sense of “living being,” can Oedipus regain male *kratos*.

Given *kratos* as a prime masculine quality, supporters and opponents of democracy fought a discursive battle over who had the better claim to manhood. The supporters unsurprisingly tended to portray the *dēmos* as ideally masculine. In Demosthenes' *Third Olynthiac*, he connects the previous glories of democracy to the *dēmos*' courage and willingness to fight, whereas they now, in Demosthenes' sarcasm, have reached “the climax of the manlihood” (τὸ πάντων ἀνδρειότατον, Dem. 3 *Olynth.* 31; really the nadir) in letting corrupt politicians pull their strings.²¹ Democracy was also characterized by freedom of speech, which fostered the manly quality of frankness (παρρησία).²² Moreover, “freedom” as opposed to servitude is a masculine trait. The opponents of democracy disputed democratic claims to manhood: in Plato's *Republic* 557c, democracy is likened to a colorful cloak which, because of its colorfulness, would appeal to women and boys:

καὶ ἴσως μὲν, ἦν δ’ ἐγώ, καὶ ταύτην, ὥσπερ οἱ παῖδες τε καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τὰ ποικίλα θεώμενοι, καλλίστην ἂν πολλοὶ κρίνειαν.

And maybe, said I, would many people judge this cloak to be very beautiful, like boys and women watching colorful things. (Pl. *Resp.* 557c)

²⁰ It soon turns out that the *kratē* that Oedipus can guarantee depend on where his corpse—which is cursed—will be buried. Jebb takes κράτη as “political predominance generally, but with esp. ref. to prevalence in war against Athens.” See *The Oedipus Coloneus*, ed. and trans. R.C. Jebb, 2nd ed., *The Plays and Fragments with Critical Notes, Commentary, and Translation in English Prose 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889), 70. Kamerbeek takes κράτη (following Mazon) as “succès,” and reads ἀνήρ as implying “force and energy.” See *The Oedipus Coloneus*, *The Plays of Sophocles: Commentaries 7* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 74.

²¹ Joseph Roisman, *The Rhetoric of Manhood: Masculinity in the Attic Orators* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2005), 133, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uu/detail.action?docID=227324>.

²² Roisman, 133.

Of course, the implication is that men who like democracy are unmanly.²³ The *Lysistrata* and *Assemblywomen* by Aristophanes, likewise, can be read as criticizing democracy for being so unmanly that one may as well turn it over to women (cf. the equation between Zeus and Dēmos noted in “Zeus, the Cyclopes, and the Thunderbolt” above, which rather belonged to a character sarcastically portrayed in the play).²⁴ In this context, it is appropriate to cite the first few lines from the “Oligarchical man” in Theophrastus’ *Characters* 26:

Δόξειεν δ’ ἂν εἶναι ἡ ὀλιγαρχία πλεονεξία²⁵ τις ἰσχύος καὶ κέρδους γλιχομένη, ὁ δὲ ὀλιγαρχικός τοιοῦτός τις οἶος, τοῦ δήμου βουλευόμενου τίνας τῶ ἄρχοντι προσαιρήσονται τῆς πομπῆς τοὺς συνεπιμελησομένους, παρελθὼν ἀποφύνασθαι ὡς δεῖ αὐτοκράτορας τούτους εἶναι, κἄν ἄλλοι προβάλλωνται δέκα, λέγειν: “ἱκανὸς εἷς ἐστί,” τοῦτον δὲ ὅτι δεῖ ἄνδρα εἶναι, καὶ τῶν Ὀμήρου ἐπῶν τοῦτο ἔν μόνον κατέχειν ὅτι “οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη, εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω,” τῶν δὲ ἄλλων μηδὲν ἐπίστασθαι.

Oligarchy could be considered a kind of hunger for strength and gain, and the oligarchical man as a man who, when the *dēmos* consider which persons they are going to assign to the archon to help plan the procession, would come forward to say that they must have plenipotentiary powers, and if others suggest they be ten in number, he would say: “One will suffice,” *but that one has to be a man*, and of Homer’s verses he only commands one, namely “having many leaders is no good, let there be one master!”; but he does not know any other. (Theophr. *Char.* 26.1–2)

The oligarchical man makes the point that when many men share responsibilities, they lack manhood.²⁶ Δημοκρατία is often taken to have a negative connotation to oligarchs, but in a sense, the opposite may be true: it may have too laudatory a connotation, ascribing manhood to effeminate collective rule, which makes it an offensive misnomer.

On the other hand, the oligarchic man’s attack on democracy may be false. Greg Anderson has proposed that Greek democracy was not the rule of individuals acting in aggregate, but the rule of the corporate person Dēmos, who was embodied by the individual citizens but preceded them ontologically, an

²³ David Kawalko Roselli, “Gender, Class and Ideology: The Social Function of Virgin Sacrifice in Euripides’ *Children of Herakles*,” *Classical Antiquity* 26, no. 1 (2007): 112 n. 104, <https://doi.org/10.1525/ca.2007.26.1.81>.

²⁴ Alan Sheppard takes *Assemblywomen* as proposing that the reforms to save democracy must be undertaken by a woman because men are so utterly self-interested. “Aristophanes’ *Ecclesiazsae* and the Remaking of the Πάτριος Πολιτεία,” *The Classical Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (December 2016): 483, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838816000653>. A possible implication is that democracy is so feminine that it takes female rulers to fix it.

²⁵ Πλεονεξία supplevit Octave Navarre. Codd. has nothing. See Theophrastus, *Caractères*, ed. and trans. Octave Navarre (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1920), 61 n. 2 in the app. crit. Φιλαρχία is found in one codex. See the critical apparatus in *Theophrasti characteres*, ed. Hermann Diels (Oxford: Clarendon, 1909) ad loc. (unpaginated).

²⁶ Remember that “numbers” were the means for women to get *kratos* over men in Euripides’ *Hecuba* 883–885.

“ageless primordial superorganism...continually present in Attica since the time of those first earth-born kings.”²⁷

If it was not the individual citizens but the corporate person that ruled Athens, the distinction between democracy and monarchy is conceptually inapplicable. As Lynette G. Mitchell puts it, “at the end of the fifth century and into the fourth century the rule of the good king, and even the *tyrannos*, could also be a metaphor for the rule of the *demos*.”²⁸ Such comparisons were not negative: in Euripides’ *Suppliants* 352–353, for instance, Theseus proudly says that he, “freeing this city with equal vote” (ἐλευθερώσας τήνδ’ ἰσόψηφον πόλιν, 353) has installed the *dēmos* “in monarchy” (ἐς μοναρχίαν, 352).²⁹ In contemporary art, Dēmos is often portrayed with a royal scepter: a stele from 337/6 even portrays Dēmos as being crowned by Dēmokratia.³⁰ We have already noted the comparisons between the Dēmos and the king *par excellence*, Zeus. Insofar as monarchy is an attempt to restore ancient great *kratos*, the monarchy of the *dēmos* easily becomes the *kratos* of the *dēmos*. Nor is it any wonder that oligarchy is not oligocracy. The *dēmos*, as a corporate person, has a better claim to *kratos* than, say, an oligarchic junta, which consists of highly individuated persons (whose collaboration is often strained, at that). Compared with the unitary Dēmos, the strongly individuated members of the oligarchy are not few but many, and if the oligarchic man’s own logic is to be trusted, they are feminine.

Conclusions

We have drawn a number of conclusions of varying kind from the previous sections. We began by concluding that there is merit to the observation that *kratos* is monosemous, which means that we must approach it holistically, as it were. It was discovered that *kratos* is not strength, but it is nonetheless the opposite of deceit. It causes and is caused by victory, mostly on the battlefield but also in politics, to which Solon’s use of his *krateron* shield to apportion

²⁷ Anderson, *Realness of Things Past*, 143. See also “The Personality of the Greek State,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 129 (November 2009): 1–22.

²⁸ Lynette G. Mitchell, “Political Thinking on Kingship in Democratic Athens,” *Polis, the Journal for Ancient Greek and Roman Political Thought* 36 (2019): 443. See also Lisa Kallet, “Dēmos Tyrannos: Wealth, Power and Economic Patronage,” in *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and Its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, ed. Kathryn Morgan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 121f and *passim*.

²⁹ As Theseus is still the king of Athens, this is technically incongruent. Theseus should probably be seen as a personification of Athens or the Athenian spirit.

³⁰ See A.E. Raubitschek, “Demokratia,” *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 31, no. 3 (1962): 238, <https://doi.org/10.2307/147119> (citing Benjamin D. Meritt).

victory to political factions in Athens testifies. *Kratos* can be harnessed to uphold justice, but is itself rooted in violence or hubris, which is indicated in the close relationship of mythological personifications *Kratos* and *Bia*, and in how Zeus' thunderbolt, a manifestation of his power, was handed to him by the Cyclopes, beings of Chaos. As *kratos* becomes a transgressive force when it is harnessed against the will of the gods, it must be considered probable that the transgressive nature often ascribed by Archaic poets to political *kratos* is transgressive precisely because Zeus does not sanction it; after all, the traditional kings (whose *kratos* is unproblematic) were the protegés of Zeus.

We have observed that *kratos* in tragedy approaches a kind of legitimacy. This is likely an effect of its strong connection with Zeus. This kind of legitimacy is also connected to victory, as we saw in how Orestes' victory against Clytemnestra depended on his being given "*kratos* of the halls" by his dead father. This should lead us to yet again consider the Old Oligarch's analysis of the relationship between the *kratos* of the *demos* as motivated because the *demos* serve in the navy, which produces military victories for Athens (cf. "Victory" above).

Epilogue: *Kratos* in Classical Prose and Comedy

After the word δημοκρατία had been coined, -κρατία seemingly became the default suffix for coining new constitutional terms: ἀριστοκρατία, πλουτοκρατία, τιμοκρατία, θεατροκρατία. Interestingly, at the same time, κράτος became less common. Schmidt notes that κράτος is little attested in "good prose."¹ He argues that this is because it was outcompeted by words that conveyed more precisely the different senses of κράτος, mentioning νίκη, ἀρχή, βασιλεία as examples. Breuil, on the other hand, proposes that κράτος had "epic resonance."² Excluding the adverbial constructions κατὰ κράτος and ἀνὰ κράτος, which are mainly attested in prose and are in practice lexemes of their own, κράτος is undeniably more common in the epics than in prose.³ The adverbial constructions excluded, the table below shows that κράτος became gradually less common after the Archaic era.

¹ Schmidt, *Synonymik der griechischen Sprache*, 3:668.

² Breuil, "De κράτος à δημοκρατία," 84. Cf. Charles Forster Smith, "Traces of Epic Usage in Thucydides," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 31 (1900): 79. The epic resonance does not extend to κρατέω.

³ The lone non-prosaic occurrence of κατὰ κράτος (Hes. *Cat. frag.* 154b.4 Most), if correct, probably precedes the fixed expression: it refers to Castor and Polydeuces counterfactually making a suitor of Helen's into their wedded kin *kata kratos*. As the fixed adverbial expression refers to acts of violence, it seems out of place. Glenn Most interprets this as "by their supremacy," which I take to refer to Castor and Polydeuces' *authority* (vel sim.), not to their physically coercing someone to marry Helen. J.G. Griffiths has ἀυτάγρετον, "self-chosen," instead of κατὰ κράτος. See Hesiod, *The Shield. Catalogue of Women. Other Fragments*, ed. and trans. Glenn W. Most, Loeb Classical Library 503 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 244.)

Author ⁴	Attestations	Adverbial expressions ⁵	Relevant attestations
Homer	47 ⁶	0	47
Hesiod	10	0	10
Pindar	7	0	7
Aeschylus	24	0	24
Sophocles	26	0	26
Euripides	27	0	27
Herodotus	15	0	15
Thucydides	29	21	8
Aristophanes	7	0	7
Xenophon	33	32	1
Plato	11	3	8
Isocrates	7	7	0
Demosthenes	5	4	1
Aristotle	3	2	1

Κράτος, undeniably more common in the epics than in Attic prose, is also quite prominent in drama and has non-negligible attestations in Herodotus, who wrote in Ionic. As Ionic is the basis for the Epic dialect, and epic poetry in turn influenced Ionic prose, it is difficult to say whether the use of κράτος reflects specifically Epic language or Ionic in general.⁷ Many Attic authors never use κράτος. In the case of, say, Lysias, this is attributable to subject matter, but the rarity of κράτος in the political and philosophical corpora of Platon and Aristotle is striking. Plato's corpus is much larger than that of Thucydides, yet they have the same number of attestations; Aristotle's corpus has a single attestation. Unlike ἀρχή, κράτος is clearly of little importance in philosophical or theoretical discourse (here understood as distinct from mythological discourse).⁸ The fact that κράτος is often personified whereas ἀρχή is not gives the impression that the words belong to opposed registers or discourses.

Assuming that philosophical discourse strives for conceptual precision, this scarcity gives some credence to Schmidt's hypothesis that κράτος became less common because it was vague. But, κράτος being so rare in Attic, it is easy to

⁴ Cf. the enumeration in Breuil, "De κράτος à δημοκρατία," 73. The numbers differ on the margin, perhaps because we treat some fragments differently.

⁵ Their high frequency in Thucydides and Xenophon is due to subject matter, that is, war; the attestations in Xenophon are found in his historical works and from his treatise on cavalry. Actions that can be modified by κατὰ κράτος include sieges, blockades, invasions, and so on. Ἀνὰ κράτος is curiously often used in contexts of escape, which shows that κράτος in these adverbial expressions has little to do with *Obmacht* and prevalence.

⁶ Including three attestations from the Homeric hymns.

⁷ Cf. Horrocks: "...Ionic or 'poetic' characteristics (which often amount to the same thing, since much of what was current in early Ionic prose had come to be felt as poetic because of the continued use of the same words and expressions in contemporary archaizing poetry)." *Greek*, 68.

⁸ It ought to be noted that the verb, κρατέω, is common in both authors. Κρατερός, the adjective, is rare.

suspect that the few passages in which κράτος occurs are somehow marked. Is the use of κράτος an excursion into an Epic–Ionic register, and what would motivate this excursion?⁹

Kratos in Herodotus and Thucydides

Only in Herodotus and Thucydides is *kratos* used so much in specific political context that it is possible to interpret what characterizes specifically political *kratos*.¹⁰ Notably, all holders of *kratos* in Herodotus, are either single persons, i.e. kings or tyrants, or members of a collegial body holding the *kratos* jointly, such as a board of generals, an oligarchic junta, or the *dēmos*; there is no instance of *kratos* being split between two opposed parties.¹¹ In Herodotus 6.73, Crius and Casambus, described as having the “greatest *kratos*” in Aegina, are probably the most influential members of the aristocratic families ruling jointly there.¹² In 8.2, Eurybiades is described as a general with “the greatest *kratos*” in the Panhellenic navy; he is assisted by the Athenian Themistocles and the Corinthian Adeimantos, generals in their own right (8.3–5). They pass their decisions collegially, as evinced by Adeimantos’ questioning of voting procedures (8.61), but the voting is ultimately consultative: in Herodotus 8.64, the author writes: “since Eurybiades decided it, they prepared to stay and fight” (ἐπεῖτε Εὐρυβιάδῃ ἔδοξε, αὐτοῦ παρεσκευάζοντο ὡς ναυμαχῆσοντες). “The greatest *kratos*” thus appears to mean simply “the *kratos*.”

Kratos is sometimes equated with control of the *archai*: in the Constitutional Debate, Otanes refers to his position as “the rule of the multitude” (πλήθος ἄρχων, 3.80) whereas Megabyzus calls this “carrying the *kratos* to the

⁹ Tudor Gardiner assumes κράτος occurs in “important or elevated contexts.” See *Terms for Power*, 113. Smith ascribes Thucydides’ use of κράτος in reference to victories (2.87, 3.13) to Epic influence on Thucydides “indirectly through Tragedy, or Herodotus, or Lyric.” See “Epic Usage,” 76, 79. Cf. n. 2 above.

¹⁰ *Kratos* over the Medes (1.129); *k.* over the Persians (3.69); the multitude hypothetically holding *k.* over the Persians (3.81); an oligarchy hypothetically holding *k.* over the Persians (3.81); ?Persian *k.* in the old Medes empire? (3.117); Maeandrius having *k.* over the Samians (3.142); a monster having *k.* over a forest (4.9); Pisistratus having all *k.* in Athens (6.35); Crius and Casambus having the largest *k.* among the Aeginetans (6.73); Xerxes’ *k.* among the Persians (7.3); Atossa’s having the entire *k.* over the Persian succession (7.3); generals having *k.* over the Persian expedition to Europe (7.96); 7.187 Xerxes’ *k.* over the Persian expedition to Europe; Eurybiades’ *k.* over the joint Greek naval force (8.2); Persian *k.* over the Persian expedition to Europe (9.42).

¹¹ The collective character of *kratos* is perhaps what Marrucci refers to when saying: “*Arche* ed *archein* designano una sovranità in grado di misurarsi con più di un meson contemporaneamente, e non, a differenza di *kratos* (e *kratein*), con un meson soltanto. Una volta che il *kratos* ‘raggiunga’ il meson, esso diviene, si è detto, raggiungibile da tutti i politai, equidistanti da esso e per questo tra loro interscambiabili.” *Kratos e Arche*, 229.

¹² For the political structure of Aegina, see Thomas J. Figueira, “The Saronic Gulf,” in *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, ed. Mogens Herman Hansen and Thomas Heine Nielsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 621.

multitude” (ἐς τὸ πλῆθος φέρειν τὸ κράτος, 3.81); Megabyzus advocates investing a small oligarchic junta with *kratos*. In Herodotus 3.142, Maeandrius has all the *kratos* on Samos because the late tyrant delegated *archē* to Maeandrius before his death. In Plato’s *Menexenus* 238d, Socrates says that Athens is both a democracy and an aristocracy because the people are “in control” (ἐγκράτες) of many things, but give “*kratos* and the *archai*” to the best people. But *kratos* is not always concerned with a constitutional or legal structure: in Herodotus 7.3, Cyrus’ daughter Atossa, the queen-consort of Darius, is described as having “all *kratos*” in appointing the successor of Darius. Breuil calls this *kratos* “influence” because it is not “recognized by everyone.”¹³ But the context suggests something more than mere influence: Darius married Atossa because she is the daughter of Cyrus the Great, which means she legitimized Darius’ claim to the throne: the succession depended on her, and Xerxes, being her son, was the oldest descendant of Cyrus the Great (cf. “*Kratos* and Legitimacy?” above).¹⁴

As said in “An Inquiry into *Kratos*: Conclusions” above, it is unclear whether the rather less glamorous nature of *kratos* in Herodotus compared to in the tragedies and Archaic poetry is because poetry amplifies *kratos*, which implies that *kratos* in prose is “real” *kratos* as opposed to poetic false *kratos*, or the Archaic era had a different understanding of *kratos* which persisted in poetry. It is, for instance, possible that the success of democracy in establishing *kratos* led to this concept’s losing some of its exalted character.

At any rate, there is no instance of two opponents having *kratos* in the same community at the same time. Although κράτος is sometimes quantified, which would imply its divisibility, it is always quantified with words denoting largeness or totality, such as μέγα, μέγιστον, and πᾶν.¹⁵ These are probably to be taken as identifying essential qualities of *kratos*, not accidental ones: κράτος is always “great” and “total.”¹⁶ Although technically superfluous, the quantifiers are motivated by communicative logic, as when Herodotus speaks of Pisistratus:

ἐν δὲ τῆσι Ἀθήνησι τηνικαῦτα εἶχε μὲν τὸ πᾶν κράτος Πεισίστρατος, ἀτὰρ ἔδυναστεύε γὰρ καὶ Μιλιτιάδης ὁ Κυψέλου ἐὼν οἰκίης τεθριπποτρόφου . . .

¹³ Breuil, “De κράτος ἃ δημοκρατῆ,” 72f.

¹⁴ On Atossa’s outsized position among the Persians, see Mark H. Munn: “Commentators have remarked on the manner in which the royal consort and mother, godlike in status, is assimilated in [Aeschylus’ *Persians*] to a personification of kingship, or even to the land of Asia itself”; *The Mother of the Gods, Athens and the Tyranny of Asia: A Study of Sovereignty in Ancient Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 232.

¹⁵ Cf. Benveniste, *Pouvoir, droit, religion*, 75. Breuil takes the adjectives as referring to the “ampleur,” magnitude, of *kratos*, which appears mistaken. See “De κράτος ἃ δημοκρατῆ,” 74. The one time in Greek literature that κράτος is quantified with another adjective is in Simonides: “The *kratos* of men is small [ὀλίγον] and the sorrows are unconquerable, and in a short life burden is laid on burden” (Simonides frag. 15.1–3 Page). This musing on the human condition is obviously a special case.

¹⁶ Cf. Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 16f.

At that time, Pisistratus had all the *kratos* in Athens, but Miltiades son of Cypselus, a member of a household that could afford a team of four horses, had influence too. (Hdt. 6.35)

“All *kratos* at that time” does not mean that Pisistratus, thrice tyrant of Athens, at another time had held half or three quarters or a fifth of the *kratos*; it means that at this moment, Pisistratus was indeed ruling. It should also be noted that Miltiades is not described as having *kratos* but with the vaguer term ἐδυνάστευε, “having influence.” Against the alleged indivisibility of κράτος, ἰσοκρατία (“equality of κράτος”) may be invoked.¹⁷ But the term is hapax (Hdt. 5.92), which means we do not know what it denoted.¹⁸

In Attic, κράτος is mainly used in five contexts: (1) the concept κράτος τῆς γῆς, belonging to the Greek *ius gentium*; (2) speeches and mythic passages in dialogues, which are often assumed to have an elevated style; (3) the proverbial expression νίκη καὶ κράτος (or κράτος καὶ νίκη), attested since Epics (e.g. Hes. *Theog.* 646); (4) the occasional paraphrase of constitutional terms featuring -κρατία (e.g. δήμου κράτος τι, Pl. *Leg.* 757d); (5) the adverbial expressions κατὰ κράτος and ἀνὰ κράτος.

Thucydides, whose Attic prose is influenced by Ionic, partly falls outside of these categories.¹⁹ Excluding the expression κατὰ κράτος, he uses κράτος eight times. Three (1.143, 2.87, 3.13) are in speeches, whether direct or indirect.²⁰ Five passages (1.143, 4.98, 8.24, 8.46 and 8.76; note that 1.143 is counted again) contain the phrase κράτος τῆς γῆς or θαλάσσης, which refers to a concept in Greek political custom:²¹

τὸν δὲ νόμον τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν εἶναι, ὧν ἂν ἦ τὸ κράτος τῆς γῆς ἐκάστης ἦν τε πλέονος ἦν τε βραχυτέρας, τούτων καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ αἰεὶ γίνεσθαι, τρόποις θεραπευόμενα οἷς ἂν πρὸς τοῖς εἰωθόσι καὶ δύνωνται.

For the Greek custom was that whoever had the *kratos* of each land, no matter the size of the land, always should be in charge of the temples, which should be taken care of according to the usual customs and according to ability. (Thuc. 4.98)

¹⁷ Ober, for instance, understands ἰσοκρατία as “equal access to the public good of *kratos* – to public power that conduces to the common good through enabling good things to happen in the public realm.” “Original Meaning of ‘Democracy,’” 6.

¹⁸ Ostwald interprets ἰσοκρατία in practice as denoting “a form of government which embodies the bicameral principle of a council which deliberates and formulates policies and an assembly (or a larger representative council) which validates them...” “Isokratia,” 37.

¹⁹ Horrocks: “Thucydides... wrote his account of that conflict in a rather internationalized Attic, which suppresses the most characteristically Attic features in favor of Ionic equivalents...” *Greek*, 68.

²⁰ There is often no difference in style and content between direct and indirect discourse in Thucydides according to Carlo Scardino, “Indirect Discourse in Herodotus and Thucydides,” in *Thucydides and Herodotus*, ed. Edith Foster and Donald Lateiner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 94.

²¹ Cf. Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 99 n. 262. Compare the phrase κράτος τῆς χώρας (vel sim.) in Herodotus 4.9 and Euripides frag 12.77–78 Page.

In 8.24, after battling the Milesians, the Athenians raise a trophy, which the Milesians immediately tear down because it was not raised “with *kratos* of the land” (ὡς οὐ μετὰ κράτους τῆς γῆς στήθεν). The use of κράτος τῆς γῆς indicates that it is an established concept: trophies were governed by convention; they were supposed to remain on the scene of battle until they decayed naturally. Had the trophy not been raised illegally, its removal would have been extraordinary.²² It is possible that this feature of *kratos* is connected with its resemblance to legitimacy, and how a king is the warden of *kratos* which properly belongs to the land (cf. “Kratos and Legitimacy?”)

Thucydides 2.29 mentions one Teres, king of Odrysians, who became the first king *en krateri*. The construction ἐν κράτει is hapax in Thucydides and possibly in all Greek.²³ Gomme takes this ἐν κράτει simply as “powerful.”²⁴ But if Teres should be understood as the first king of the Odrysians, *kratos* is obviously connected to the institution of kingship, reflecting supreme rule.

Attic Allusions to Epic–Ionic

Aristophanes’ register usually reflects colloquial speech; instances of κράτος in his corpus could raise a red flag over the epic status of *kratos*.²⁵ Six of seven attestations, however, are actually parodic citations of earlier poetry, especially tragedy: the citations often involve the original author of the passage (Aeschylus or Euripides) appearing as a character in Aristophanes’ play.²⁶

²² Lucia Nováková and Romana Šályová, “Marking the Victory in Ancient Greece: Some Remarks on Classical Trophy Monuments,” *Iliria International Review* 9, no. 1 (2019): 193, <https://doi.org/10.21113/iir.v9i1.484>. Cf. Johannes Classen and Julius Steup: “Nur die Behauptung des Schlachtfeldes berechnigte nach völkerrechtlichem Grundsatz zur Errichtung des Siegeszeichens.” *Thukydides*, ed. Johannes Classen and Julius Steup, 3rd ed., vol. 8 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1922), 56. The verb ἱστᾶναι, “raise” (as opposed to ἀνατιθέναι, “dedicate”), indicates that trophies were not objects of cult. See Gomme, Andrewes, and Dover, *Commentary on Thucydides*, 1981, 5:54.

²³ An occurrence in Sophocles’ *Antigone* 715 about a pilot in control of a ship, can be a misreading of ἐγκρατεῖ (vel sim.). Other variants have been proposed: ἐγκρατής in Kamerbeek, *Antigone*, 135; ἐγκρατῆ (over “stilwidrig” ἐγκρατής) in Gerhard Müller, *Sophokles Antigone* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter - Universitätsverlag, 1967), 167; ἐγκράτῆ also in *Antigone*, ed. and trans. R.C. Jebb, 134.

²⁴ Gomme, *Commentary on Thucydides*, 2:91. Cf. Johannes Classen: “ἐν κράτει eng mit βασιλεύς zu verbinden (der erste mächtige König...).” *Thukydides*, ed. Johannes Classen, 7th ed., vol. 2 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1966), 73f.

²⁵ Horrocks: “The core of the language of Athenian tragedy...is essentially Attic, despite the overlay of a range of ‘distancing’ features. The same is true of ordinary (i.e. non-parodic) language of Old Comedy, familiar from the plays of Aristophanes, though this is, as far as we can tell, much closer to colloquial varieties of the Attic of the period.” *Greek*, 67.

²⁶ Ar. *Vesp.* 1232–1235 = Alc. frag. 141.4–5 Lobel and Page; Ar. *Thesm.* 871 = Eur. *Hel.* 68; Ar. *Ran.* 1126 and 1138 = Aesch. *Cho.* 1; Ar. *Ran.* 1276 = Aesch. *Ag.* 104; Ar. *Ran.* 1284–1285 = Aesch. *Ag.* 109. The quote from Euripides’ *Helen* in the *Women at the Thesmophoria* is part of an extended paraphrase of that play.

This indicates that κράτος was associated with poetic mannerism; had Aristophanes explicitly mocked the use of κράτος, we should have proof.²⁷ An example of such a parodic citation can be found in *Frogs* 1138, where Euripides criticizes Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* 1 for being "unclear":

Αι. πῶς φῆς μ' ἀμαρτεῖν; Εὐ. αἴθις ἐξ ἀρχῆς λέγε. / Αι. "Ἐρμῆ χθόνιε, πατρῶ' ἐποπτεύων κράτη." / Εὐ. οὐκ οὐκ Ὀρέστης τοῦτ' ἐπὶ τῷ τύμβῳ λέγει / τῷ τοῦ πατρὸς τεθνεῶτος; Αι. οὐκ ἄλλως λέγω. / Εὐ. πότερ' οὖν τὸν Ἐρμῆν, ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ἀπώλετο / αὐτοῦ βιαίως ἐκ γυναικειᾶς χερὸς / δόλοισι λαθραίοις, ταῦτ' "ἐποπτεύειν" ἔφη;

A: How do you mean, "I made mistakes"? / E: Take it once more, from the top! / A: "Hermes of the Earth, guarding the father's *kratē*." / E: Doesn't Orestes say this at the grave of his dead father? / A: That's what I'm saying. / E: Well, given that his father died a violent death by his woman's hand in a secret plot, why does he say that Hermes was "guarding"? (Ar. *Ran.* 1137–1143)

The one instance of κράτος that is not a quote is a prayer to Athena in a choir section (Ar. *Thesm.* 1141); both prayers and choral sections belong to a dignified stylistic register.

Adverbial expressions excluded, Xenophon and Demosthenes use κράτος only once each, in the formula νίκη καὶ κράτος (or κράτος καὶ νίκη), which is attested in Hesiod, Tyrtæus, Aeschylus, and Sophocles, among others:

νίκης τε γὰρ ἐπιθυμεῖν, ἢ τὰ καλὰ πάντα καὶ τὰγαθὰ κτᾶται τε καὶ σφῶζει, τί μᾶλλον ἡμῖν ἢ ὑμῖν προσήκει; κράτους τε, ὃ πάντα τὰ τῶν ἡττόνων τοῖς κρείττοσι δωρεῖται, τί εἰκὸς ἡμᾶς μᾶλλον ἢ καὶ ὑμᾶς τούτου δεῖσθαι;

And why is it more fitting for us to desire victory, which achieves and safeguards everything good and noble, than it is for you? And why is it more proper for us to ask for *kratos*, which gives everything that belongs to the weaker to the stronger, than it is for you? (Xen. *Cyr.* 2.1.17)

Τίνας οὖν εὐχὰς ὑπολαμβάνεται εὔχεσθαι τοῖς θεοῖς τὸν Φίλιππον, ὅτ' ἔσπενδεν, ἢ τοὺς Θηβαίους; ἄρ' οὐ κράτος πολέμου καὶ νίκην αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς συμμάχοις διδόναι, καὶ τὰναντία τοῖς τῶν Φωκέων;

So which prayers do you think Philip, or the Thebans, prayed to the gods when pouring the libations? That the gods should give them and their allies *kratos*

²⁷ Stanford, commenting on *Frogs* 1126 and 1138, remarks that "Euripides complains (justly) that A.'s phrase πατρῶα κράτη is unclear [ἀσαφής], since 'paternal' may refer to Orestes's father, Agamemnon, or to Hermes's father." Stanford then says that the ambiguity increases because of κράτος, which can mean "strength, power, rule sovereignty, authority, mastery, victory." See *Frogs*, ed. and comm. W.B. Stanford, 2nd ed. (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1983), 170. But as can be seen in the quotation above, Euripides' explicit criticism of Aeschylus is that Hermes is invoked as the "guardian of [a] father's *kratē*" at the grave of Orestes' father Agamemnon. This criticism of course hinges on the unclear reference Stanford points out, but the unclarity is only half the story.

and victory in the war, and the opposite to the Phocian side, no? (Dem. *Fals. leg.* 130.5)

The passage from Xenophon is a speech; it consists of two sentences whose themes—as indicated by the word order—are νίκη and κράτος.²⁸ The phrase often occurs in prayers, as it does in the cited passage from Demosthenes.²⁹ Plato’s *Laws* 962a, likewise, offers that a general should aim for “victory and *kratos* over the enemies” (νίκην καὶ κράτος πολεμίων). It appears that the phrase is a set expression, to which Xenophon’s use seemingly refers.

Besides this formulaic expression, there are seven *prima facie* relevant attestations in Plato, but one is likely spurious.³⁰ Of the six remaining attestations, three are paraphrases of regime types featuring -κρατία in its name. *Menexenus* 238d and *Laws* 757d contain obvious paraphrases of δημοκρατία and/or ἀριστοκρατία; the *Menexenus*, for instance, includes a lengthy speech (probably a parody of Pericles’ famous funeral oration) explaining why the Athenian regime is called democracy although it is truly an aristocracy:³¹

καλεῖ δὲ ὁ μὲν αὐτὴν δημοκρατίαν, ὁ δὲ ἄλλο, ᾧ ἂν χαίρη, ἔστι δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ μετ’ εὐδοξίας πλήθους ἀριστοκρατία. βασιλῆς μὲν γὰρ αἰεὶ ἡμῖν εἰσιν· οὗτοι δὲ τοτὲ μὲν ἐκ γένους, τοτὲ δὲ αἰρετοί· ἐγκρατὲς δὲ τῆς πόλεως τὰ πολλὰ τὸ πλῆθος, τὰς δὲ ἀρχὰς δίδωσι καὶ κράτος τοῖς αἰεὶ δόξασιν ἀρίστοις εἶναι, καὶ

²⁸ For the pragmatic function THEME, which is assigned to words at the beginning of (*realiter* just before) a clause, see e.g. Helma Dik, *Word Order in Ancient Greek: A Pragmatic Account of Word Order Variation in Herodotus*, Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology 5 (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1995); Dejan Matić, “Topic, Focus and Discourse Structure: Ancient Greek Word Order,” *Studies in Language* 27, no. 3 (2003): 573–633; and R.J. Allan, “Changing the Topic. Topic Position in Ancient Greek Word Order,” *Mnemosyne* 67 (2014).

²⁹ Aeschylus’ *Suppliants* 950 contains a wish: εἴη δὲ νίκη καὶ κράτος τοῖς ἄρσεσιν “May victory and power belong to the men!” (Aesch. *Supp.* 950). In later Greek, the formula often occurs in real prayers: φάσκοντες προσαγγέλλειν τὴν θεὸν νίκην καὶ κράτος (Polyb. 21.37); δεδῶχθαι τῇ πόλει καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσιν ἐπὶ τοῖς γεγενημένοις ἀγαθοῖς εὐχεσθαι μὲν τοὺς ἱερεῖς καὶ τὰς ἱερείας ... δ[ι]δόναι βασιλεῖ Εὐμένει νίκην καὶ κράτος καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν... (Clara Rhodos 2 [1932] 172,3); ἰκέτευε τὸν θεὸν ὑπερασπίσαι καὶ νίκην καὶ κράτος περιποιῆσαι τοῖς Ἑβραίοις (Philo *Mos.* 1.216:). Cf.: ...ἀπαγγέλλων ὡς ἡ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν ἀνακτόρων ἐφθέγγεσθ’ αὐτῷ, νίκην καὶ κράτος πολέμου Ῥωμαίοις ὑπάρχειν (Plut. *Mar.* 17).

³⁰ The spurious attestation is found in Plato’s eighth letter and means “province,” a meaning otherwise unattested in Classical Greek ([Pl.] *Ep.* 8 353e). Recent research, considering epigraphic evidence from Sicily (the letter deals with Sicilian politics), suggests that the letter anachronistically projects a third-century situation back onto fourth-century Sicily. See James Clackson, “Oscan in Sicily,” in *Language and Linguistic Contact in Ancient Sicily*, ed. Olga Tribulato, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 132–148, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139248938>.

³¹ David Engels argues that although the dialogical preamble to the funeral oration is clearly ironic, the funeral oration is too banale to have been written by Plato. He concludes that the funeral oration is a sincere oration which has been inserted into an ironic Platonic dialogue. See “Irony and Plato’s *Menexenus*,” *L’Antiquité classique* 81 (2012): 14, 25, <https://doi.org/10.3406/antiqu.2012.3808>. Holger Thesleff assigns the speech to the “rhetorical,” “pathetic” and “historical” styles, but the precision of his analyses is often difficult to believe. *Studies in the Styles of Plato*, Acta Philosophica Fennica 22 (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Kirjapaino Oy, 1967), 119f.

οὔτε ἀσθενεΐα οὔτε πενία οὔτ' ἀγνωσία πατέρων ἀπελήλαται οὐδεις οὐδὲ τοῖς ἐναντίοις τετίμηται, ὥσπερ ἐν ἄλλαις πόλεσιν, ἀλλὰ εἷς ὄρος, ὁ δόξας σοφὸς ἢ ἀγαθὸς εἶναι κρατεῖ καὶ ἄρχει.

Some call it a democracy, others call it whatever they like, but it is in truth an aristocracy approved by the multitude. We have always had kings; they are sometimes hereditary, sometimes elected; but although control of the city mostly belongs to the multitude, they give magistracy and *kratos* to those who are always considered the best, and no one is stopped by their family's impotence or poverty or ignorance, nor does the opposite give privilege, as it does in other cities. Nay, there is one criterion: the one who has a reputation for wisdom or goodness rules and governs. (Pl. *Menex.* 238c–d)

Being a funeral oration, some stylistic elevation is also expected. *Laws* 757d contains κράτος δήμου τι as a paraphrase of δημοκρατία τις:³²

ἄλλην τε ἂν ποτέ τις οἰκίζη, πρὸς ταῦτόν τοῦτο σκοπούμενον χρεῶν νομοθετεῖν, ἀλλ' οὐ πρὸς ὀλίγους τυράννους ἢ πρὸς ἓνα ἢ καὶ κράτος δήμου τι, πρὸς δὲ τὸ δίκαιον αἰεὶ, τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ τὸ νυνδὴ λεχθέν, τὸ κατὰ φύσιν ἴσον ἀνίστοις ἐκάστοτε δοθέν.

And if someone sometime founds another colony, he must make laws with the same purpose: not to benefit a few tyrants or one tyrant, not even to benefit some people's *kratos*, but always to benefit justice, which is, as we said just now, the natural equality granted to unequals at any time. (Pl. *Leg.* 757d)

In *Laws* 712b–713a (also discussed in “Constitutional Typologies”), the Athenian, Megillus the Spartan and Cleinias the Cnosian discuss the ideal arrangement of a city. The passage, although not mythical in itself, begins like a mythical passage with an invocation of the divine:

Ἀθηναῖος: θεὸν δὴ πρὸς τὴν τῆς πόλεως κατασκευὴν ἐπικαλώμεθα· ὁ δὲ ἀκούσειέν τε, καὶ ἀκούσας ἴλεως εὐμενῆς τε ἡμῖν ἔλθοι συνδιακοσμῆσων τὴν τε πόλιν καὶ τοὺς νόμους. / Κλεινίας: ἔλθοι γὰρ οὖν.

Athenian: Let us invoke God for the foundation of the city! May he hear us, and having heard us, may he come with grace and kindness to assist us in arranging the city and its laws. / Cleinias: Yes, may he come! (Pl. *Leg.* 712b)

To reiterate points from a previous argument: when discussing constitutions, Megillus and Cleinias fail to identify what constitution their native countries utilize.³³ Megillus thinks Sparta combines elements of tyranny, aristocracy,

³² Thesleff apparently labels this passage as “semi-literary conversational style,” “intellectual style,” and “onkos style,” with touches of other stylistic register. *Styles of Plato*, 152.

³³ Thesleff labels this specific passage of the *Laws* as “semi-literary conversational style”, with touches of the “onkos” style. 151.

and democracy, but he ultimately cannot decide. Their interlocutor, the so-called *Athenian*, responds:

Ἀθηναῖος: ὄντως γάρ, ὦ ἄριστοι, πολιτειῶν μετέχετε· ἄς δὲ ὀνομάκαμεν νῦν, οὐκ εἰσὶν πολιτεῖαι, πόλεων δὲ οἰκίσεις δεσποζομένων τε καὶ δουλευουσῶν μέρεσιν ἑαυτῶν τισι, τὸ τοῦ δεσπότης δὲ ἐκάστη προσαγορεύεται κράτος. χρῆν δ' εἶπερ του τοιούτου τὴν πόλιν ἔδει ἐπονομάζεσθαι, τὸ τοῦ ἀληθῶς τῶν τὸν νοῦν ἐχόντων δεσπίζοντος θεοῦ ὄνομα λέγεσθαι.

Athenian: Exactly, for you truly partake in citizen-states, gentlemen. But those we have just mentioned are not citizen-states, but arrangements of cities in which they are ruled by and serve some constituent parts of theirs, and each has its name after the master's *kratos*. But if one ought to name the city after some such thing, one ought to name it after the God who in truth rules those who have good sense. (Pl. *Leg.* 712e–713a)

Megillus and Cleinias cannot define their constitutions (πολιτεία), because they live in citizen-states (also πολιτεία), but the constitutions in the standard political typology are regimes in which a faction dominates the rest of the polis. These are not citizen-states, and their names duly reflect the *kratos* of their respective masters: δημοκρατία is called δημοκρατία after the *kratos* of the *dēmos*, and so forth. Κράτος is thus a paraphrase of -κρατία.

The three remaining attestations are all explicitly mythic (*Phdr.* 237e, *Plt.* 273a, *Ti.* 36c). *Timaeus* 36c is part of a monologue which begins when Timaeus says that he shall produce the “probable account” or “probable myth” (εἰκότα μῦθον, 29d) of the creation of the Cosmos.³⁴ The passage from *Statesman* spans 269d–274e; it is explicitly called a myth both in the beginning (268d, with some interruptions before the story gets going) and at the end (274e).³⁵ The passage from *Phaedrus*, also called a myth, even begins with an invocation of the Muses, and contains an archaism in the form of a tmetic verb (ξύμ μοι λάβεσθε):

ἄγετε δὴ, ὦ Μοῦσαι, εἴτε δι' ᾧδῆς εἶδος λίγειαι, εἴτε διὰ γένος μουσικὸν τὸ Λιγύων ταύτην ἔσχει· ἐπωνυμίαν, “ξύμ μοι λάβεσθε” τοῦ μύθου, ὃν με ἀναγκάζει ὁ βέλτιστος οὐτοσί λέγειν...

³⁴ Stylometrical analysis of function-words, etc., indicates that the register shifts around Stephanus page 37. See Harold Tarrant, Eugenio E. Benitez, and Terry Roberts, “The Mythical Voice in the *Timaeus-Critias*: Stylometric Indicators,” *Ancient Philosophy* 31, no. 1 (2011): 114. It is however clear that Stephanus page 36, thematically speaking, is a myth, as explained in detail in Leonardo Tarán, “The Creation Myth in Plato’s *Timaeus*,” *The Society For Ancient Greek Philosophy Newsletter*, no. 252 (1966). Thesleff considers this passage as showing the “onkos” style, a feature of which is “archaic or in general heavy vocabulary.” See *Styles of Plato*, 144.

³⁵ Thesleff attributes the styles “semi-literary conversational style” and “onkos style,” with touches of “intellectual style” and “mythic narrative style”, to 268d–274e. *Styles of Plato*, 147.

Come now, Muses, whether you have the name “clear” because of the form of your song, or because of the musical race of the Liguans, help me with this myth, which the gentleman here compels me to tell... (Pl. *Phdr.* 237a)³⁶

In sum, the occurrences of κράτος in Plato can with some confidence be attributed to excursions into a different register. Demosthenes’ sole instance of κράτος occurs in the formula νίκη καὶ κράτος, which has been discussed above.

In Aristotle, the only *prima facie* relevant attestation is a quote from Solon.³⁷ The lack of κράτος in Aristotle is, given his deep political interests, striking, possibly testifying to the little theoretical value of *kratos*.³⁸

Conclusions

To conclude, *kratos* in Herodotus is somewhat “unglamorous” compared to *kratos* in tragedy and poetry, but some aspects of it are similar: it denotes supremacy, and it is possibly tied to legitimacy. Josiah Ober’s idea that κράτος represents a “capacity to do things” in the public sphere is not borne out by the evidence. Κράτος is power far beyond. This tie to legitimacy is also possibly reflected in the *ius gentium* phrase κράτος τῆς γῆς.

Κράτος in Attic mostly belongs to set expressions; outside of these, the parodic uses in Aristophanes and Plato signal that κράτος belongs to a higher register, indeed suggesting an “Epic resonance.” In a way, this is an argument that poetic uses of *kratos* was perceived as its prime uses, and that the rather prosaic nature of *kratos* in Herodotus is a secondary development. Discourse around *kratos* is therefore premised on the concept’s belonging to the Archaic era, which probably reinforces the assumption that the meaning of δημοκρατία must be sought in the meaning of *kratos* in the Archaic era.

³⁶ The passage is stylistically complex. According to Thesleff, it begins as an invocation (mainly featuring the “pathetic style”, with shades of the “colloquial” and “ceremonious” style), continues as storytelling (apparently largely pathetic but with shades of “mythic narrative” style), then segues into treatise mode, characterized by an “intellectual” style with traces of the “rhetorical” style, then going into a “burlesque complication”, which apparently is the “intellectual” style with shades of the “onkos” style (Socrates calls this a “dithyrambic” style in 238d). See 143.

³⁷ There are a few more possible instances that, however, seem to be misattributions: one is a misattributed quote from Philo (*Aet.* 22.4), another instance is from *On the Cosmos* 399b, most probably a spurious text postdating Aristotle by a couple of centuries.

³⁸ It should be noted that there is no theoretical discussion surrounding κρατέω either.

6. Concluding Remarks

Let me reiterate the preliminary questions posed in the introduction to this thesis:

(1) If δημοκρατία was a substitute for δημορχία, it presupposes a specific chronological and morphological relationship between μοναρχία, ὀλιγαρχία, and δημοκρατία. What is the basis for this presupposition? Which chronological and morphological relationship *should* be assumed?

(2) If κράτος is monosemous, what can those instances of κράτος usually translated as “strength” and “victory” teach us about κράτος as power? Can this bear on our understanding of δημοκρατία?

(3) Does Josiah Ober’s reading of κράτος as simple “empowerment” reflect the sources?

(4) If the monosemy of κράτος is relevant, what of ἀρχή: is it also monosemous, implying that we should understand its “power” meanings in terms of its “beginning” meanings? How does the notion of “supremacy” inherent in ἀρχή relate to the references to magistrates? Does this have any bearing on our understanding of -αρχία, and negatively, of δημοκρατία?

(5) Are there differences in connotation between ἀρχή and κράτος, and if so, when? Can anything be concluded about the difference in connotation between -αρχία and -κρατία?

(6) How does ἀρχή and κράτος feature in theoretical language? Can either term be identified with specific constitutional functions?

The chronological and morphological relationship between μοναρχία, ὀλιγαρχία, and δημοκρατία

It has been safely concluded that the presupposition about the chronological and morphological relationship between μοναρχία, ὀλιγαρχία, and δημοκρατία has often (but not exclusively) been that δημοκρατία is calqued on the other two. This presupposition has often been rooted in the naïve assumption that the constitutional terms developed in the same order as the constitutions to which they refer. Although there are no primary sources telling us that this was the case, Albert Debrunner provided this assumption with a scientific basis through his morphological–semantic argument on the coining of δημοκρατία. But his argument has been found invalid, and the rationale for supposing that δημοκρατία was calqued on μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία is weakened. Δημοκρατία should therefore not be seen as a substitute for δημορχία, nor should ἀρχή and κράτος be seen as functional substitutes. Δημοκρατία

cannot be dated more safely than previous research has suggested, which is between the archonship of Cleisthenes and the reform movement of Ephialtes (c. 462). The term was well established when Herodotus wrote his *Histories* (c. 440), in which ὀλιγαρχία is first attested as well. Μοναρχία is doubtless the oldest of the major constitutional terms. Δημοκρατία in all likelihood precedes ὀλιγαρχία.

What can the monosemy of κράτος teach us about *kratos*?

Kratos, in the deepest sense of the word, is a force that is rooted in hubris but can be harnessed to uphold justice. It is generated by victory, and in turn generates victory. *Kratos* is not strength; strength is merely a manifestation of *kratos*. Just like “power,” κράτος does not refer to control of any specific constitutional function; it is nondescript. In some Greek texts, *kratos* does not merely pass along with political power, but is somehow inherited from the previous holder. *Kratos* appears to be necessary for holding on to political power in the long run. *Kratos* is also more fundamental than *archē*.

Archē, in turn, is institutional power, *kratos* is not institutional per se, which is not to say that *kratos* is incongruent with political institutions.

Ober’s view that “‘the one’ and ‘the few’ were *inherently* strong and capable” is imprecise.¹ For one thing, “the few” did not have *kratos* by default: in Archaic poetry, the power of “the few” is usually called δύναμις; κράτος, on the other hand, never refers to mere “empowerment” but rather tyrannical or monarchic power. The apparent indivisibility of κράτος seems to make μονοκρατία tautological and ὀλιγοκρατία, if not impossible, difficult. Reading κράτος as “empowerment” is idiosyncratic and fits ill with the sources.

What does the polysemy of ἀρχή teach us about *archē* and the constitutional typology?

It has been shown clearly that the term ἀρχή was polysemous for the Greeks, even the polysemous term par excellence. The original connection between its specific meanings is unclear, but in ancient Greek times its major sub-senses (“beginning” and “rule”) were separate.

As a term for political supremacy, ἀρχή was originally virtually synonymous with κράτος, but political developments led to the dilution of ἀρχή, which made ἀρχή polysemous even when used in domestic political contexts: the meanings “magistracy” and “supremacy” are practically mutually exclusive, which was something of a theoretical conundrum to Aristotle. This polysemy explains the double reference of ὀλιγαρχία, which can refer either to “a few being magistrates” or “a few being supreme,” the latter being tantamount to “a monarchy of the few.” The latter interpretation was probably the original

¹ Ober, “Original Meaning of ‘Democracy,’” 7.

purpose of coining ὀλιγαρχία: the point was not to use ἀρχή in a specific meaning, but to allude to μοναρχία, which means that ὀλιγαρχία is only derived indirectly from ἀρχή.

How should the connotative differences between ἀρχή and κράτος affect our interpretations of the constitutional typology?

The differences in connotation between ἀρχή and κράτος can be summarized as follows: ἀρχή generally has more positive connotations, κράτος generally has more negative connotations, but mostly when the words are contrasted; even then, context at times reverses the connotations. Had δημοκρατία been calqued on μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία, the substitution of -αρχία for -κρατία could have indicated that δημοκρατία was pejorative. But there are no reasons to assume this morphological dependence. It is rather the inherently negative character of μοναρχία that has motivated the formation ὀλιγαρχία. This means that the connotations of the base words are effectively reversed in the suffixes: -αρχία is negative and -κρατία positive. This has nothing to do with neither ἀρχή nor κράτος in themselves, only with the originally negative connotations of μοναρχία. Ὀλιγαρχία was therefore coined in the pejorative sense “monarchy of the few,” but the polysemy of ἀρχή meant that ὀλιγαρχία could also refer to a less radical democracy (though this appears not to have been the impetus behind its coining). In Athenian terms, supporters of moderate oligarchy would hold that it represented a return to the Cleisthenic (that is to say pre-Ephialtic) constitution. If Cleisthenes’ constitution was indeed called a democracy in its time, the moderate oligarchs could rightly be called conservative democrats.

Pace Ober, -αρχία does not in itself denote the monopolization of office, nor would *πολλοιαρχία have implied that only *hoi polloi* could be magistrates.² The “monopoly” interpretation is rather due to the prefixes μον- and ὀλιγ-. There is no μονοκρατία or ὀλιγοκρατία simply because the political struggles engendering μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία concerned the number of *archai*—a constitutional technicality.

Even though it is likely that *kratos* neutralizes or goes beyond the notion of rank often manifest in *archē*, and it is possible that this may be reflected in the constitutional typology, one should also bear in mind that such analyses to some extent abstract from the concrete historical situations in which μοναρχία and ὀλιγαρχία were coined. In these historical contexts, the notion of “rank” may be less important than the allusion to tyranny (which certainly implies rank, but the problems of tyranny arguably go the question of rank).

The connotations of the suffixes are not static: in Plato, the suffixes appear to be effectively synonymous, at least insofar as τιμαρχία and τιμοκρατία tes-

² Ober, 8.

tify. It is also unclear if δημοκρατία originally was formed to polemicize specifically against μοναρχία. It is unclear if the terms originally belonged to the same discourse.

How did ἀρχή and κράτος feature in different discourses?

Ἀρχή features prominently in technical discourse, then often because it is difficult to define. As a political term, it is virtually nonexistent in mythological sources. With κράτος, the opposite applies: it is virtually nonexistent in theoretical discourse, at least if we limit ourselves to the noun. The noun mainly occurs in prose in allusions to Epic–Ionic language; perhaps it has a dignified, even pompous timbre. As mentioned above, as a political term, ἀρχή tends to refer to “supremacy” or “magistracy”; its use as a geographical designator shows, however, that the “supremacy” meaning does not always apply. Some superordination probably applies in every case.

The meaning of δημοκρατία

It is difficult to say what the specific characteristics of *kratos* outside of politics add to the understanding of *kratos* as a political phenomenon, other than there being a connection. Is there anything gained by saying that δημοκρατία means “the *kratos* of the people” as opposed to “the power of the people”? The difficulty arises, as always, from the lack of relevant contemporary sources. It may well be argued that the term δημοκρατία, in attributing *kratos* to the *dēmos*, effectively likened the *dēmos* to Zeus and kings; if this is true, we can reasonably surmise that it was politically and metaphysically revolutionary.³ But was this the point of δημοκρατία or rather a byproduct, because there was no alternative expression for “people’s power”? Or was any appropriation of power by the *dēmos* tantamount to likening the *dēmos* to Zeus and kings, meaning that the terminological question is redundant? As we have seen, the *dēmos* is likened to Zeus and kings in art and in certain Greek texts, but these testimonies postdate the founding of democracy by decades, if not centuries. It is therefore uncertain if these equations are due to the meaning of *kratos* or rather due to day-to-day politics in radically democratic Athens. Would the *demos* still have been likened to Zeus if democracy was called polyarchy?

It is perhaps not false to say that the *dēmos* has *kratos* in the sense that it distributes victory in the public arena and receives more *kratos* in doing so, but it is truistic. It does not help explain how democracy worked. Metaphysical interpretations of δημοκρατία, regarding it as the *dēmos*’ claiming Zeus-like power (vel sim.) must also take into account that Herodotus describes Pisistratus as having *kratos*. It must be explained why or why not the same metaphysical implications attributed to Greek democracy applies to Pisistratus’ tyranny, or any other ruler holding *kratos*.

³ Cf. Marrucci, *Kratos e Arche*, 42f.

If anything, my study of *kratos* puts ideological discourses surrounding democracy into perspective, such as discourse around masculinity, about democracy as monarchy, about *Dēmos* as *Zeus*; the indivisible character of *kratos* possibly gives some credence to Greg Anderson's view that *Dēmos* is a corporate person. Although it is impossible to determine whether the view underlying such discourse is a *cause* or *effect* of the coining of *δημοκρατία*, there is nevertheless a connection; I myself incline toward effect.

It has been shown that *kratos* in tragedy approached an emic criterion for legitimacy, probably because of its strong connection with *Zeus*. This type of *kratos* was apparently both the basis for Agamemnon's rule in Mycenae, as well as the means with which Orestes would kill Clytemnestra. The *kratos* of power is the same as the *kratos* of victory, as it were, as it apparently was in the *Iliad* (cf. the conclusions to "*Archē* and *Kratos* compared"). This should lead us to yet again consider the Old Oligarch's analysis of the relationship between the *kratos* of the *demos* as motivated because the *demos* serves in the navy, which produces military victories for Athens (cf. "Victory" above).

The analysis of Thrasymachus' views and comparison with discourse on *κράτος* shows that Thrasymachus' views were rooted in Greek myth. The understanding of *kratos* as linking justice and hubris can inform the discussion on the Greek view of the roots of political order, or even the roots of justice.

In the end, however, this conclusion appears the most prudent: *δημοκρατία* was coined to refer to a constitution in which the freemen held collective power. It was so named either because the democrats claimed supreme power over and beyond that of the magistrates, or because *-αρχία* was considered a slur, given that the democrats used *μοναρχία* as a slur against those who would monopolize power, that is to say, against would-be tyrants. One of the tools used by the democrats to secure their power was to massively widen the number of magistrates, as well as the pool of eligible candidates for public office. Those who opposed this, for whatever reason, were called *ὀλιγαρχία*, a rhetorical move associating these opponents with old-style tyrants.

Final remarks

On a more general level, this thesis has shown that studying words closely reveal their ephemeral, ambiguous, fluid character. Words and their meanings are rarely as self-evident as they appear at first glance, and all too often scholars take a traditional understanding for granted, without examining the linguistic and historical context in which the words are rooted. It has also shown that a single word properly studied can reveal plenty about a culture, things which were always there to be seen, but we did not see.

A related insight has to do with the sometimes contradictory nature of studied concepts. Concepts can certainly appear contradictory because we do not have matching concepts, and by zooming out, as it were, and rethinking our assumptions, we can resolve some of these contradictions, as the discussion

about κράτος and its alleged sub-senses “power,” “strength,” and “victory” has shown. But even if it is a good heuristic to assume that clarity is at the root of every concept, this may not ultimately be true. Sometimes concepts are inherently unclear, at least in certain aspects.

At the beginning of this thesis, it was noted that the study of ancient democracy is important in part because ancient democracy is often invoked to legitimize modern discourse and modern ideological positions on democracy, which means that the study of ancient democracy is a way of holding these modern positions up to scrutiny. I hope to have shown here that the metaphysical implications of saying “the *dēmos* has *kratos*” is different from saying that the people have power.

Now for a concluding methodological observation. Discussing passages in isolation has its benefits and its drawbacks, one downside being that proper context is easily neglected. It occurred to me only late in the writing process that two passages discussed above, one relating to Zeus and the other including the first possible reference to δημοκρατία, follow immediately after one another:

Χο. ὑπ’ ἀρχῆι δ’ οὔτινος θαόζων / τὸ μείον κρεισσόνων κρατύνει / οὔτινος ἄνωθεν ἡμένου σέβει κράτη, / πάρεστι δ’ ἔργον ὡς ἔπος / σπεῦσαι. τί τῶνδ’ οὐ Διὸς φέρει φρήν; / Δα. θαρσεῖτε, παῖδες· εὐ τὰ τῶν ἐγχωρίων / δήμου δέδοκται παντελεῖ ψηφίσματα. / Χο. ὦ χαῖρε πρέσβυ, φύλτατ’ ἀγγέλλων ἐμοί. / ἔνισπε δ’ ἡμῖν ποῖ κεκύρωται τέλος, / δήμου κρατοῦσα χεῖρ ὅπηι πληθύνεται.

Choir: He does not sit enthroned under someone’s *archē*, ?ruling the smaller lot of greater beings?. He reveres the *kratē* of no-one sitting above him. Action is as ready as words to get going. What thing here is not brought forth by Zeus’ will? / Danaus: Have courage, my children, for the absolutely powerful decrees of the ?natives of the people? have been decided well. / Choir: Greetings, herald bringing the loveliest tidings! Tell us what final decision has been reached, in which direction the people’s ruling hand went? (Aesch. *Supp.* 595–604)

That is to say, the possible first allusion to δημοκρατία refers to the outcome of a popular vote, and it appears directly after the chorus’s musing on the *kratos* of Zeus and the fact that his will produces all that is good. Even though such musings are common in choral parts, these passages—knitted together by the repetition of κρατύνει, κράτη, κρατοῦσα—perhaps suggest, in their coupling, something like *vox populi*, *vox dei*.

7. Summary in Swedish

I denna avhandling diskuteras hur termen *dēmokratia* (ursprunget till ”demokrati”) och dess suffix *-kratia* förhåller sig till den klassiska grekiska statskickstypologin. Denna bestod i sin mest grundläggande form av termerna *monarchia*, *oligarchia* och *dēmokratia* – alltså *monarki*, *oligarki* och *demokrati*. (Nedan kommer dessa att kallas ”statsskickstermerna”.) Avhandlingen utforskar på sätt och vis varför *dēmokratia* heter just *dēmokratia* och inte *dēmarchia*. Och omvänt: varför *monarchia* och *oligarchia* inte heter *monokratia* och *oligokratia*. Vad ligger egentligen i suffixen *-archia* och *-kratia*? Vad beror denna tudelning på? Jag försöker att besvara detta genom att relatera termerna till de ord ur vilka typologins suffix uppkom: *archē* (”makt, styre” men också ”början”) och *kratos* (”makt”, men ofta också översatt ”styrka, seger”).

Jag undersöker när statsskickstermerna först belades och hur historieskrivningen om statsskickens uppkomst ser ut. Jag konstaterar att det äldsta begreppet tvivelsutan är *monarchia*. *Oligarchia* och *dēmokratia* är väsentligen belagda samtidigt. Tidsspännet inom vilket *dēmokratia* troligen myntades är dock så stort att det inte går att säga exakt vad termen ursprungligen åsyftade.

Därefter undersöker jag de viktigaste beläggen för statsskickstypologin i den klassiska grekiska litteraturen. Jag konstaterar att det aldrig förklaras varför de två suffixen används sida vid sida. Det beror i grunden på att båda suffix var sedan länge etablerade och förgivettagna när det första systematiska politiska tänkandet uppstod. Därför diskuteras suffixen aldrig. Som en forskare har uttryckt det uppstod termerna organiskt. Systemet kom först i efterhand.

Därefter jämför jag *archē* och *kratos*. Det antas ofta i forskningen att *kratos* är ett mer negativt laddat ord; därför har vissa tänkt sig att *-kratia* ursprungligen var negativt laddat. Jag finner att denna uppfattning måste kvalificeras. Visserligen framstår *archē* oftare som ett ”snällare” ord än *kratos*, men detta är främst när orden uttryckligen kontrasteras mot varandra. När orden används var för sig kan båda ord ha såväl positiv som negativ laddning. (Emellanåt kan *kratos* ha positiv laddning trots att det jämförs med *archē*. Detta beror på den etymologiska kopplingen mellan *kratos* och *enkrateia*, ”självkontroll”). Frågan är då om *-kratia* i *dēmokratia* ursprungligen kontrasterade mot suffixet *-archia* – vilket skulle innebära att det var negativt laddat.

Ett inflytelserikt argument som kan stödja en sådan hållning formulerades 1947 av Albert Debrunner. Debrunner menade att *dēmokratia* morfologiskt och semantiskt uppvisar ett beroende av *oligarchia*, som i sin tur uppvisar ett

liknande beroende av *monarchia*. Debrunner antog att *dēmokratia* inte hette *dēmarchia* eftersom det senare ordet redan var upptaget (det syftar på ett offentligt ämbete). Men eftersom han hävdar att *dēmokratia* är myntat med *oligarchia* och *monarchia* som förlaga, kan också den negativa laddningen hos *kratos* vid jämförelser med *archē* spela in. Jag menar att Debrunners argument utgår från alltför formalistiska uppfattningar. Om man överger dem, försvinner också grunderna för att anta det morfologiska och semantiska beroendet mellan *dēmokratia* å ena sidan och *oligarchia* och *monarchia* å den andra. Det finns istället starka skäl att anta att *oligarchia* myntades när folkväldet redan var ett faktum – fåtalsväldet (som *oligarchia* ju betyder) är ett fåtalsvälde jämfört med folkstyret men inte jämfört med enväldet. Dessutom måste man ta hänsyn till att *monarchia* ursprungligen syftade på tyranniska strävanden i aristokratiska regimer och därför hade negativ laddning. Min slutsats är att *dēmokratia* mest sannolikt har myntats i opposition mot enbart *monarchia*, som ännu hade negativ klang. När sedan en motreaktion uppstod mot vissa radikala utvecklingar i demokratin myntade demokratiförespråkarna ordet *oligarchia* i anknytning till *monarchia* och antydde därmed att deras motståndare egentligen var ett slags ”fåtalstyranner”. Slutsatsen blir då snarast att *-archia* är ett mer negativt laddat suffix än *-kratia*.

Därefter undersöker jag om det finns märkbara skillnader mellan *archē* och *kratos* – annat än vad gäller laddning – när dessa kontrasterar mot varandra. Jag påstår att *archē* i huvudsak syftar på institutionell makt. *Kratos* tycks vara en mer grundläggande makt och framstår ofta som den ”högre” makten. Detta tycks bero på att den i brist på bättre uttryck ligger bortom rang och hierarki – den är total. I statskickstypologin kan detta möjligen återspeglas i det faktum att *dēmokratia* så att säga utplånar hierarki, medan *-archia* uttrycker hierarki. Jag manar dock till försiktighet gentemot sådana slutsatser i min sammanfattning. Den mer historiskt betingade anspelningen på tyranni kan vara viktigare än att *-archia* i essentiell mening skulle uttrycka hierarki. (Även om tyranni förstås bygger på hierarki är den demokratiska kritiken av tyranni mer omfattande än så.)

Därefter undersöker jag *archē*. Jag argumenterar för att grekerna uppfattade ordet som mycket polysemt. De kopplade inte nödvändigtvis ordets temporala betydelse (”början”) till dess politiska betydelse (båda betydelser är möjligen utvecklade ur en ursprunglig betydelse ”det att vara först”). Tidigare forskning har ofta betonat att *archē*, som ovan nämnts, uttrycker institutionella maktförhållanden. Jag ansluter mig till denna uppfattning. Jag visar hur *archē* ursprungligen syftade på den högsta makten, men också hur – då maktpositionerna mångfaldigades i det demokratiska Aten och den högsta makten också spädades ut – *archē* fick ytterligare ett lager av polysemi: det kunde å ena sidan betyda ”högsta makt”, å andra sidan kunde det användas om så gott som maktlösa befattningar. (Förhållandet mellan de i sig maktlösa befattningarna och den stora makt som befattningarna kollektivt utövade ledde så småningom till ett definitionsproblem: vad betyder egentligen *archē*?) Termen *oligarchia*

myntades under denna epok. Termen var tvetydig på så vis att den å ena sidan kunde tolkas som ”ett statskick med färre ämbeten” – alltså sådan som Athens demokrati var innan den radikaliserades – å andra sidan som ”ett statskick där ett fåtal har tyrannisk makt”, i linje med vad som sagts ovan. Ordet var möjligen ett skällsord brukat av radikaldemokrater mot moderata demokrater för att misstänkliggöra deras position.

En i teorin eventuellt möjlig benämning på demokratin, på mönster av *monarchia* och *oligarchia*, vore *polyarchia* – ”mångvälde” eller ”ett statskick där många har ämbeten”. Tidigare forskning har påstått att denna (i linje med *monarchia* och *oligarchia*) skulle ha betytt ungefär ”när massan monopoliserar ämbeten; när massan utövar tyranni”. Detta faktum, menar tidigare forskning, gällde inte i demokratin, varför *polyarchia* vore en missvisande benämning. Jag betonar istället att *polyarchia* tvärtom har en stark koppling till anarki, och att det är *detta* som gjort ordet omöjligt som en benämning på demokratin annat än som skällsord.

Därefter undersöker jag *kratos*. Jag försöker bestämma kopplingen mellan ordets påstådda bibetydelser ”makt”, ”styrka” och ”seger”. I linje med tidigare forskning argumenterar jag för att *kratos* är ett monosemt ord som vi inte gör rättvisa i översättning. Jag nytolkar ordet genom närläsningar av textpassager från framförallt den grekiska epiken och tragedin. Jag påstår att kopplingen mellan *kratos* och seger bör förstås som att *kratos* är segerns *orsak* och *följd*. *Kratos* är inte heller styrka: styrka är uttryck för *kratos*. Vidare menar jag att *kratos* är rotat i *hybris* (i bemärkelsen ”överträdelser”), men kan användas för att skipa rättvisa. Detta gäller även för Zeus *kratos*: den manifesteras i åskvигgen, som cykloperna – representanter för kaos – gav till Zeus. Åskvигgen kommer alltså ur kaos men upprätthåller Zeus rättvisa ordning. Vidare argumenterar jag för att *kratos* i arkaisk poesi och i tragedin kan tolkas som ett slags legitim makt (till exempel kan en kung *efter sin död* ge sin *kratos* vidare till sin son för att denne ska störta tronpretendenter). Detta är intressant eftersom tidigare forskning emellanåt har försökt skilja på *archē* och *kratos* genom att kalla *archē* för legitim makt.

I arkaisk poesi är *kratos* ett tvetydigt begrepp: Zeus *kratos* är vördnadsvärd, men hos människor är *kratos* förknippat med överträdelser. Jag föreslår (men kan på grund av källäget inte bevisa) att arkaiska poeter ansåg att *kratos* var en obsolet eller död form av makt förknippad med mytiska kungar, som tyranner *in spe* under arkaisk tid försökte återuppliva vilket hotade den arkaiska stadsstaten. Om detta är sant innebär det att man kan utläsa starka anspråk i termen *dēmokratia* – det är möjligt att demokrater ansåg sig uppväcka denna obsoleta makt som förknippades med hjältekungar och Zeus. Det är också möjligt att det i demokratisträvanden låg ett slags överträdelse som nygrundar en legitim monarkisk makt (monarkisk eftersom Folket möjligen ansågs vara en kollektiv person). Det är dock svårt att fastslå någonting. Det är oklart om vissa av egenskaperna hos *kratos* spelade roll för myntandet av ordet *dēmokratia*. Exempelvis är *kratos* förknippat med Zeus, med maskulinitet,

med rättframhet och så vidare. Var ordet *dēmokratia* ett medvetet anspråk på sådana egenskaper? I viss grekisk litteratur och konst finns det sådana tecken, men anspråken kan mycket väl vara en *effekt* av ordet *dēmokratia* snarare än en *orsak*.

Avsnittet om *kratos* avslutas med en kort diskussion om användningen av ordet i den klassiska tiden. Jag argumenterar för att *kratos* utanför den joniska prosan mest används som en medveten arkaism.

Utöver vad som redan sagts drar jag bland annat slutsatserna att *monokratia* inte finns eftersom det var tautologiskt: *kratos* tillhör i regel en person eller en kollektiv person. Det är möjligen av den anledningen *oligokratia* inte finns (oligarker är i regel mindre kollektiv- och mer individbetonade).

Den sammanfattning man kan dra utan för mycket spekulation är att *dēmokratia* myntades för att beteckna ett statsskick i vilket fria män utövade kollektiv makt. Det kallades så (dvs. med suffixet *-kratia*) antingen eftersom demokraterna gjorde anspråk på en makt över eller bortom ämbetsmännens makt, eller eftersom *monarchia* var ett skällsord som demokraterna ville kontrastera mot. Ett av verktygen som demokraterna använde för att befästa sin makt var att kraftigt utvidga antalet ämbetsmän och sänka kraven för att inneha offentliga befattningar. De som av något skäl motsatte sig detta ansågs förespråka *oligarchia*, ett retoriskt grepp för att koppla ihop motståndarna med gammeldags tyranner. På grund av de historiska associationerna hos termen *kratos* inbjöd namnet *dēmokratia* till återkommande jämförelser mellan Folket och Zeus eller mellan Folket och mytologiska kungar. Dessutom utspelades möjligen som följd av namnet *dēmokratia* en strid mellan demokrater och oligarker om vilka som hade rättmätigast anspråk på att vara män (*kratos* är mycket förknippat med manlighet).

På ett mer övergripande plan visar avhandlingen att begrepp som tas för givna blir mindre självklara och mer flertydiga när de försöker förstås i sitt ursprungliga historiska sammanhang.

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