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ATHENIAN OSTRAKISMOS AND THE HYBRIS OF A WOULD-BE TYRANT

Summary: Analysing Greek literary sources together with a selection of preserved ostraka, this article discusses the interrelationships between the prevention of hybris, the perceptions of tyranny, and the purposes of practising ostracism in fifth-century Athens. It will be proposed that the political decisions to organize ostrakophoriai were reactions to the threat posed by hybristic disposition of an individual – hence, ostracism played a role in detecting and punishing one’s motives and intentions. It will also be proposed that luxurious life-style was perceived by the Athenians both as a sign of Medism and of a hybristic disposition characteristic of a would-be-tyrant. Thus, profligate life-styles of political figures might have urged the Athenians to organise ostrakophoriai.

Key words: ostracism, hybris, tyranny, luxury

This article discusses the interrelationship between the perceptions of tyranny, the prevention of hybris, and the purposes of ostracism in fifth-century Athens.1 The issue is studied by combining ancient Greek literary source material with a selection of preserved ostraka. The ostraka are used as evidence of the shared imagery of the ostracizing Athenians.2 While no ancient author explicitly names hybris as an explanatory cause of introducing and using ostracism, I shall demonstrate that ostracizing was related to reacting to hybris. I shall claim, firstly, that hybris was manifested and exposed by the individual life-style and characteristics, which resembled those of (fictitious rather than

1 Scholarly literature on ostracism is vast. The most recent monograph on the subject is S. FORSDYKE’s Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy. The Politics of Expulsion in Ancient Greece, Princeton–Oxford 2005. Basic reading on the origins and original purposes of ostracism include J. CARCOPINO’s L’Ostracisme Athénien, Paris 1935 [1909] and R. THOMSEN’S The Origin of Ostracism. A Synthesis, Copenhagen 1972. Additional useful studies on the purposes and procedure of ostracism include, for instance, PHILLIPS, D. J.: Athenian Ostracism. In HORSLEY, G. H. R. (ed.): Hellenika. Essays on Greek Politics and History. North Ryde, NSW 1982, 21–43. On the symbolic nature and the ritual connotations of ostracizing, see also HALL, L. G. H.: Remarks on the Law of Ostracism. Tyche 4 (1989) 91–100; MIRHADY, D. C.: The Ritual Background to Athenian Ostracism. AHB 11.1 (1997) 13–19; ROSENLOOM, D.: Ponêroi vs. Chrêstoi: The Ostracism of Hyperbolos and the Struggle for Hegemony in Athens after the Death of Pericles, Part I. TAPA 134 (2004) 55–105; see now also KOSMIN, P. J.: A Phenomenology of Democracy: Ostracism as Political Ritual. ClAnt 34 (2015) 121–162. While several scholars have noted that ostracism was a punishment for rising above others, the role of the idea of hybris has not been sufficiently expounded. For example, A. E. RAUBITSCHEK (Theophrastus on Ostracism. C&M 19 [1958] 90, 109) has concluded that the original purpose of ostracism was to “punish those who rose above others”, but that one of the original causes of ostracism was “the envy of reputation/virtue”. He has also argued that ostracism was designed to keep in check those “who were outstanding in their arrogance”. E. VANDERPOOL. (Ostracism at Athens, Cincinnati 1970, 3) too, has stated that the idea of ostracism “was rather to clip the wings of the too ambitious man than to ruin him permanently”: V. J. ROSIVACH (Some Fifth and Fourth Century Views on the Purpose of Ostracism. Tyche 2 [1987] 166) has noted explicitly that ostracizing “dovetails nicely” with the idea of gods punishing hybris.

2 When studying the ostraka, I have utilized BRENNÉ, ST.: Die Ostraka (487–ca. 416 v. Chr.) als Testimonia (T 1). In SIEVERT, P. (ed.): Ostrakismos-Testimonia. I. Die Zeugnisse antiker Autoren, der Inschriften und Ostraka über das athenische Scherbengericht aus vorhellenistischer Zeit (487–322 v. Chr.). Stuttgart 2002. When referring to ostraka, I have followed Brenne’s numbering. I have benefited also from Brenne’s numerous publications on the procedure of ostracism and on the excavated ostraka such as BRENNÉ, ST.: Ostrakismos und Prominenz in Athen. Attische Bürger des 5. Jhs. v. Chr. auf den Ostraka. Wien 2001; and BRENNÉ, ST.: ‘Portraits’ auf Ostraka. MDAIA 107 (1992) 161–185. For a recent discussion on the significance of the ostraka as manifestations of shared mental associations, see KOSMIN (n. 1) 134.
factual) tyrants and, secondly, that the ostracizing Athenians reacted to hybris and sought to prevent its consequences.

As is well known, ostrakismos was a voting procedure, established probably by Cleisthenes along with his reforms implemented in 508/7 BCE, which enabled fifth-century Athenians to exile any citizen for a period of ten years. When the ten years had passed, the subject’s public status was restored. The process of ostracism proceeded as follows: once a year, the Athenians voted on whether there was a need to ostracize anyone that year. If the majority voted in favour of ostracism, a particular voting event called ostrakophoria was organized approximately two months later. In the ostrakophoria, the citizen was to inscribe the name of the man he wished to exile on an ostrakon (a potsherd used as a voting ballot – hence the name of the procedure). A minimum of 6000 votes had to be cast, otherwise the vote was void and no one was ostracized that year. During the process, no charges were pressed, nor any candidates nominated, but the citizens were allowed to vote for the removal of whomever they wished, without giving any reasons. Five to fifteen ostracisms took place between 488/7 and ca. 415 BCE, and the subjects were usually prominent politicians.

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3 There was a hiatus of around 20 years between the introduction of ostracism and its first use in 488/7. The old statement of K. J. BELOCH (Griechische Geschichte. Bd. 1, T. 2. Strassburg 1913, 332) is frequently repeated that a “weapon” such as ostracism is not first developed and then left unused for 20 years. The hiatus has provoked much discussion, and scholars have presented several reasons for it. For example, D. KAGAN considers in his article (The Origin and Purposes of Ostracism. Hesperia 30.4 [1961] 398) that Cleisthenes’ intention was to threaten Hipparchus but, as Hipparchus consented to cooperate with him, there was no need to use ostracism immediately after introducing it. In a similar vein, G. R. STANTON has argued in his article (The Introduction of Ostracism and Alcmeonid Propaganda. JHS 110 [1970] 181) that Cleisthenes enacted ostracism to get rid of his rival, Isagoras; however, as Isagoras left the political stage, invoking ostracism became unnecessary. Another explanation of Cleisthenes’ intentions has been offered by A. R. HANDS (Ostraka and the Law of Ostracism – Some Possibilities and Assumptions. JHS 79 [1959] 71, 76), who has suggested that by introducing ostracism, Cleisthenes showed the people that he was willing to take the risk of becoming ostracized himself. Whatever Cleisthenes’ motives might have been, I find it likely that ostracism was among his reforms. This is the opinion of several other scholars, too, such as FORSDYKE (n. 1) 282. Against this view, some scholars (such as SCHREINER, J. H.: The Origin of Ostracism Again. C&M 31 [1970] 84–97; HIGNETT, C.: A History of the Athenian Constitution to the End of the Fifth Century B.C. Oxford 1952, 185, 189; RAUBTSCHEK, A. E.: The Origin of Ostracism. AJA 55 [1951] 221) have argued for the introduction of ostracism in 488/7 either by Themistocles, Aristides or Cleisthenes. Additional traditions exist which attribute the introduction of ostracism to the mythical king Theseus, a man named Achilles, son of Lyson, and Hippias, the last tyrant of Athens. On these unconvincing traditions see THOMSEN (n. 1) 15 in detail and with references.

4 The amount of votes required is disputed. According to Philochorus (FGrH 328 F 30), 6000 votes were required against one man; according to Plutarch (Arist. 7. 5), 6000 votes were to be cast in total. According to the latter view, the man who had received the majority of the votes was declared ostracized.

5 A. MISSIOU (Literacy and Democracy in Fifth-Century Athens. Cambridge 2011, 50) has challenged the traditional assumption that there were no fixed lists of candidates.

6 The exact number of ostracisms is disputed, but the list of the subjects of ostracism includes at least Hipparchus, son of Charmus, in 488/7; Megacles, son of Hippocrates, in 487/6 (and perhaps again in ca. 470); a third one whose name [Pseudo-]Aristotle leaves unmentioned, in 486/5; Xanthippus, son of Aristocles, in 485/4; Aristides, son of Lysimachus, in 483/2; Themistocles, son of Neocles, in ca. 471; Cimon, son of Miltiades, in 461; Thucydides, son of Meletias, most likely in 444/3; and Hyperbolus, son of Antiphanes, either in 417 or 415. Additionally, there are some disputable ostracisms: Alcibiades the Elder might have been ostracized in the 460s or 440s, Menon, son of Menecles in 471 or 457, Damon, son of Damonides, in the 440s or 430s, and Callias, son of Didymus in the 440s. Ostracism was never officially abolished but it fell out of use after Hyperbolus’ ostracism.
What purposes did ostracism serve? Scholars have frequently explained ostracism in political terms. For example, it has been viewed as a “negative election” and as an “inverted popularity contest”. It has also been recurrently repeated that whatever its original purpose was, the Athenians started to use ostracism as an instrument through which they chose between rival political leaders. Moreover, Sara Forsdyke has argued that ostracism was the key factor in securing the stability of classical Athenian democracy. She claims that ostracism was both designed by Cleisthenes and employed by the Athenians to intervene in intra-elite struggles for political power. Forsdyke’s main argument is that ostracism was devised to control intra-elite competition before its turning into violence. According to this view, the Athenians prevented stasis by ostracizing.

While political explanations of ostracism have been common in various studies, this article contrariwise focuses on the interrelationship between ostracizing and the desire of the Athenians to prevent hybris. Hybris was a multifaceted ethical concept which occurred in Greek literature and law and which was applied to humans, animals, and plants. The definition of hybris has been much discussed. In general, hybris referred to actions beyond due measure, and the basic meaning of the term was associated with excess in, for example, ambition. In this respect, hybris was related to lack of moderation and self-control. However, ever since N. R. E. Fisher’s momentous study, hybris has been understood primarily in the context of honour and shame. Indeed, hybris referred to the sense of superiority and to the pleasure gained from showing one’s supremacy over one’s equals. As I see it, hybris covered the ground of one’s actions, on the one hand, and one’s state of mind, on the other. That hybris involved a psychological state is illustrated, for example, by Conon’s behaviour described by Demosthenes in Against Conon. Demosthenes relates how Conon, together with his son, assaulted a man named Ariston. Demosthenes continues that Conon committed hybris against Ariston because after the assault, he “began to crow, mimicking fighting cocks that have won a battle and his

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8 FORSDYKE (n. 1) 151, 165 and passim.
10 FISHER 1992 (n. 9) passim.
11 Cf. MACDOWELL (n. 9) 18, 27, who has defined hybris as “having energy or power and misusing it self-indulgently” and as “the spirit which makes men climb Mount Everest because it is there.” In a similar vein, HOOKER (n. 9) has argued that hybris was originally a morally neutral conception and that it could be used in the morally neutral meaning of “high spirits”. CAIRNS (n. 9) has argued that hybris referred to “thinking big” (περα ὁφέστρε) and that it thus involved not only one’s actions but also one’s thoughts and intentions. See now also CAIRNS, D. L.: Aristotle on Hybris and Injustice. In C. Veillard, O. Renaut, and D. El Murr (eds.): Les philosophes face au vice, de Socrate à Augustin. Brill, Leiden 2020, 147–74; CANEVARO, M.: The Public Charge for Hubris against Slaves: the Honour of the Victim and and the Honour of the Hubristês. JHS 138 (2018) 100–126.
fellow bade him flap his elbows against his sides like wings”. In Demosthenes’ view, Ariston could have prosecuted Conon for *hybris*; Ariston, however, chose to prosecute Conon by *dikê aikeias* (a private action of assault).

Indeed, *hybris* was illegal in Classical Athens. A law against *hybris* (most likely enacted by Solon in the 590s) prohibited anyone from acting hybristically toward other men, women, or slaves. Interestingly, the law text does not specify what a hybristic act exactly involves. Another peculiarity in the law text is that together with hybristic actions, it also prohibits “lawless” (*paranomon*) deeds. In this connection, I would point out that similarities existed between ostracism and *graphê hybreos* although ostracism was not a judicial procedure. Firstly, illegal *hybris* was dealt with as a *graphê* which indicates that it was regarded as a crime against the whole community. Like a *graphê*, ostracism was also targeted against an individual on behalf of the community as a whole. Secondly, the Athenians used both ostracism and *graphê hybreos* very rarely: there is no evidence that anyone was ever convicted of *hybris*. Furthermore, it seems to have been commonplace that *dikê aikeias* was employed instead of *graphê hybreos*. Why? Douglas M. MacDowell has pointed out that Demosthenes used the word *paranomia* (the meaning of which was not only “against the law” but also “against custom” or “against unwritten rules”) and suggested that *graphê hybreos* was designed as a response to wrongdoings that had not been prohibited by a written law, but by unwritten rules. According to this view, *graphê hybreos* was infrequently employed because individual deeds could be sanctioned by law, but motive and state of mind were much harder to prove.

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14 So, e.g., VAN WEES (n. 13) 119.
15 For the cases of *graphê hybreos*, see FISHER: The Law (n. 13) 123–133 with further references.
16 MACDOWELL (n. 9) 26, 28. On the other hand, FISHER 1992 (n. 9) 54 and, more recently, VAN WEES (n. 13) 120 have suggested that the purpose of the term *paranomia* in this connection is to stress the anti-social nature of a hybristic act. He suggests that the *graphê* procedure invented by Solon in 594/3 was in a sense an extension of the law against *hybris*. In van Wees’ view, the law against *hybris* was an unspecified and general procedural law and *hybris* was singled out only because it was the gravest offence of all (apart from homicides). He argues that women, children and slaves were distinguished in the text because the law was meant to establish that all citizens regardless of their age, gender, or status were entitled to bring a written indictment on behalf of anyone else.
The rarity of employing graphê hybreos, on the one hand, and invoking ostracism, on the other, might perhaps also be explained by the symbolic role that both graphê hybreos and ostracism may have had in the minds of fifth-century Athenians. According to Nick Fisher, the existence of the law against hybris reinforced the egalitarian and cohesive democratic ideology of Athens and served to persuade and compel the rich and powerful to treat their fellow-citizens with decency. Similarly, as has been demonstrated by Sara Forsdyke, ostracism served the purpose of deterring leading politicians from doing wrong. Recognizing the symbolic nature of ostracism, Forsdyke argued that ostracism was a limited and legal form of exile which symbolized people’s power; in her view, the rarity of employing ostracism resulted from the moderate nature of Athenian democracy.\textsuperscript{18}

Ostracism, Anti-Tyranny, and the Hybris of a (Would-be) Tyrant

Various ancient authors associate the purpose of introducing and using ostracism with the desire of the Athenians to maintain democracy and prevent the recurrence of tyranny. The sources which maintain or imply that ostracism was targeted against those aspiring to tyranny include [Pseudo-]Aristotle’s Athênon Politeia, the works of the later historian Diodorus of Sicily, the atthidographers Philochorus and Androtion, as well as the much later lexicographers Hesychius (fourth century CE) and Photius (ninth century CE).\textsuperscript{19} For example, Diodorus of Sicily reports that during the ostrakophoria, “each citizen wrote on a piece of pottery the name of the man who in his opinion had the greatest power to destroy the democracy,”\textsuperscript{20} and in another passage, Diodorus reports that the voters were required to inscribe the name of the man who “seemed most capable of tyrannizing over his fellow citizens.”\textsuperscript{21} As regards the intentions of the lawgiver of ostracism, the author of Athênaion Politeia maintains that ostracism had been aimed at “friends of tyrants”\textsuperscript{22} and according to Androtion, “the law about ostracism then first of all (tote próton) having been instituted on account of suspicion of the supporters of Peisistratos, because he, being a leader of the people and general, became tyrant”.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{17} FISHER: The Law (n. 13) 137.
\textsuperscript{18} FORSDYKE (n. 1).
\textsuperscript{19} [Arist.] Ath. Pol. 22. 6; D. S. 11. 55. 87; Photius ostrakismos, Etym. Mag. 349. 15; Hsch. Keramikê mastix; Androtion 324 F 6; Philoch. 328 F 30.
\textsuperscript{20} D. S. 11. 55. 2: ἐκαστὸς τῶν πολιτῶν εἰς ὀστρακόν ἔγραφε τοῦνομα τοῦ δοκοῦντος μᾶλιστα δύνασθαι καταλάβαι τὴν δημοκρατίαν. Trans. C. H. Oldfather.
\textsuperscript{21} D. S. 11. 87. 1: τοῦνομα τοῦ δοκοῦντος μᾶλιστα δύνασθαι τυραννεῖν τῶν πολιτῶν. Trans. SK.
\textsuperscript{22} [Arist.] Ath. Pol. 22. 6: ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ γε τοὺς τῶν τυράννων φίλους ὀστρακίζον, ὧν χάριν ὁ νόμος ἔτέθη [...]
\textsuperscript{23} Philoch. FGrH 328 F 30: ἀρξάμενον νομοθετήσαντος Κλεισθένους, ὅτε τοὺς τυράννους κατέλυσαν, ὅτως συνειδήσατο καὶ τοὺς φίλους αὐτῶν. Trans. SK.
\textsuperscript{24} Androtion FGrH 324 F 6: [...] τοῦ περὶ τῶν ὀστρακισμῶν νόμου τότε πρῶτον τεθέντος διὰ τὴν ὑπογίαν τῶν περὶ Παισιστράτου, ὃτι δημασιογός ὁν καὶ στρατηγὸς ἐτυράννησεν. Trans. PHILLIPS (n. 1) 29. There has been philological debate on Androtion’s choice of the words τὸτε πρῶτον. Since τότε signifies “then” or “at that time” and πρῶτον “for the first time”, the problem is whether πρῶτον refers to something that has happened recently or twenty years ago. From a philological point of view τότε πρῶτον refers to something that has happened recently, and numerous scholars have argued that Androtion meant the year 488/7. See, e.g., THOMSEN (n. 1) 22, 23, 24; HIGNETT (n. 3) 159–160. CONTRA: CARCOPINO (n. 1) 24–28, who claims that Androtion’s account actually supports the idea of Cleisthenes as the lawgiver of
Numerous scholars have disagreed with the anti-tyranny explanations of ostracism with good reason. For example, L. G. H. Hall has pointed out that eliminating one politician would have made no difference in a “factional milieu” because a politician always acted together with his supporters, friends and relatives. She states that the fourth-century sources which maintain that the replacement of the friends of the tyrants was the intention of ostracism are “certainly incorrect”.25 Scholars have also pointed out that there were much harsher penalties than ostracism for those who had attempted to seize tyrannical power.26 Nevertheless, it is undeniable that tyranny and the tyrant had significant roles as the opposites of the Athenian democratic ideals of freedom and political equality between the citizens (isonomia), on the one hand, and as the makers of Athenian democratic civic identity, on the other.27

Anti-tyrannical ideology indisputably prevailed in fifth-century Athens.28 One remarkable example of anti-tyrannical ideology was the “tyrannicide myth”29 according to which Harmodius and Aristogiton had murdered the tyrant Hipparchus in 514 and brought isonomia to the Athenians. Statues were built in honour of the tyrannicides, and their descendants were provided with substantial privileges. The Tyrannicides group was, significantly, situated at the Agora, and the area surrounding the group of statues was left empty and isolated. It is noteworthy that the ostrakophoriai were performed in the immediate vicinity of the Tyrannicides and that the ostraka were cast in near proximity to the statues of Harmodius and Aristogiton. As has been observed recently by Paul J. Kosmin, the fact that the ostrakophoriai were organized next to an idealized visualization of tyrant-killing was probably no coincidence.30 Indeed, Vincent J. Rosivach has argued that ostracism in fact served to keep alive the figure of the tyrant.31

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25 HALL (n. 1) 93, 99.
26 See, e.g., FORSDYKE (n. 1) 154. The anti-tyrannical explanation of ostracism is criticized also by, for example, RHODES, P. J.: A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaión Politeía. Oxford 1981, 270.
28 There were various examples of the rejection of tyranny on the institutional level. These included an oath against potential tyrants and subverters of democracy (And. 1. 97–98), curses against potential tyrants, and the archaic anti-tyranny law ([Arist.] Ath. Pol. 16. 10). On laws and institutions against tyranny, see OSTWALD, M.: The Athenian Legislation against Tyranny and Subversion. TAPhA 86 (1955) 107, 109, 120–123. For a more recent overview on tyrant-killing legislation, see now also TEEGARDEN, D. A.: Death to the Tyrants! Ancient Greek Democracy and the Struggle against Tyranny. Princeton–Oxford 2013.
29 As called by J. HALL (n. 27) 16–17. On the story of Harmodius and Aristogiton: Th. 6. 54. 1 – 59. 1.
30 KOSMIN (n. 1) 146, 147.
31 According to ROSIVACH: The Tyrant (n. 27) 45, all the anti-tyrannical institutions testify that “[…] the figure of the tyrant was woven into the institutional fabric of Athenian democracy” and that the figure of the tyrant had “an effect on the consciousness of the citizen body as a whole”. On ostracism as an expulsion of an imaginary and symbolic tyrant, see also ROSENBLoom (n. 1).
I find it plausible that the association between tyranny and ostracism had more to do with the role of the tyrant in Athenian imagination than with fear of actual tyranny. The imaginary and metaphorical tyrant was viewed in an ambivalent way by fifth-century Athenians. By the last third of the fifth century, the tyrant had become a symbol. The imaginary tyrant was perceived as a civic “ogre”, and the tyrant was frequently represented as hybristic and immoral by Greek authors: he raped and killed even his own relatives; he was perceived as paranoid, insolent, abusive, rich, immoral, and self-indulgent. The tyrant was insensitive and treated others as if they were his slaves. The tyrant had destroyed the freedom of the citizens and made them equal with each other (but not with himself). While the prevailing way of conceiving the tyrant was probably negative, the figure of the tyrant was at the same time also endowed with positive elements because paradoxically the tyrant represented a crystallization of “competitive values”. In this regard, the tyrant contained all the traditional competitive virtues pursued by men: he was independent, free, and a slave to no-one. Indeed, several passages from Greek literature indicate that tyranny and the tyrant did not have exclusively negative connotations in the imagery of fifth-century Athenians and that tyranny was felt as worth pursuing. For example, Eteocles names tyranny as “the greatest of the gods” (τὴν θεὸν μεγίστην) in Euripides’ Phoenissae, and Hecuba laments in Euripides’ Trojan Women that the dead Astyanax will never know “godlike tyranny” (τῆς ἱεοθέου τυραννίδος) due to his premature death.

What were the perceived differences between legitimate and illegitimate rule? It seems that the Athenians drew a distinction between tyrannis and basileia, that is, between good and bad one-man-rule. Apparently, tyrannos was used as a derogatory term by Solon and Theognis and in general, apart from when depicting the gods, tyrannos was always endowed with pejorative connotations. According to Aristotle’s definition, tyranny was...

32 Tyrrannical government was no longer a factual option in Athens after the overthrow of Hippias’ tyranny. The “real” threat was posed by political clubs and the threat was oligarchic rather than tyrannical. However, to say that there was no actual threat of a tyrannical coup is to regard the events of the fifth century in hindsight: the people living in the fifth century were not aware that there was not going to be any tyrannical takeover. Cf. ROSIVACH: The Tyrant (n. 27) 43, according to whom tyranny was “a familiar topic in political discussions” and “a very real threat to democracy in the eyes of many Athenians”.

33 ROSIVACH: The Tyrant (n. 27) 53: “The tyrant is in fact an ogre: he is arrogant, he is avaricious, he is violent, etc. etc.” See also ROSIVACH: The Tyrant (n. 27) 44; ROSIVACH (n. 1) 164.

34 On the ambivalence of tyranny (as well as on the competitive and co-operative values), see ADKINS, A. W. H.: Merit and Responsibility, A Study in Greek Values. Oxford 1960, 164–165, 234–235; for a contradicting opinion, see RAFLAUB (n. 27) 72.

35 E. Phoen. 499–505; E. Tro. 1169.

36 Cf. B. M. LAVELLE (Fame, Money, and Power: The Rise of Peisistratos and “Democratic” Tyranny at Athens. Ann Arbor 2005) 162, who has suggested that the difference between legitimate rule and tyranny is “[…] sometimes little more than that between pride and more pride, ambition and further ambition, between the discharge of power cloaked with a conventional sense of propriety and restraint and the unconventional or perhaps simply less proper discharge of power.” See also HEGYI, D.: Notes on the Origin of Greek Tyranny. AAmHung 13 (1965) 307. On the semantics of tyrant, see PARKER, V.: Τυραννος: The Semantics of a Political Concept from Archilochus to Aristotle. Hermes 126 (1998) 145–172. On the Greek perceptions on sole rule in general and for an argument that sole rule was not perceived as an unanimously negative option, see MITCHELL, L.: The Heroic Rulers of Archaic and Classical Greece, London and New York 2013.

37 However, the words tyrannos (“tyrant”) and basileus (“king”) could be used synonymously in the fifth century. Before Thucydides (1. 13. 1), who differentiates between tyranny and hereditary monarchy, both tyrannos and basileus referred to sole rule in general. J. HALL (n. 27) 27–28 has argued that the word tyrannos is regularly neutral or positive in connotation when it reflects the viewpoint of the ruler;
rule by one man without limitations, while *basileia*, in contrast, was “rule “subject to certain regulations.” In Aristotle’s political philosophy, a difference existed between the king and the tyrant (i.e., tyranny was the corrupt form of kingship), since the tyrant used law according to his own interests, while the king used it according to the common interest. It seems that *hybris* was among the factors which made tyranny different from legitimate one-man-rule. Ancient sources constantly associate *hybris* with tyranny. Firstly, a tyrant-like man was conceived as lacking self-control and respect for others. Therefore, he represented an antithesis of the ideal of moderation and self-control. In democratic Athens, the moral language praised a good man as able to control his appetites and as “stronger than himself”; contrariwise, the bad man was perceived as “weaker than himself”, that is, incapable of controlling his lusts and resisting temptations like food, drink, sex, and sleep. Man was perceived as either the master of or as slavishly and womanishly mastered by his pleasures – in the shared imagery, there was nothing between the master and the slave. If man was perceived as incapable of resisting temptations in private life, he was perceived as incapable of controlling himself in stately matters, too. A person who had sold himself on a private level was perceived as likely to sell out the common good of the city as well.

Another connection between tyranny and *hybris* was wealth. For instance, Otanes, defending democratic rule in the Constitutional Debate of Herodotus, recognizes *hybris* on the one hand, and envy on the other, as the causes of a monarch’s crimes. He represents *hybris* as being engendered by prosperity and as depending upon external circumstances (i.e. excessive wealth and power). In Otanes’ view, tyranny brings material advantages to the tyrant and these advantages, in turn, create *hybris*. In addition to Herodotus’ Otanes, numerous ancient Greek authors, too, conceived *hybris* as concerning the rich rather than the poor. According to the general cultural pattern already prevalent in

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38 Arist. *Rhet.* 1365h3–1366a2: μοναρχία δ᾽ ἐκείνη κατὰ τόδονμα ἡ ἑκάτερον κύριός ἔστιν: τούτων δὲ ὑὲ μὲν κατὰ τάξιν τινὰ βασιλεία, δ᾽ ἄρσενος τυραννικ. “In a monarchy, as its name indicates, one man alone is supreme over all; if it is subject to certain regulations, it is called a kingdom; if it is unlimited, a tyranny.” Trans. J. H. Freese.


40 For example, Plato’s “tyrannical man” presented in the *Republic* (571b–573c) is shameless and has no control over his lusts. According to Plato, all the darkest depths of the soul are shared by all but expressed in action only by the tyrannical man. The tyrannical man expects to rule over men and gods, and he has no control over the forces that have taken him.


42 *Cf.* WINKLER (n. 41) 50, 57.

43 Hdt. 3. 80. 3.


45 For example, Aristotle states in the *Rhetoric* (1390b32–1391a19) that a rich man is arrogant and full of *hybris*. Lysias (24.16–17), too, attributes *hybris* to the rich rather than to the poor as he states that the rich are more likely to commit *hybris* because they can pay themselves off, while the poor are forced to behave moderately as they do not have the means to buy themselves off.
archaic Greece, *hybris* was considered as being inflicted by prosperity and well-being (*olbos*) which caused *koros* (“satience”, or, as M. W. Dickie has aptly translated it, “feeling well-filled and pleased with oneself”⁴⁶). According to this traditional view, satiety and excess in wealth (*koros*) caused *hybris*. In this respect, *hybris* referred both to the state of having eaten or drunk too much and to one’s naïve confidence in the continuation of his good luck and success. This sort of *hybris* was conceived as characteristic of the youth, the rich and the drunken.⁴⁷ In this view, material well-being was thought to engender great human villains. This was also true in the world of plants: overnurtured plants which failed to produce fruit or crops were depicted in Aristotle’s botanical texts as *hybristic*.⁴⁸

**Ostracism and Anti-Superiority**

According to [Pseudo-]Aristotle, after ostracizing friends of tyrants for three years, the Athenians started to ostracize also those who “seemed to be too great” (καὶ τῶν ἄλλων εἶ ὁ τὸ ἄλλοι μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων εἶναι).⁴⁹ By stating εἰ … δοκοίη μὲν ἐπὶ, the author appears to emphasize the subjective element and to imply that the impression that a man gave of himself mattered more than his actual status and position. Likewise, Pseudo-Andocides maintains that “men of sense should beware of those of their fellows who grow too great (τοὺς ὑπεραυξανομένους), remembering that it is such as they who set up tyrannies.”⁵⁰ Pseudo-Andocides states also that ostracism was instituted against those members of the community who were “more powerful than the magistrates and the laws” (τοὺς κρείττους τῶν ἄρχωντων καὶ τῶν νόμων).⁵¹ On the other hand, according to Aristotle’s *Politics*, the intention of ostracism was to replace those who had managed to acquire too much influence due to their wealth or friends or some other form of political power. In the Aristotelian view, ostracism served as a “remedy”, which was to be employed whenever either one man or a body of men had gained excessive predominance.⁵² According to Aristotle, ostracism could be approved as politically just, if there was general acknowledgement that someone was predominant (ὁμολογουμένας υπεροχάς), but it turned unjust, if a man was ostracized because of his inner qualifications, that is, his virtue.⁵³

According to Aristotle, democratic *poleis* utilized ostracism in order to pursue equality:

⁴⁶ Dickie (n. 9) 108.
⁴⁸ Arist. *On the Generation of Animals* 725b35. See also Fisher 1992 (n. 9) 19: “In plants the undesirable element in the *hybris* consists in the plants’ ‘disobedient’ failure to produce fruit or fruit.” On *hybristic* plants, see also Michelini (n. 9) passim.
⁵³ In the Aristotelian view, those who exceed others in virtue are like gods among men and should be appointed as kings whom others should obey: Arist. *Pol.* 1284b15–30, 1288a15–25.
This is why democratically-governed states institute the system of ostracism – because of a reason of this nature; for these are the states considered to pursue equality most of all things, so that they used to ostracize men thought to be outstandingly powerful on account of wealth or popularity or some other form of political strength, and used to banish them out of the city for fixed periods of time. And there is a mythical story that the Argonauts left Heracles behind for a similar reason; for the Argo refused to carry him with the other voyagers because he was so much heavier. Hence, also those who blame tyranny and Periander’s advice to Thrasybulus must not be thought to be absolutely right in their censure (the story is that Periander made no reply to the herald sent to ask his advice, but leveled the corn-field by plucking off the ears that stood out above the rest; and consequently, although the herald did not know the reason for what was going on, when he carried back news of what had occurred, Thrasybulus understood that he was to destroy the outstanding citizens); for this policy is advantageous not only for tyrants, nor is it only tyrants that use it, but the same is the case with oligarchies and democracies as well; for ostracism has, in a way, the same effect as docking off the outstanding men by exile.\(^5^4\)

In this passage, Aristotle describes ostracism as a way of ridding the city of outstanding citizens. He explicitly equals the mechanism of ostracism with Periander’s plucking of the outstanding ears of crop and with Argo’s refusal to carry Heracles. Therefore, he seems to view ostracism as a kind of “equalizer”. Since Aristotle tells the story to provide the outstanding...
Also later authors such as Diodorus of Sicily and Plutarch assume that the desire to bring down men in power motivated Athenian decisions to ostracize. According to Plutarch, ostracism was “a humbling and docking of oppressive prestige and power”, while Diodorus of Sicily relates that the law on ostracism was passed “not for the purpose of punishing wrongdoing, but in order to lower through exile the presumption of men who had risen too high”.\textsuperscript{58} Plutarch also relates that the advisor of Pericles and a philosopher of music, Damon, son of Damondides was ostracized owing to his pride and reputation.\textsuperscript{59} Along similar lines, Pericles is paralleled in the comic poet Cratinus’ undatable fragment with Zeus because he is “parading about like Zeus, glorying in his building projects”\textsuperscript{60} since he had managed to escape ostracism.\textsuperscript{60} As has been noticed by Vincent J. Rosivach, Cratinus’ passage implies that ostracism was expected to restrain hybristic behavior.\textsuperscript{61}

Likewise, Plutarch states about Themistocles (who was ostracized in ca. 471) that

[…] they visited him with ostracism, curtailing his dignity (τὸ ἀξιωμα) and pre-eminence (τὴν ὑπεροχήν), as they were wont to do in the case of all whom they thought to have oppressive power, and to be incommensurate with true democratic equality (πρὸς ἴσοτητα δημοκρατικήν ἀσυμμέτρους εἶναι).\textsuperscript{62}

According to contemporary sources, ostracism was targeted at men whose authority caused fear. For example, Thucydides implies that ostracism was employed to banish those who roused fear because of their power (δύναμις) and authority (ἀξιωμα). According to Thucydides, the demagogue Hyperbolus was ostracized (in ca. 415) “not from fear of his influence on position, but because he was a rascal and a disgrace to the city”.\textsuperscript{63} The passage obviously indicates that in Thucydides’ view, ostracism was usually employed to banish persons of authority and power. Similarly, the comic poet Plato writes about Hyperbolus:

Although he got what he deserved,

\textsuperscript{58} Plu. Arist. 7. 2: μυθηρίας γὰρ οὐκ ἦν κόλασις ὁ ἕξωστρακισμὸς, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκαλεῖτο μὲν δ᾽ εἰσπέπειν θυγκου καὶ δυνάμεως ὑπερεκτος ἡπείρους καὶ κόλοιτος, ἡν δὲ φθόνον παραμιθώς φλανθρωπος, εἰς ἀνάγκασον σοδόν. ἀλλ᾽ εἰς μετάστασιν ἐτὸν δοκεῖν τὴν πρὸς τὸ λαэкон ἀπερεκιμένου δυσμένειν. Trans. B. Perrin. D. S. 11. 55. 3: νομοθήτησε δὲ τὰ ἐκατοτοκοῦν οἱ Αθηναῖοι, οὐχ ἤν τὴν καθιαν καλάζων, ἀλλ᾽ ἤν τὰ φρονήματα τῶν ὑπερεχόντων ταπεινότερα γένηται διὰ τὴν φυγήν. Trans. C. H. Oldfather.\textsuperscript{59} Plu. Nic. 6. 1. See also [Arist.] Ath. Pol. 27. 4 for a claim that Damon was ostracized due to his position as Pericles’ advisor. Elsewhere, Plutarch explains ostracism repeatedly in terms of envy: see, e.g., Plu. Arist. 7. 2; Plu. Nic. 11. 1; Plu. Arist. 1. 2–3; Plu. Alc. 13. 4.

\textsuperscript{60} ὁ συγκοέραλος Ζεὺς δεῦ / προσέρχεται τιρεδεῖν ἐπὶ τοῦ κρανίου / ἐχον, ἑπιδή τοὐστρακόν παροῖχεται.\textsuperscript{61} ROSIVACH (n. 1) 166.

\textsuperscript{61} Plu. Them. 22. 3: τὸν μὲν οὖν ἕξωστρακισμὸν ἐποίησαντο κατ᾽ αὐτόν κολοῦντος τὸ ἀξιωμα καὶ τὴν ὑπεροχήν, ὄσπερ εἴδοῦσαν ἐπὶ πάντων, οὐς ὄντοι τὴ δυνάμει βαρεῖς καὶ πρὸς ἴσοτητα δημοκρατικήν ἀσυμμέτρους εἶναι. κόλασις γὰρ οὖν ὁ ἕξωστρακισμός, ἅλλα παραμιθώς φθόνον καὶ κοφισμός ἠδομένου τὸ ταπεινοῦν τοὺς ὑπερέχοντας καὶ τὴν δυσμένειν εἰς ταύτην τὴν ἀπίματα ἀποπνέοντος. Trans. B. Perrin.\textsuperscript{62} Th. 8. 73. 3: καὶ ὶπαρξολόν τὸ τινὰ τῶν Ἀθηναίων, μυθηρίας ἄνθρωπον, ἕξωστρακισμόν οὐ διὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ἄξωματος φόβου, ἅλλα διὰ πυρνηρίας καὶ αἰχμήσεως τῆς σόλεως. Trans. J. M. Dent and E. P. Dutton. Note that the fear (phobos) felt by the people was irrational and it was thus not based on the factual qualities of the “candidate” of ostracism. \textit{Cf. HEFTNER, H.}: Die Aussagen der Testimonien über die ‘Zielgruppe’ des Ostrakismos. In SIEWERT (n. 2) 495.
his fate was too good for him and his slave brands. 

For ostracism was not invented for men such as he.\(^64\)

This poetic passage, too, states that Hyperbolus was not worthy of being subjected to ostracism. In the case of Hyperbolus’ ostracism, it is plausible that the target the Athenians had in mind before the vote on organizing the ostrakophoria, had been Alcibiades. The “undemocratic lawlessness” (οὐ δημοτικὴν παρανομίαν) of Alcibiades’ life-style had roused fear of a tyrannical takeover.\(^65\) Also, the sacrilegious profanation of the Eleusinian mysteries and the mutilation the Hermès (of which Alcibiades was accused) were seen as indicators of a tyrannical coup. Indeed, Alcibiades was a likely victim of ostracism owing to his arrogance as well as to his anti-egalitarian and undemocratic way of life.\(^66\) According to Thucydides, the Athenians feared Alcibiades as a potential tyrant due to his prestige and because his personal conduct made him a potential tyrant.\(^67\) Similarly, Pseudo-Andocides attacks Alcibiades due to his greed, paranomia, and unwillingness to be equal with others. Pseudo-Andocides maintains that Alcibiades deserves to be ostracized because he “shows the democracy to be nothing better than a sham, by talking like a champion of the people and acting like a tyrant”.\(^68\) He also compares Alcibiades with Callias, son of Didymus (who was perhaps ostracized earlier) and claims that Alcibiades the Elder (Alcibiades’ paternal grandfather), as well as Megacles (his maternal grandfather), were ostracized twice.\(^69\)

Alcibiades’ refusal to respect the boundaries of democratic equality, his extravagant way of life as well as his pastime of breeding horses were seen as signs of his paranomia.\(^70\) Moreover, the Athenians associated hippotrophy with ostracism. As will be demonstrated below, Alcibiades’ maternal grandfather, Megacles (ostracized in 486) was associated with horses on numerous ostraka. In this respect, it is interesting that a central event prompting suspicions of Alcibiades’ tyrannical desires may have been his victory of the chariot race at the Olympic Games of 416.\(^71\) Various connections existed between tyranny and Olympic victory. Firstly, Panhellenic athletic victory was associated with tyranny because no democratic leader had won on the circuit before Alcibiades. Secondly, Alcibiades’ victory might have reminded the Athenians of the Olympic victor Cylon’s

\(^{64}\) Plu. Nic. 11. 6: καίτοι πέπραξε τῶν προτέρων μὲν ἁξία, / αὐτῶ δὲ καὶ τῶν στημάτων ἀνάξια: / οὐ γὰρ τοιούτων εἶναι’ ἄστραξ’ εὐράθη. Trans. FORSIDYKE (n. 1) 153.

\(^{65}\) Th. 6. 28. 2.

\(^{66}\) ROSIVACH (n. 1) 164.

\(^{67}\) Th. 6. 15. 3–4.

\(^{68}\) […] οὐδενός ἀξίαν τὴν δημοκρατίαν ἀποφαίνει, τοὺς μὲν λόγους δημανήγωγον τὰ δ’ ἐργα τιμίουν παράξενον, καταμαθῶν ὑμᾶς τὸ μὲν ὀνόματος φροντίζοντας, τοῦ δὲ πράγματος ἀμελοῦντας. [And.] 4. 27. Trans. K. J. Maidment.

\(^{69}\) [And.] 4. 32; 4. 34. Similarly, also Lysias (14. 39) states that ἀλεξιβιάδην μὲν τὸν πρόσαπον αὐτῶδε καὶ τὸν πατρὸς πρὸς μήπος πάππον Μεγακλέα οἱ ὀμετέρους πρόγονον δὲς ἀμφοτέρους ἐξωσπάγκοιν. “[…] it was Alcibiades, his great-grand-father, and Megacles, his father’s grandfather on the mother’s side, whom your ancestors ostracized, both of them twice […]” Trans. W. R. M. Lamb.


\(^{71}\) Various ancient Greek sources associate the ostrakophoria of 415 with Alcibiades’ Olympic victory in 416. See, e.g., Plu. ALC. 11–12; [And.] 4. 25–33; Th. 6. 16–17. 1. On Alcibiades’ numerous transgressions, see also [And.] 4. 26–29, 4. 29–31; Isoc. 16. 1, 16. 34; D. S. 13. 74. 3–4; Plu. ALC. 13. 3; Ath. 1.3E, 12.534D. See also ROSENBLOOM (n. 1) 72–74 for further discussion and bibliography.
attempt to set himself up as a tyrant. Thirdly, the victory bestowed the victor with a precarious mystique; tyranny was regarded as a reward for victories which were so great that the society could not compensate them. In this connection, too, tyrannical desires were associated with *hybris*, and ostracism might have been employed at least in this case to exile a symbolic tyrant.

Ostracizing a Hybristic Would-be Tyrant

It has been argued that none of the preserved ostraka support the anti-tyranny explanation of ostracism. However, an image of a hybristic would-be-tyrant is evident on a variety of survived ostraka. While it is true that no ostrakon accuses the target straightforwardly of tyranny, numerous ostraka label their targets as Persians. In this connection, it should be noted that the notion of tyranny intermingled and overlapped with Persia, on the one hand, and with *hybris*, on the other. Soon after Marathon, the Athenians had begun to believe that victory over the Persians had signified the victory of democratic values and principles over tyrannical ones. After the Persian Wars, the Persian Great King became an example of a hybristic despot in the minds of the Athenians. The victory over the Persians was recognized as not only a victory of democracy over tyranny but also as an Athenian victory over *hybris*. By the time of Aeschylus’ *Persians*, the Athenians had started to explain the Persian defeats in 490–479 by the luxury, softness, and *hybris* of the Persians. After the Persian Wars, a luxurious life-style started to be viewed as a sign of the moral decline and decadence of the Persians. Luxury was associated with the aristocratic elite and with the connections with the East and it was associated with *hybris* because it was perceived as collapsing the distance between the humans and the gods and bridging the gulf between immortals and mortals.

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72 So ROSENBLOOM (n. 1) 74.
73 For example, Pseudo-Andocides (4.29) accuses Alcibiades of committing “*hybris against the whole polis*” (τῆς πόλεως ἀλήθεια ὡς θύρας) and appearing “more powerful than the entire polis” (μᾶρον ἀπάσις τῆς πόλεως δυνάμεων). For the ostrakophoria of 415 as an expulsion of a symbolic tyrant, see also ROSENBLOOM (n. 1).
74 SCHEIDEL, W.: Aussagen der Testimonien über die Institution des Ostrakismos. In SIEWERT (n. 2) 485.
75 Herodotus (7.8B.2–7.8C.2) equates Xerxes’ “thinking big” with *hybris* as he portrays Xerxes as wishing to yoke the Hellespont and dreaming that he encompasses “all the lands on which the sun shines” after conquering Greece. I agree with CAIRNS (n. 9) 14 who considers this “a perfectly standard case of *hybris* involving the pursuit of greater honour for oneself in a way that threatens the honour of others”. For a recent study on Xerxes in Greek imagination, see BRIDGES, E.: *Imagining Xerxes. Ancient Perspectives on a Persian King*. London 2015 [Bloomsbury Studies in Classical Reception].
76 For example, in Aeschylus’ *Persae*, the Athenians are represented as having been victorious in Salamis owing to the gods, on the one hand, and due to the *hybris* of the Persians, on the other. For a discussion, see, e.g., GOLDEHILL, S.: Battle Narrative and Politics in Aeschylus’ *Persae*. In HARRISON, TH. (ed.): *Greeks and Barbarians*. Edinburgh 2002, 51, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60; RAUHALA, M. – KUOKKANEN, S.: Orja taikka alamainen ei kellekään. Voittoisa Salamis ateenalaiskansallisen identiteetin tekijänä Aiskhyloksen Persialaisissa. *Faravid* 42 (2016) 5–30 (with a summary in English: Nobody’s Slaves or Subjects: Triumph at Salamis as the Maker of Athenian National Identity in Aeschylus’ *Persae*).
Various ostraka connect their target with Persia. For example, 16 ostraka against Callias, son of Cratias associate him with Persia. Some comments inscribed on the ostraka against Callias state that Callias comes from Media (ἐκ Μήδους), while other ostraka simply call him a Medizer (Μηδος).78 Obviously, this kind of vocabulary and imagery is neither neutral nor is it to be taken literally. As has been observed by Stefan Brenne, reference is not made to Callias’ political opinions on these ostraka, but rather to his personal contacts with the enemy and to the influence that the Persians had on him.79 In addition, one fragmentary ostrakon against Callixenus presents a head in profile, which looks rightward and wears a crown-like object. Stefan Brenne considers that the thorny, crown-like thing covering the head represents a cock’s wattle. He associates the graffito with aggrandizement and arrogance fitting for a man viewed as a suitable “candidate” for ostracism.80 The cock was associated with Medism, too, and comedians had named the cock “Persian bird”.81 The cock’s wattle and the king’s crown were strongly associated with each other in, for example, Aristophanes’ Birds.82 Hence, an association with the cock could be connected with the accusation of Medism. I agree with Brenne that the graffito imitates the Great King of Persia. In this respect, this ostrakon serves as evidence of the association between hybris, Persia, tyranny, and ostracism.

Various ostraka were addressed against Megacles, son of Hippocrates, too, and they indicate that at least some ostracizers saw him as a hybristic would-be tyrant.83 Megacles, a wealthy member of the Alcmaeonid family and one of the men labelled by [Pseudo-]Aristotle as a “friend of tyrants”, was ostracized in 486 and perhaps again approximately 15 years later. The ostraka attack Megacles’ luxurious life-style and his habit of horse-breeding in particular. The “epithets” given to Megacles on the ostraka include “adulterer” (ὁ μοιχός) and “silver-loving” (φιλάργυρος). Also Megacles’ “new hairstyle”, his arrogant extravagance, and the hereditary Cylonian curse of the Alcmaeonid family have drawn the attention of the voters.84

78 BRENNE: Die Ostraka (n. 2) T I / 46–61.
80 BRENNE: Die Ostraka (n. 2) 142; on the Callixenus ostrakon, see also BRENNE: Portraits (n. 2) 177–184.
81 E.g. Ar. Av. 275 ff. See also BRENNE: Portraits (n. 2) 180 n. 83.
“(Pisthetaerus): It was not the gods, but the birds, who were formerly the masters and kings over men; of this I have a thousand proofs. First of all, I will point you to the cock, who governed the Persians before all other monarchs, before Darius and Megabazus. It’s in memory of his reign that he is called the Persian bird. (Eupelides): For this reason also, even to-day, he alone of all the birds wears his tiara straight on his head, like the Great King.” Trans. E. O’Neill.
83 There is significantly more archaeological than literary evidence on the ostracism of Megacles, against whom, according to BRENNE: Die Ostraka (n. 2) 62, 4142 ostraka have been unearthed.
84 “New hairstyle”; BRENNE: Die Ostraka 2002 (n. 2) T 1/107–108. Three ostraka call Megacles “cursed” or “Cylonian”. These might refer to Megacles’ support of Cylon: see BRENNE: Die Ostraka (n. 2) 104.
The two ostraka referring to Megacles’ “new hairstyle” (νέα κόμη) may have referred to his desire for tyranny. Long hair might have been perceived as a sign of aspiration for tyranny: for example, Herodotus reports that Cylon, who had attempted to seize tyranny in the seventh century, “groomed himself” or literally “grew his hair long” (ἐξόμησε). On the other hand, as long hair was associated with luxury, I find it plausible that the ostracizers referring to Megacles’ new hairstyle may have based their voting decisions on the luxurious and aristocratic life-style of Megacles. On the other hand, these ostraka also indicate that the two ostracizers perhaps viewed themselves as cutters-down-to-size of Megacles’ hair and thus as judges determining Megacles’ social status. Another possibility is that the “new hairstyle” ostraka share the same idea with the ostrakon on which the ostracizer calls Megacles a μοιχός: according to Athenian custom, an adulterer’s hair was cut short. In addition, several ostraka targeted at Megacles refer to horses. One ostrakon is addressed “to Megacles, son of Hippocrates, and to the horse, too”, and several ostraka call Megacles hippotrophos (“horsekeeper”). Horse-breeding was related to one’s wealth and social status, and these ostraka can be interpreted as comments on Megacles’ rich, aristocratic, and luxurious life-style.

Significantly, Megacles is called ΤΡΟΦΟΝΟΣ on one ostrakon. Stefan Brenne has interpreted the word ΤΡΟΦΟΝΟΣ as related to the word τροφή (“luxury”) and he considers that this ostrakon refers to Megacles’ arrogance, overindulgence, and luxurious lifestyle. Another possibility is that ΤΡΟΦΟΝΟΣ referred to Trophonios (Τροφινός), the mythical builder of the first temple of Apollo in Delphi. Nonetheless, the literal meaning of ΤΡΟΦΟΝΟΣ is “nurtured” (τροφέω = “to nurture”). Brenne rejects this translation because it “makes no sense”. However, I would consider also this meaning of the word plausible in the context presented above. The word ἕξοβρίζειν (“to break out in ὑβρις”) is used by Aristotle in his botanical texts to refer to vines which “goat” (ὑπνος) – that is, to a condition of not producing ripe fruit but creating a profusion of flowers and leaf instead. The vines break out in ὑβρις due to excessive nurturing (διὰ τῆς τροφῆς).

Accepting Ann Michelini’s view that an analogy existed between hybristic plants and hybristic men, I would propose that the ΤΡΟΦΟΝΟΣ ostrakon is in accordance with other ostraka which indirectly label Megacles as a ὑβριστὴς. Megacles’ material well-

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85 In my view, Kosmin (n. 1) 149 pushes it too far when he suggests that νέα κόμη referred to a “new village” represented by the enclosure which Kosmin understands symbolically as a barathron. I believe that a reference to Megacles’ “new hairstyle” is more likely.
86 Hdt. 5. 71. 1; cf. Th. 1. 126; Plu. Sol. 12. For another reference to cutting long hair, although in a completely different context, see Anacr. fr. 347 PMG. See also Harrison: The Cause (n. 57) 147.
87 See, e.g., Rosenbloom (n. 1).
88 The ostraka which refer to horses: Brenne: Die Ostraka (n. 2) T 1/101–105; T 1/158.
89 Brenne: Die Ostraka (n. 2) T 1/113.
90 Brenne: Die Ostraka (n. 2) 119.
91 ὁμοιοὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ παρὰ τὰς τραγῳδίας ἀμπέλους πάθος, αὐτὰ δὲ τῆς τροφῆς ἐξοβρίζουσιν [...] Arist. On the generation of animals 725b35. See also Fisher 1992 (n. 9) 19.
92 Michelini (n. 9).
being is repeatedly referred to on the *ostraka* which refer to his habit of horse-breeding as well as to his love of silver. As I see it, the word ΤΡΟΦΟΝΟΣ is here related to Megacles’ hybristic condition which had resulted in, to speak metaphorically, producing only leaves instead of fruit. Megacles’ abundance of nurture (that is, his great wealth, his *koros*) was perhaps among the reasons of this citizen for voting for the ostracism of Megacles. The ostracizer perhaps thought that Megacles’ *koros* had made him break out in *hybris*; this, in turn, would perhaps later manifest itself in an attempt of tyrannical takeover. This view is in accordance with the *ostraka* which associate Megacles with a woman named Coisyra. Coisyra is referred to in the *scholia* of Aristophanes’ comedies as an Eretrian, and her name became synonymous with arrogant extravagance, high-living, wealth, nobility, “thinking big” (μέγα φρονέων) and tyrannical temperament. Therefore, I would agree with B. M. Lavelle who has argued that “extravagance and high living, tantamount to tyrannical disposition” contributed to Megacles’ ostracism.

In conclusion, I would argue that ostracism played a role in detecting and punishing one’s motives and intentions. I would suggest that it was primarily the hybristic disposition against which the institution of ostracism was an answer. This view is in accordance with the traditional cultural pattern *koros* → *hybris* (→ *atê*) found in early Greek literature.

One question remains, however, which still needs further clarification: why do the contemporary literary sources not explicitly attribute ostracism to the Athenian desire to curb *hybris*? I would propose that the anti-tyrannical and pro-democratic ideology had strongly influenced especially the fourth-century sources and that these ideologies might perhaps explain why they view ostracism in terms of anti-tyranny instead of in terms of preventing *hybris*. A further explanation might be that the conceptions of *hybris*, tyranny and Persia were deeply intertwined in fifth-century Athenian thought. Both Persia and the tyrants were also associated with wealth and luxury. Ostentation was also associated with both tyrants and Persia. Hence, profligate and luxurious life-style might have been perceived by the Greeks as a sign of Medism, on the one hand, and of future tyranny, on the other. In sum, a hybristic disposition exposed by one’s life-style was feared to lead to tyranny. This was evident in the case of Alcibiades whose hybristic display in the Olympic games of 416, together with his way of life, might have strongly contributed to the decision to organize the *ostrakophoria* in 415.

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95 LAVELLE (n. 93) 505–506; BRENN: Die Ostraka (n. 2) 111.
96 LAVELLE (n. 93) 506, 510.
97 Cf. ROSIVACH (n. 1) 166: “In conventional Greek morality, the gods strike down those guilty of *hybris*, who think too highly of themselves and fail to recognize their proper place. This view of ostracism as kolasis tôn hyperauksanomenôn, in effect, a levelling response to political *hybris*, dovetails nicely with this conventional morality and draws strength from it”.
98 Cf. ROSIVACH (n. 1) passim, for a claim that the fourth-century sources view ostracism in terms of democratic ideology.