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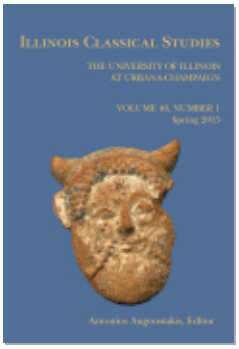

T. George Hendren

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Meidias Tyrannos: Meidias' Tyrannical Attributes in Demosthenes 21

T. GEORGE HENDREN

The venom with which Demosthenes lambasts Meidias suits both the circumstance of their violent private quarrel as well as the contemporary political climate of the Mediterranean world. This article will reevaluate Demonsthenes' vitriol in his *Against Meidias* to show that the characterization of his opponent plays off Athenian fears specific to tyrannical overthrow. I argue that Demosthenes spins his chief criticisms of Meidias into tyrannical attributes similar to those with which he attacked Philip. Demosthenes' use of literary tyranny calls into question the reliability of the speech as a source for historical analysis of Athenian *hubris*.

ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον (Soph. *OT* 872)
hubris feeds the tyrant

The portrait of Meidias that Demosthenes paints in the twenty-first speech plays on Athenian fears of oligarcho-tyrannical usurpation.[1] Because of the pervasive reliance on this tactic and its roots in Athenian literary tyranny, the role of Demosthenes' *Against Meidias* as a primary source for Athenian conceptions of *hubris* deserves careful scrutiny. Demosthenes connects the defendant's hubristic actions to the general character of the aspiring tyrant or oligarch, a rhetorical scheme that renders Meidias the archetypal "bogey-man" of the Athenian democracy.[2] This demonization of Meidias relies on a complex of vague accusations, few of which provide concrete or verifiable examples of *hubris* in the illegal sense (beyond the punch for which Meidias was condemned through the

1. Translations are my own, unless otherwise noted; the text of Demosthenes 21 is that of MacDowell (1990).

2. For the terminology see Wilson (1991) 167; cf. the similar language of Henderson (2003) 170 and Osborne (2003) 268 with reference to tyrants, tyranny, and oligarchy in general. For the Athenians' connection between oligarchy and tyranny, see Thucydides' conflation of the two at 6.60; cf. Raaflaub (2003) 225–49 and Teegarden (2014a) 44 on the connection between the Thirty and tyranny. Osborne (2003) 251 links the late fifth and fourth century obsessive fear of tyranny and oligarchy to the breakdown in meaningful terminology surrounding non-democratic politics: "the coups of 411 and 404 revealed the emptiness of earlier political discourse and political analysis."

probolē procedure in 348 BCE), and even the quoted law on *hubris* (21.47) has been shown to be spurious.[3] Despite these shortcomings, the *Against Meidias* remains a major source for *hubris* as both a legal institution of the democracy and a major facet of Athenian social interaction. The attention this speech has garnered among historians of the Athenian democracy and its privileged place among testimonies from antiquity for the legal side of *hubris* at Athens necessitates continued reevaluation of Demosthenes' rhetorical strategy, especially in light of his characteristic manipulation of fact to support his own agenda.

The substantial difficulties posed by the speech have led readers to question the nature of the charge and whether the speech was even actually delivered.[4] The procedure began with a *probolē* in 348 BCE (21.9) on account of the offense Meidias committed against the god when he struck Demosthenes, who was acting as *chorēgos* at the Greater Dionysia. Edward Harris has demonstrated that this *probolē* was a separate legal procedure from that found in the speech preserved as ΚΑΤΑ ΜΕΙΔΙΟΥ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΝΔΥΛΟΥ,[5] and that it was likely a *hubreōs graphē* that Demosthenes brought against Meidias in 346.[6] Although this has been a point of scholarly contention,[7] it cannot be doubted that some collection of hubristic acts (however ill-defined) form the backbone of Demosthenes' accusations throughout the speech.[8] *Hubris* itself had a fluid definition in Athens, and it was up to the *dikastai* to decide whether or not the crime had been committed; the law empowers the citizenry to identify and condemn hu-

3. Harris (2008) 103–4.

4. Aeschin. 3.52 (cf. Plut. *Dem.* 12) seems to indicate that Demosthenes never delivered the speech but accepted a settlement of thirty *minae*. Among many criticisms leveled at this claim are those summarized by MacDowell (1990) 28 and Harris (2008) 84–85: the charge comes sixteen years after the events allegedly took place, Aeschines' speech against Demosthenes from 343 does not mention the settlement, the speaker offers no evidence to support his claim, and two of Aeschines' four charges have been shown to be false.

5. Not the title given by Demosthenes himself; see Wilson (1991) 164.

6. See Harris (2008) 79–81 and 129–36 on the *probolē* procedure, which was non-binding, and allowed the victim to then decide whether a public or private suit was necessary; cf. the case Evandrus brought against Menippus (21.175–76): as Harris points out, after winning the *probolē*, Evandrus brought a private suit against Menippus, for which he could be awarded monetary payment, in order to recoup his losses from the debtor. A public suit, such as the one Demosthenes pursues, would have incurred only a fine paid to the state (cf. Dem. 21.28).

7. Cf. MacDowell (1990); Rowe (1994) claims the charge was *asebeia*. If *hubris* was not the actual charge brought by Demosthenes, then a *hubreōs graphē* certainly lurks in the shadows throughout the speech.

8. Rowe (1993); cf. Kurihara (2003) 475–76. Representative discussions of oratorical technique in Dem. 21 can be found in Pearson (1976) 105–11, MacDowell (1990) 28–37, Fredal (2001), and Harris (2008) 82–85. See also Worthington (2000) 94 on Philip in *Philipic* 3 and *On the Chersonese*.

bristic behavior, but it does not define it.[9] Demosthenes calls *hubris* the act of "treating free men as slaves" (21.180), a loaded representation of the concept that matches his vilification of Meidias as a tyrannical plotter who (according to Demosthenes) strives to deprive the collective citizen body of their law-empowered rights.[10]

Contemporary Political Climate

The Athenians of the fourth century inherited long-standing traditions of pro-democratic militancy tempered by apprehension with regard to the security of the state.[11] David Teegarden's excellent work detailing the songs (e.g., Philostr. *VA* 7.4), oaths (Demophantus), and laws (Eucrates) that celebrated tyrant slaying during the fourth century provides ample background to Demosthenes' pro-democratic rhetoric in speech twenty-one.[12] Monuments honoring Harmodius and Aristogeiton stood in the Agora from the sixth century on (securely attested as heroic nudes from the early fifth century) as perennial reminders of Athens' anti-tyrannical roots.[13] Athenians of the late fifth century embraced the democratic imagery of the statue group whole-heartedly. Aristophanes captures their pervasive fears of overthrow, overhasty connections between anti-democratic behavior and tyrannical plots, and eagerness to defend their democratic ideals in his *Lysistrata*:[14] ἀλλ' ἐμοῦ μὲν οὐ τυραννεύσουσ', ἐπεὶ φυλάξομαι / καὶ "φορήσω τὸ ξίφος" τὸ λοιπὸν "ἐν μύρτου κλαδί," / ἀγοράσω τ' ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις ἑξῆς Ἀριστογείτονι, / ὧδέ θ' ἑστήξω παρ' αὐτόν ("But I won't let these women

9. The nebulous nature of the *hubrēos graphē* accusation has not deterred modern commentators from attempting a concrete definition: see Fisher (1976) and (1992), MacDowell (1976) 21, and Cairns (1996). The crime manifests itself in two distinct spheres, what Harris (2008) 81 terms the "subjective" (as the opposite of *sophrosyne*) and "objective" (as "an action that causes dishonor and a sense of humiliation in the victim").

10. Hinted at in Seager (1967) 7, MacDowell (1990) 37, Wilson (1991) 180–86 and (2000) 157: "the spectre of oligarchic revolution is not far away," and Fredal (2001).

11. Such apprehension dates at least to Cylon (Hdt. 5.71, Thuc. 1.126); cf. Sol. fr. 9 and 32 W, Plut. *Sol.* 19.4–5, [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 8.4, 16.10, though the authenticity of the laws cited in Plutarch and the *Constitution of the Athenians* has fallen under scrutiny: see Ruschenbusch (1966) and Rhodes (1993) 220–23. For the presence of anti-democratic factions in democratic states, see Teegarden (2014a) 1–5, who cites Arist. *Pol.* 1304b19–305a36, 1309a15–310a35 and Dem. 10.4.

12. See Teegarden (2012) and (2014a) 1–56.

13. The late sixth-century sculpture by Antenor (the first such statue of historical figures erected in Athens) was lost in the Persian destruction. It is the later group by Kritios and Nesiotes from 477/476 BCE that depicts the Tyrannicides as nudes (see Paus. 1.85 and Pliny *Nat.* 34.70) and would become extremely popular in Athenian democratic culture.

14. The quotations from Aristophanes are taken from Henderson's (1998) and (2000) Loeb edition.

tyrannize me, I'll be on guard, and I'll 'carry my sword in a myrtle branch,' I'll meet in the Agora at arms right next to Aristogeiton, just like this, I'll stand beside him," *Lys*. 631–34).[15] Likewise, in the *Wasps* Aristophanes mocks the kind of democratic paranoia that had become prevalent at the time:

> ΒΔ. ὡς ἅπανθ' ὑμῖν τυραννίς ἐστι καὶ ξυνωμόται,
> ἤν τε μεῖζον ἤν τ' ἔλαττον πρᾶγμά τις κατηγορῇ.
> ἧς ἐγὼ οὐκ ἤκουσα τοὔνομ' οὐδὲ πεντήκοντ' ἐτῶν·
> νῦν δὲ πολλῷ τοῦ ταρίχους ἐστὶν ἀξιωτέρα,
> ὥστε καὶ δὴ τοὔνομ' αὐτῆς ἐν ἀγορᾷ κυλίνδεται.
> ἢν μὲν ὠνῆταί τις ὀρφῶς, μεμβράδας δὲ μὴ 'θέλῃ,
> εὐθέως εἴρηχ' ὁ πωλῶν πλησίον τὰς μεμβράδας·
> "οὗτος ὀψωνεῖν ἔοιχ' ἄνθρωπος ἐπὶ τυραννίδι."
> ἢν δὲ γήτειον προσαιτῇ ταῖς ἀφύαις ἥδυσμά τι,
> ἡ λαχανόπωλις παραβλέψασά φησι θἀτέρῳ·
> "εἰπέ μοι· γήτειον αἰτεῖς· πότερον ἐπὶ τυραννίδι;
> ἢ νομίζεις τὰς Ἀθήνας σοὶ φέρειν ἡδύσματα;"(Ar. *Vesp*. 488–99)
>
> BD. No matter what issue is being talked about, whether it's important or not, you turn it into a discussion about tyranny or conspiracy. I haven't heard these words in fifty years, but now, they're so rolled around in the Agora that they're just like fish. So if someone wants to buy trout but doesn't want anchovies, straightaway the anchovy seller says, "This guy prefers dainty fish for his tyranny!" Or if you want an onion to add some sweetness to your dish, the cabbage seller looks down on you and asks, "Tell me, would you like an onion or tyranny? Do you think the Athenians bring out all their sweet things just for you?"

The chorus' accusations of tyranny and Bdelycleon's response center on two points: the absurdity of democratic claims of tyrannical conspiracy and the prevalence of those claims. This passage also provides evidence for the oscillation between security and insecurity that the Athenians experienced in the fifth century: Bdelycleon's assertion that he has not heard these words (tyranny and conspiracy) in fifty years (490) recalls the prosperity of the pentecontaetia, when democracy was considered more secure.[16] Widespread fear of democratic overthrow, however, had become commonplace in the late fifth century, and this creeping paranoia crystalized into law late in the fifth century with the Decree

15. See Ober (2003) 220; cf. Taylor (1981) 51–77 on Athen. 15.695a, which preserves a series of *skolia* from the second century CE celebrating Harmodius and Aristogeiton with language similar to that found in the *Lysistrata,* indicating that the ideals associated with anti-tyrannical action remained important (or at least commonly known) well after the permanent collapse of Athenian democracy.

16. Though cf. [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 25 on the reforms of Ephialtes.

of Demophantus.[17] The realization of these fears in the reign of the 400 and that of the Thirty Tyrants only served to justify the extent of democratic insecurity.[18]

Few sources for Athenian anxiety in the first half of the fourth century survive, aside from a series of treaties with Achaea, Arcadia, Elis, Phlius, and some Thessalian states that ensured support against and forbid the establishment of "tyrannies or oligarchies."[19] Although fragmentary, the restored treaties may include language that confirm an increase in Athenian hostility towards the machinations of foreign despots, especially in the years leading up to the Social War. This period also saw a sharp rise in the popularity of archaic style tyranny:[20] Pherae, Sicyon, and Syracuse had all come under the sway of tyrants,[21] and from 377 to 349 BCE no fewer than three autocratic revolutions took place in Eretria (a member of the Second Athenian League).[22]

17. Andoc. 1.96–98. Canevaro and Harris (2012) date the decree to 403/402 or 400/399 BCE, and the document we have preserved, they show, may be a forgery; cf. arguments for the standard dating found in Shear (2007), Teegarden (2012), and Sommerstein (2014).

18. Later evidence indicates that the Athenians treated the overthrow of the oligarchic 400 and the Thirty Tyrants as a form of tyrannicide, celebrating the participants alongside the memory of Harmodius and Aristogeiton: see Teegarden (2014b) on Philostr. *V A* 4.7 and Plut. *Arat.* 16.

19. Unfortunately, the key language specifying tyranny and democratic overthrow is supplemented in *IG* II^2 112 (= *RO* 41), dated to 362/361 BCE: . . . ἐὰν δέ τις ἴηι ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀττι] / [κὴ]ν ἢ τὸν δῆμον [καταλύηι τὸν Ἀθηναίων ἢ τύραννον] / [κα]θιστῆι ἢ ὀλι[γαρχίαν (" . . . if anyone goes against Attica or overthrows the people of Athens or sets up a tyrant or an oligarchy," trans. Rhodes and Osborne). Cf. similar fears among the Thessalians in *IG* II^2 116 (= *RO* 44), dated to 361/360: ἐάν τι[ς] ἴηι ἐπὶ τὸ κοινὸν τὸ Θετταλῶν ἐπὶ πολ / [έμ]ωι ἢ τὸν ἄρχοντα καταλύει, ὃν εἵλοντο Θετταλοί, ἢ / [τ]ύραννον καθ[ι]στῆι ἐν Θετταλίαι (" . . . if anyone goes against the *koinon* of the Thessalians for war, or overthrows the *archon* whom the Thessalians have appointed, or sets up a tyrant in Thessaly," trans. Rhodes and Osborne); see Teegarden (2014a) 122. Also cf. *IG* II^2 111 (= *RO* 39): in 363/362 an Athenian treaty with Ceos contained specific terms for the city of Iulis that sought to circumvent foreseeable problems with returning exiles, in the event that any might attempt to impose an extreme oligarchy or otherwise undermine the established government. The Athenians likewise sent cleruchs to Samos in 361/360 (Schol. Aeschin. 1.53) perhaps in an attempt to prevent Mausolus or a group of previously exiled Samians from retaking the island; see Ruzicka (1998) 67. Teegarden (2014a) 87 also notes that honors reserved for the descendants of the Tyrannicides (*sitēsis*, *proedria*, and *ateleia*) appear to have been increased in the early fourth century.

20. See Teegarden (2014a) 222 and 232–34, who provides the following statistics: nineteen of 126 cities for which we have evidence experienced tyranny in the second half of the fifth century (15%); thirty-two of 117 in the first half of the fourth century (32%).

21. Alexander of Pherae: Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.34 and Diod. Sic. 15.60–61; on Alexander's relations with Athens: Diod. Sic. 15.95.1–2; Euphron of Sicyon: Xen *Hell.* 7.1.44 and Diod. Sic. 15.70.3; Dionysius I of Syracuse: Diod. Sic. 13.91.1–95.6; Dionysius II of Syracuse: Diod. Sic. 16.5.1–6.5, 16.9.1–13.3. For the perceived threats to Athens posed by tyranny and oligarchy in the fourth century, see Osborne (2003) 254–56.

22. Teegarden (2014a) 133–34. The tyrannical coups included that of Plutarchus, for whom Meidias served as *proxenos*.

Demosthenes' Language of Tyranny

Although the link between *hubris* and tyranny existed for some time prior to 346, Demosthenes' *Against Meidias* has become a *locus classicus* for explorations of the legal charge of *hubris*.[23] The term *hubris* appears more than 100 times in the speech, nearly as often as the rest of the Demosthenic corpus combined, making it a valuable source for those legal historians concerned with the charge.[24] Much of Demosthenes' invective language only vaguely matches the Athenian concept of a hubristic tyrant, and such accusations had become commonplace among attacks on elite opponents.[25] Nevertheless, his combination of related words for rhetorical effect extends to the very theme of the charge: passages emphasizing Meidias' *hubris* also frequently employ language, themes, and even historical examples that would have incited the jury's democratic outrage against would-be tyrants and oligarchic elites. Considered alongside a contemporary revival in "groundless fears of the subversion of the democracy,"[26] a new interpretation of the literary evidence emerges that clarifies the goals behind Demosthenes' exuberant, emotional style in the *Against Meidias*, and the influence of his political rhetoric on the forensic courtroom.

Meidias, like contemporary Mediterranean monarchs and oligarchs, threatens the very operation of the democratic state,[27] and his personal fortune empowers this threat. Although abuse of wealth was an admittedly vague accusation that included tyrants along with any number of other *hubristēs*, it nevertheless constituted a *sine qua non* for the literary tyrant. Gyges, Croesus, and Polycrates were paradigmatic for their extravagant wealth,[28] as was Meidias:

23. For *hubris* and tyranny, see Lys. 33.2, Isoc. 4.80, [Dem.] 17.3, 12. On the legal issues, especially those surrounding the charge of *hubris*, see Ruschenbusch (1965), Fisher (1976) and (1992), MacDowell (1976), Gagarin (1979), Harris (1989), MacDowell (1990) 263–65, Cohen (1991), Ober (1991) 208–12, Cairns (1996), and Harris (2008) 79–82. On the structure and rhetorical strategy of the speech, see MacDowell (1990) 28–37, Rowe (1993), and Fredal (2001).

24. Rowe (1993) 397: 131 times in the *Against Meidias*, as opposed to 274 total in Demosthenes' extant works and 170 in that of the other Greek orators.

25. Ober (1991) 208–12. Rowe (1993) and Kurihara (2003) both stress the prosecutor's role in reminding the jury of the public danger inherent in acts of *hubris* (thus the overlap with the language of tyranny), which, in threatening the freedoms of an individual citizen, also threatened the foundations of the democracy.

26. MacDowell (1990) 37.

27. Dem. 21.7, 31–35, 123–27, 211, 218. The danger posed by greedy, self-absorbed elites dates as far back as Hes. *Op.* 240–44; cf. Ober (2003) 229 on Agamemnon in the *Iliad*; cf. McGlew (1993) 57–61.

28. Gyges: Archil. fr. 19.17–20 W and Hdt. 1.14; Croesus: Hdt. 1.30; Polycrates: Pl. *Meno* 90a; see also McGlew (1993) 26. Solon's lack of tyrannical behavior is emphasized in similar terms at Plut. *Sol*. 14.6; cf. Soph. *OT* 380–81 and *Ant*. 1056.

> ἀλλ' ὅτι πλούσιός ἐστιν· ἀλλὰ τοῦτό γε τῆς ὕβρεως αὐτοῦ σχεδὸν αἴτιον εὑρήσετ' ὄν, ὥστ' ἀφελεῖν τὴν ἀφορμήν, δι' ἣν ὑβρίζει, προσήκει μᾶλλον ἢ σῶσαι διὰ ταύτην . . . (Dem. 21.98)
>
> But [you might spare him] because he is wealthy? But you will find that is the very reason for his *hubris*, such that it is more fitting to take away the means with which he commits *hubris*, than to save him because of it.
>
> τὸ γὰρ ἐπ' ἐξουσίας καὶ πλούτου πονηρὸν εἶναι καὶ ὑβριστὴν τεῖχός ἐστι πρὸς τὸ μηδὲν ἂν αὐτὸν ἐξ ἐπιδρομῆς παθεῖν . . . (Dem. 21.138)
>
> For the hubristic and violent man who is supported by wealth and power is protected from having to suffer any sudden attack.

As with his literary predecessors, Meidias' affluence is double-edged: it equips the *hubristēs* to commit his outrageous acts and protects him from the consequences of those actions. Such is the freedom afforded to monarchs that Herodotus places in Otanes' mouth and Thrasymachus celebrates in the *Republic*.[29] The archetypal tyrant's wealth enabled him to commit *hubris* even against divine law: τόν τοι τύραννον εὐσεβεῖν οὐ ῥᾴδιον ("it is not easy for the tyrant to act piously," Soph. *Aj*. 1350). Cleisthenes of Sicyon was known for his acts of impiety; likewise Meidias, who, Demosthenes claims, has not only violated an Athenian citizen, but also a religious official, and the god himself.[30]

Meidias' ostentatious appearance matches another characteristic of the literary tyrant,[31] and sets him opposite the democratic Demosthenes:

> καίτοι πότερ' εἰσὶν ὄνειδος, ὦ Μειδία, τῇ πόλει οἱ διαβάντες ἐν τάξει καὶ τὴν σκευὴν ἔχοντες ἣν προσῆκε τοὺς ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους ἐξιόντας καὶ συμβαλουμένους τοῖς συμμάχοις, ἢ σὺ ὁ μηδὲ λαχεῖν εὐχόμενος τῶν ἐξιόντων ὅτ' ἐκληροῦ, τὸν θώρακα δ' οὐδεπώποτ' ἐνδύς, ἐπ' ἀστράβης δ' ὀχούμενος ἀργυρᾶς τῆς ἐξ Εὐβοίας, χλανίδας δὲ καὶ κυμβία καὶ κάδους ἔχων, ὧν ἐπελαμβάνονθ' οἱ πεντηκοστολόγοι; ταῦτα γὰρ εἰς τοὺς ὁπλίτας ἡμᾶς ἀπηγγέλλετο. (Dem. 21.133)
>
> What is the greater cause of shame for the democracy, Meidias, those who left the city in order, took with them the equipment necessary to face the enemy, and brought help to the allies, or you, the one praying he would not be among those appointed by lot for the journey, who never wore a breastplate, holding fast to your silver mule-chair from Euboea, with your fine garments and cups and wine bottles, which the tax collectors tried to seize? For these are the things that were announced to us hoplites.

29. Otanes: Hdt. 3.80.3; Thrasymachus: *Rep.* 1.344c; see also McGlew (1993) 30.
30. Cleisthenes: Hdt. 5.67; Meidias: Dem. 21.31–5, 51, 227; cf. Palmer (1982) on Alcibiades.
31. Thuc. 1.130.1 and Plb. 6.7.7; see Dunkle (1967) 170.
32. Pl. *Rep.* 8.562a-9.572b; see McGlew (1993) 30.

Meidias' liturgies are a shame to the democracy and little more than private expenditures that in no way benefit the public good. Along with the other cavalry elites he paraded his way to Euboea on a silver saddle, dressed in fine clothes, drinking wine out of expensive cups, and never so much as prepared for, much less engaged in, combat. Demosthenes, however, sides with the ideals of the democratic *polis* by situating himself with the citizen hoplites. Meidias' stereotypically elite behavior reflected ancient conceptions of the oligarchic or tyrannical man, whose appetites were thought to be out of control.[32] Theophrastus' "Oligarchic Man" acts in a similar fashion:

> καὶ τὸ μέσον δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐξιὼν [καὶ] τὸ ἱμάτιον ἀναβεβλημένος καὶ μέσην κουρὰν κεκαρμένος καὶ ἀκριβῶς ἀπωνυχισμένος σοβεῖν τοὺς τοιούτους λόγους τραγωιδῶν . . . (Theo. *Char.* 26.4)[33]
>
> He goes out at midday and struts about dressed in his fine cloak, with his hair trimmed and his nails carefully pared, declaiming melodramatically . . .

Again, Meidias, as a paragon of elitism, overshadows the oligarchic man:

> οἰκίαν ᾠκοδόμηκεν Ἐλευσῖνι τοσαύτην ὥστε πᾶσιν ἐπισκοτεῖν τοῖς ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, καὶ εἰς μυστήρια τὴν γυναῖκ' ἄγει, κἂν ἄλλοσέ ποι βούληται, ἐπὶ τοῦ λευκοῦ ζεύγους τοῦ ἐκ Σικυῶνος, καὶ τρεῖς ἀκολούθους ἢ τέτταρας αὐτὸς ἔχων διὰ τῆς ἀγορᾶς σοβεῖ, κυμβία καὶ ῥυτὰ καὶ φιάλας ὀνομάζων οὕτως ὥστε τοὺς παριόντας ἀκούειν. (Dem. 21.158)
>
> He built such an enormous house at Eleusis that it overshadows everything else in the area, and he takes his wife to the Mysteries, or wherever else she wants to go, in a chariot pulled by two white horses of Sicyon, and with his three or four followers he clears a path through the agora, going on about "goblets" and "drinking horns" and "chalices" so loudly that those nearby can hear.

Meidias' conduct is egregious: he does not just dress up in his nice cloak; he goes about in a chariot pulled by expensive white horses. Unlike the oligarchic man, who complains loudly about the failures of the democracy, Meidias shouts only about his own wealth. Both Meidias and the oligarchic man share this form of arrogance (*huperphania*)[34] with literary tyrants, who felt pressed not only to enjoy their wealth, but also to elicit envy from their subjects and enemies.[35]

33. The text and translation is that of Diggle (2004) 140–41.

34. On the various shades of Meidias' *huperphania* (hubristic, bullying), cf. Dem. 21.83, 96, 137, 195, 199 with MacDowell (1990) 302–3.

35. Cf. Archil. 23.19–21 W and 19.1–4 W. See also Xen. *Hier.* 1.9, Hdt. 3.52.4–5, and McGlew (1993) 30–35 for a more complete discussion and other informative citations.

The elaborate ostentation shared by Meidias and the oligarchic man hints at the luxury and effeminacy indicative of the barbaric Persian monarchy and was therefore anathema to the democratic interests of the *dikastai*.[36]

Demosthenes makes Meidias' bullying a centerpiece of his argument.[37] The first word of the speech is *aselgeia* ("wanton violence"), a term with particularly anti-democratic undertones in the Demosthenic *corpus*. Of the thirteen times it appears in Demosthenes' extant works, Meidias and his gang earn the most references, five, while Conon (whose outrageous antics overlap with those of Meidias) comes in second with four. Philip's imperialism is twice called *aselgeia*.[38] Of the remaining two instances, one refers to Pantainetus' abuse of a democratic legal institution (*basanos*) in his attempt to secure a sympathetic confession (37.43)[39] and the second to the groups of citizens that, according to Demosthenes, had lately organized disruptions in the assembly (in the possibly spurious *Ex*. 21.1).[40] Meidias does not merely treat Demosthenes or his other personal enemies with insolence: he employs brutality and savagery in his plots against Demosthenes (21.80) and indeed, against the entire state (21.194). While "bullying" certainly was a general accusation hurled at the hubristic citizen, Meidias employed *aselgeia* in a fashion suited to the oligarcho-tyrannical plotter.

Similar anecdotes illustrate the tyrannical nature of Meidias' violence. Demosthenes claims Meidias is worse than a certain Ctesicles, who was convicted and executed on the grounds that he went about beating people with a whip during a religious procession:

> ἐδόκει γὰρ ὕβρει καὶ οὐκ οἴνῳ τύπτειν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς πομπῆς καὶ τοῦ μεθύειν πρόφασιν λαβὼν ἀδικεῖν, ὡς δούλοις χρώμενος τοῖς ἐλευθέροις. (Dem. 21.180)
>
> It seemed that he struck on account of *hubris*, not wine, and that he took on the excuse of being drunk at the festival so that he might treat free men as slaves.

The comparison with Ctesicles reveals the depth of Meidias' *hubris* towards both citizens and religious officials and matches that exercised by archaic tyrants:

36. Wilson (1991) 184.

37. Meidias' displays a specific type of anti-democratic βίη twice in the speech (21.44, 137); in each case the term refers to his forceful or arrogant use of violence against the state or the collected citizen body. Cf. Thuc. 1.95.1 and Dem. 10.4.

38. Meidias: Dem. 21.1, 60, 80, 88, 137; Conon: Dem. 54.2, 4, 13, 26; Philip: Dem. 4.9, 19.342.

39. Pantainetus, like Medias and Conon, also displays familiar anti-democratic attributes: he has a "gang of conspirators" (τὸ ἐργαστήριον τῶν συνεστώτων, Dem. 37.39).

40. For groups of citizens that sabotage the assembly with organized interruptions (*thoruboi*), see also Dem. 13.21, 2.39–40; in general, Tacon (2001).

Cleomenes' perversion of royal power at Sparta is most evident when he beats his fellow citizens.[41] The violence, suggests Demosthenes, constitutes *hubris* because it "treats free men as slaves," an image that echoes Aristotle's definition of tyranny: τυραννικαὶ δὲ διὰ τὸ δεσποτικῶς ἄρχειν κατὰ τὴν αὑτῶν γνώμην . . . οὐθεὶς γὰρ ἑκὼν ὑπομένει τῶν ἐλευθέρων τὴν τοιαύτην ἀρχήν ("tyranny is the despotic rule according to the tyrant's opinion . . . but no free man would willingly endure such a government," *Pol.* 1295a16–17, 22–23); ὥσθ' οἱ μὲν ἄρχειν οὐκ ἐπίστανται, ἀλλ' ἄρχεσθαι δουλικὴν ἀρχήν, οἱ δ' ἄρχεσθαι μὲν οὐδεμίαν ἀρχήν, ἄρχειν δὲ δεσποτικὴν ἀρχήν. γίνεται οὖν δούλων καὶ δεσποτῶν πόλις . . . ("So that the one class [the poor] does not know how to command and must be ruled like slaves; but the other [the rich] does not know how to obey, and can only rule despotically. So there comes about a city of masters and slaves," *Pol.* 1295b19–22). Although Medias' wealth once again plays a crucial role, a characteristic of those who "do not know how to obey, and can only rule despotically," it is his treatment of free men as slaves that parallels the perversion of proper government in Aristotle's tyranny, an unnatural projection of household affairs onto those of the state.[42] Violence, for Aristotle, is fundamental to many forms of government. But within a tyranny its nature and extent are indicative of the stability or instability of the ruler's position: total control of the means to violence achieved through deception is desirable,[43] while frequent and explicit brutality is indicative of a degraded tyranny, or the hubristic and barbaric Persian system: Meidias' actions include both.[44] Demosthenes warns the jury that Meidias "will attempt to deceive you" (βούλομαι δὲ πρὸ τούτων εἰπεῖν οἷς ἐπιχειρήσειν αὐτὸν ἀκήκο' ἐξαπατᾶν ὑμᾶς, 21.24) and that his disenfranchisement of Strato involved outright deception (21.86–87). In general, however, as our evidence for Demosthenes' characterization of the defendant becomes more specific, Meidias will take on increasingly ferocious attributes, tied to the most brutal forms of tyrannical power.

Like many archetypal tyrants, Meidias deploys a bodyguard. Plato points out that an armed bodyguard was the traditional method of tyrannical overthrow:

41. Cleomenes: Hdt. 6.75; cf. Cleisthenes of Sicyon at Plut. *Mor.* 553a-b with McGlew (1993) 68, 73. Tyrannical violence often included vengeance: according to Demosthenes Meidias struck him at the festival out of retribution, with a vindictive look in his eye; a sure sign of *hubris* (Dem. 21.72–4). On revenge as an aspect of tyranny, see McGlew (1993) 72–74.

42. *Pol.* 1252b16–17; for this perversion of natural order, cf. the power slaves and women enjoy as informants under a tyranny at *Pol.* 1312b30–40.

43. [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 15, 35–37; cf. [Arist.] *Oec.* 1349a13–24 and see Boesche (1996) 79.

44. *Pol.* 1312b21-j25 and 1313b10. Cf. [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 19, 35 and see Boesche (1996) 76–77. Aristotle (*Pol.* 1285a, 1295a) argues that the Persian king's abuse of unlimited power makes him tyrannical, precisely because of his *hubris*. Similar sentiments surrounding tyrants date at least to the fifth century; see Ferrill (1978) 391–92 on Hdt. 3.80–82 and cf. Parker (1998).

such is the means for Peisistratus' first ascent to tyranny in Athens, and Cypselus, tyrant of Corinth, is unique in that he ruled "in a kindly manner and without a bodyguard."[45] In addition to his three or four attendants, who clear a path for him in the agora (καὶ τρεῖς ἀκολούθους ἢ τέτταρας αὐτὸς ἔχων διὰ τῆς ἀγορᾶς σοβεῖ, 21.158),[46] Meidias also has a more sinister band of thugs that works behind the scenes to undermine the rights of his enemies. One of his paid lackeys, Euctemon, accuses Demosthenes of desertion (21.103), while Polyeuctus and Timocrates, part of his "gang," provide false witness in court:

> νῦν δ', οἶμαι, τούτου προβέβληται Πολύευκτος, Τιμοκράτης, Εὐκτήμων ὁ κονιορτός· τοιοῦτοί τινές εἰσι μισθοφόροι περὶ αὐτόν, καὶ πρὸς ἔθ' ἕτεροι τούτοις, μαρτύρων συνεστῶσ' ἑταιρεία, φανερῶς μὲν οὐκ ἐνοχλούντων ὑμῖν, σιγῇ δὲ τὰ ψευδῆ ῥᾷστ' ἐπινευόντων. (Dem. 21.139)
>
> Now, I suppose, he is protected by Polyeuctus, Timocrates, and that filthy Euctemon; these are his paid henchmen, and in addition to these he has got others, he has gathered together a veritable club of witnesses, who do not openly vex you, but in silence they nod assent to his lies.

These goons are described as Meidias' *hetairoi* (21.20), and part of his *hetaireia* throughout the speech. The term *hetaireia* had significant negative connotations for the jury: Athenian democrats associated them with tyrannical plots to overthrow the government.[47] Demosthenes describes Meidias' henchmen as a "*hetaireia* of witnesses," his "mercenaries," who are "deployed" "in secret" to "affirm his lies."[48] While this idea of hidden scheming reflects the Aristotelian emphasis on the importance of deception to the stability of a tyranny, the language itself matches that of a tyrant deploying his bodyguard: the verb προβάλλω can have the legal sense of bringing forward witnesses or evidence, as well as the military sense of deploying a weapon or guard for one's own protection.[49] Furthermore, mercenaries are the traditional guards of a tyrant, according to Aristotle, who contrasts the tyrant's paid foreign henchmen with the citizens who protect a noble king.[50]

45. Pl. *Rep*. 9.566b. Peisistratus: Hdt. 1.59; Cypselus: *FGrH* 90 F57.8 (see also McGlew [1993] 62). Cf. Thuc. 1.130, Hdt. 2.168, Xen. *Cyr.* 7.5.84; the generic argument outlined in Arist. *Rh.* 1357b.

46. Translation adapted from MacDowell (1990).

47. Especially so after the mutilation of the *hermai* and Alcibiades' supposed profanation of the Mysteries in 415 BCE, which at the time were connected to elite *hetaireia*: Lys. 12.55. Hyp. 4.8, Thuc. 3.82.6, 6.60.1, and 8.48.3; cf. the inscriptions on Hermias of Atarneus *SIG*^{3} 229 (= *RO* 68) and see Harris (2008) 136.

48. Conon's oligarchic friends also lie to protect one another (Dem. 54.14–37) and share a number of other physical attributes, e.g., dress, false evidence in court: Sealey (1955) 81; see Diggle (2004) 463.

49. Xen. *An*. 4.2.21 and *Cyr*. 2.3.10, 6.3.24.

50. *Pol.* 1311a4–7.

Meidias' connections with foreign dictators are distorted to reflect his supposedly tyrannical inclinations. He enjoys a suspiciously close relationship with Plutarchus, the contemporary tyrant of Eretria (21.110). In the previous section (21.109), Demosthenes combines roots (e.g., κακ-, ἀναιδ-, ὠμ-, ἀδικ-, πλου-, βλαπ-, προπηλακ-) in the manner of Galen Rowe's "*hybris* clusters"[51] to emphasize the extent of Meidias' criminal *hubris*. The extension of the characterization to include the defendant's suspicious friendship with a foreign monarch, especially one known for meddling in Athenian affairs,[52] completes Demosthenes' rhetorical strategy: Meidias' vile actions are best considered in light of his anti-democratic attitude. When Demosthenes stresses Meidias' illicit relationship with the tyrant later on, similar *hubris* roots appear: πλούσιος, θρασύς, μέγα φρονών, μέγα φθενγγόμενος, βίαιος, ἀναιδής ("wealthy, audacious, thinking big, talking big, violent, shameless," 21.201). In both cases Demosthenes uses a barrage of *hubris*-related roots paired with evidence (his suspicious friendship with a foreign monarch) meant to recast Meidias' *hubris* as that belonging to an oligarcho-tyrannical sympathizer.

This augmentation of the *hubris* cluster is more regularly expressed in Demosthenes' strategic deployment of the verb ἐπιβουλεύω, a standard Attic term for conspiratorial plotting and a key aspect of the speaker's tacit association between the defendant and any tyrannical threats to the stability of the state. Demosthenes coordinates anti-democratic terms and images with his use of the verb to add oligarchic or tyrannical undertones to otherwise general (if dreadful) hubristic actions. Meidias forms a "plot" and uses "violence" to obtain Demosthenes' inheritance through legal scheming and the help of a co-conspirator, his brother Thrasylochus: καὶ ταῦτ' ἐστὶ μὲν παλαιά, ὅμως δέ τινας μνημονεύειν ὑμῶν οἴομαι· ὅλη γὰρ ἡ πόλις τὴν ἀντίδοσιν καὶ τὴν ἐπιβουλὴν τότε ταύτην καὶ τὴν ἀσέλγειαν ἤσθετο ("and these things are old news, though I imagine some of you recall them, for the whole city heard about the *antidosis*, that plot, and their violence," 21.80). Meidias even "plots" to use "brutality" and "savagery" against the entire Athenian citizenry, as evidenced by the silent witness, Strato, whose disenfranchisement Meidias engineered because of an unfavorable ruling (21.86–88). Elsewhere Demosthenes describes Meidias as "plotting outrages" against his "whole tribe," "ten per cent of the state," along with "the very laws themselves" and "the god" of the festival (21.126), again

51. Where common roots are grouped throughout the speech for emphasis: Rowe (1993) 399–400.

52. Plutarchus was the third of a series of tyrannical revolutions in Eretria, starting with Themison (366–356). Democrats regained power, but lost control of the state again in 352 BCE to a tyrant named Menestratus, who was ousted by Plutarchus in 349 (Plutarchus himself lost power in 344/343); see Picard (1979) 240–45 and Teegarden (2014a) 133–34.

because Medias "plotted" to destroy the sacred clothing and gold crowns Demosthenes had ordered for the festival (21.16), patent expansions of Meidias' *hubris* into the sphere of anti-democratic machination and tyrannical impiety. Demosthenes even postulates that Meidias' plots are so powerful that his victims would do better to bow down in *proskunēsis*, rather than attempt any legal defense (προσκυνεῖν τοὺς ὑβρίζοντας ὥσπερ ἐν τοῖς βαρβάροις, οὐκ ἀμύνεσθαι κράτιστον ἔσται, "then I guess it is best to bow down to the oppressors, as is the custom among the barbarians, and not to defend ourselves," 21.106). The combination of hubristic terminology, anti-democratic plotting, and tyrannical imagery allows Demosthenes once again to recast Meidias as the quintessential foreign monarch.[53] Peter Wilson has already noted many of the linguistic cues Demosthenes employs to cast Meidias as anathema to democratic ideology.[54] The jarring image of average citizens honoring the anti-Athenian Meidias like an eastern autocrat would have been especially unsettling for the contemporary jury, one that already harbored innate fears of democratic overthrow.

Alcibiades, the Tyrannicides, the Laws, and Meidias

Demosthenes' *a fortiori* argument based on the *dēmos*' treatment of Alcibiades conceals a complex rhetorical strategy. Demosthenes is not wrong to argue that the *dēmos* that convicted an Athenian celebrity like Alcibiades (despite his liturgies) should not hesitate to condemn a scoundrel like Meidias (who has performed no true liturgies). Likewise the same *dēmos* should not honor Meidias with rights and privileges that they would never grant to the greatest heroes of the democracy, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, which they ostensibly would by allowing Meidias' continued actions of unrestrained *hubris*. Alcibiades and the Tyrannicides, however, should be reconsidered as points of emphasis in addition to their primary role as *a fortiori* arguments: they act as typical historical examples of aspiration towards and action against tyranny and thus are analogous to the characterization of Meidias that Demosthenes hopes to produce in the minds of the *dikastai*.

The example of Alcibiades (Dem. 21.143–47) serves a twofold function: to highlight Meidias' anti-democratic and tyrannical traits, and to evoke from the jury the militant pro-democratic psychology of the late fifth and early fourth centuries. Demosthenes' argument centers on the liturgies of the defendant. He points out that if the *dēmos* did not excuse Alcibiades from his acts of *hubris*,

53. The practice was considered shameful among the Greeks and closely associated with Persian monarchy; cf. Hdt. 1.134, 7.136 and see Harris (2008) 125.

54. E.g., "abominable" (κατάπτυστος, 21.137, 167, 171), or that Meidias would "nail his enemies to a board" (προσηλῶσθαι, 21.105); see Wilson (1991) 183–84.

then they should by no means pardon Meidias, whose liturgies are hubristic and self-serving.[55] The impact of the comparison in context also renders Meidias and Alcibiades a pair of archetypal tyrannical aspirants. Demosthenes focuses on Meidias' anti-democratic *hetaireia* throughout the speech and even implies that his acts of impiety (the destruction of the *chorēgos*' clothing) rival the desecration of the herms on account of their mutual oligarcho-tyrannical origins.[56] By claiming that his *hubris* surpasses that of Alcibiades (with specific reference to Alcibiades' alleged association with anti-democratic factions), Demosthenes implies that Meidias is a more serious threat to the state.

The reference to Alcibiades also links the mentality of the contemporary jury to that of the late fifth century democratic paranoia.[57] Demosthenes' mention of Alcibiades' ancestry (21.144),[58] his direct addresses to the jury,[59] and his claim that the fifth-century Athenians lived in the good old days (κατὰ τὴν παλαιὰν ἐκείνην εὐδαιμονίαν, 21.143) "conjured up the specter of past times," a prodemocratic, idealized past, and conflate those in the present jury with the idealized fifth century *dikastai*.[60] Because of his *hubris* the fifth-century Athenians expelled even a semi-heroic figure like Alcibiades; should not the men of the jury act as they once did in the good old days, and likewise punish Meidias for his outrages?

The rhetorical emphasis Demosthenes places on Meidias' tyrannical attributes also appears in his comparison between the honors afforded to Harmodius and Aristogeiton and the hypothetical leniency the jury could (but must not) show Meidias (21.170). If anyone had earned the right to commit wanton acts of *hubris*, Demosthenes argues, it would have been Harmodius and Aristogeiton.

55. Alcibiades glorified Athens at the Olympic games and served with distinction in the navy (21.145), while Meidias avoids military service (21.160–68).

56. Dem. 21.147, rightly called "extremely tendentious" by Wilson (1991) 182. Alcibiades was actually accused of profaning the Mysteries, not destroying the ubiquitous *hermai* (Thuc. 6.28, Andoc. 1.11); see MacDowell (1990) 363–64; cf. Harris (2008) 139, who notes that Demosthenes' imprecision may be purposeful: it "altered events to make Alcibiades' crime similar to that of Meidias." On the desecration of the *hermai* and profanation of the mysteries, see Andoc. 1, Plut. *Alc*. 18–21 and *Nic*. 13.2, Thuc. 6.27–29, 6.53, and 6.60–61.

57. On the use of Alcibiades as a rhetorical topos, see Häusle (1987–88) 124: Demosthenes' character of Alcibiades acts as "an historical example" and an "idealizing move," as opposed to the "central figure." Cf. Alcibiades' role as the model tyrant in Pl. *Rep.* 8.562a-9.573b, espoused by Larivée (2012).

58. Alcibiades' mother, not father, was an Alcmeonid (Lys. 14.39, Plut. *Alc*. 1.1); see MacDowell (1990) 358 and Harris (2008) 137.

59. E.g., 21.148, part of the shared fiction at Athens of a political *dēmos* with eternal and unchanging values; see Cohen (1995) 34–57 and Wolpert (2003) 539–40, 551.

60. Häusle (1987–88) 86, 123–27.

But the Athenian people were so opposed to *hubris*, and the excess of *hubris* which is tantamount to tyranny, that they did not even grant this power to the Tyrannicides. The speaker's concluding stress on exactly how the Tyrannicides earned their honors (ὑπὲρ γὰρ αὐτοῦ τούτου τὰς ἄλλας ἔλαβον δωρειάς, ὅτι τοὺς ὑβρίζοντας ἔπαυσαν, "for it was on account of this very thing, that they stopped those committing *hubris*, that they came to possess those other honors," 21.170) admonishes the present jury once again to act as they did in the idealized past. The direct references to his audience fuse those present in the courtroom into a timeless and static *dēmos*.[61] The comparison with Harmodius and Aristogeiton even allows the current *dikastai* to act as tyrannicides themselves, in a patriotic role-play.[62] Should the *dikastai* convict Meidias and give him the penalty he deserves (just as the descendants of Harmodius and Aristogeiton received the rewards they deserved), then they might consider their action a victory for the *dēmos* over the ever-present threat of tyrannical overthrow. As with Alcibiades, Demosthenes uses the legendary prestige of Harmodius and Aristogeiton as a clear-cut point of comparison, devoid of historical fact,[63] that has been recast to suit the exigencies of convicting Meidias the tyrant.

In his final rhetorical example, Demosthenes aligns himself with the democratic *polis* and sets Meidias against the people and the laws of the state (21.154–57).[64] The extended comparison between prosecutor and defendant concentrates on each of Meidias' liturgies and shows that Demosthenes has surpassed Meidias in his service to the *polis*, progressing finally to the most democratic of activities, feasting his tribe and contributing funding for the Panathanaia.[65] Demosthenes also claims to have led a symmory (ἡγεμὼν συμμορίας, 21.157) for ten years, while his elder Meidias[66] had never once

61. As outlined in Wolpert (2003): speakers cast the *dikastai* as participants in democratic movements in which they could not have participated, but are included nonetheless, i.e., the condemnation of Alcibiades (21.141–47) and the honoring of the Tyrannicides (21.170).

62. Cf. Ober (2003) 220 on Ar. *Lys.* 631–34.

63. Cf. Demosthenes' distortion of Alcibiades' crimes at 21.147 to better suit his comparison with Meidias. As for the Tyrannicides, Herodotus (5.55–57) and Thucydides (1.20.2, 6.53.3–6.60) cast doubt on the popular opinion that the assassination led directly to democracy.

64. Cf. Dem. 21.1, 13–14, 28, 106, 133, 176, 189, 198, 213, 215–17; see Wilson (1991) 180–87 on the conflation of Demosthenes' physical body with that of the democracy, as well as the citizens themselves.

65. Dem. 21.155: trierarch; 21.156: chorus producer; 21.157: chorus producer at the Panathanaia, leader of a symmory. Demosthenes' liturgies are not only more substantive, they are more democratic; see Wilson (2000) 156–67 on "just how intimately linked the *chorēgia* as an institution was to the most fundamental concerns of the democratic polis-society."

66. On the *eisphora*, the symmories, and Demosthenes' payments, see MacDowell (1990) 375. The textual crux that arises concerning Demosthenes' age fits the speaker's argumentation: it was

done so. Furthermore, Meidias' paltry liturgies were only performed under compulsion of property exchange (ἐξ ἀντιδόσεως, 21.156). Demosthenes presents himself as an Athenian democrat without equal.

Besides shirking his responsibilities to the state in the form of liturgies, Meidias harasses and terrorizes the whole citizen body. Such was the individual experience of Strato (21.86–88) and even the entire jury at his first trial,[67] where Meidias insulted the assembly by insinuating they were deserters, choral-dancers, and foreigners, and even threatened violence:

> εἰς γὰρ τοῦτο θράσους καὶ ἀναιδείας τότ' ἀφίκετ', ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, ὡς ἴσασιν ὅσοι παρῆσαν ὑμῶν, ὥστε κακῶς λέγων καὶ ἀπειλῶν καὶ βλέπων εἰς τὸν ἀεὶ θορυβοῦντα τόπον τῆς ἐκκλησίας καταπλήξειν ᾤετο τὸν δῆμον ἅπαντα. (Dem. 21.194)
>
> For he approached such insolence and shamelessness at that time, as those of you who were there know, that speaking evilly and threatening and glaring at those areas of the assembly that had shouted out, he intended to strike down the whole assembly.

Demosthenes stresses the pervasive threat Meidias poses by pairing his *hubris*-specific terminology (θράσους καὶ ἀναιδείας, καταπλήξειν) with decidedly anti-democratic behavior, intensified by the inherently democratic setting of the assembly.[68] If Demosthenes acts as the Athenian citizen par excellence, then Meidias is an oligarcho-tyrannical enemy of the democracy, who undermines the operation of the democratic assembly through threats and violence. Demosthenes even goes so far as to suggest outright that men such as Meidias might gain control of the state: should Meidias and his cronies assume power, no democratic citizen would be safe, but would instead be subject to arbitrary prosecution and humiliating treatment (21.209–11). This diametric portrayal underscores Demosthenes' personification of the laws (21.187–88 and 21.223–25), which act as his allies against Meidias' wealth and *hubris*.

Thus Demosthenes claims that, in response to the ineffective gathering of Meidias' crying children, he will gather the *nomoi* to his side (21.188). This transparent appeal to patriotic emotion reimagines Demosthenes' legal action as one pursued in the interests of and supported by the traditions of the democracy. Furthermore, because the Athenians owe all their rights to the laws (καὶ πάνθ' ὅσ' ἔστ' ἀγάθ' ὑμῖν διὰ τοὺς νόμους ἐστίν, "and everything you have which is

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likely a lie meant to emphasize the disparity between the liturgies each has performed; see Harris (1989) 121–25.

67. The *probolē* procedure; Demosthenes equates those citizens with the present jury at 21.1–2; see Wilson (1991).

68. Dem. 21.197, 203–4; cf. also 132–35.

good comes from the laws," 21.188), Demosthenes is defending them from their archetypal enemy, the hubristic tyrant Meidias who undermines the legal institutions of the democracy.[69] Meidias literally becomes the enemy of the laws, the very definition Demosthenes employs when discussing Philip: βασιλεὺς γὰρ καὶ τύραννος ἅπας ἐχθρὸς ἐλευθερίᾳ καὶ νόμοις ἐναντίος ("for every king and tyrant is the enemy of freedom and the laws," 6.25). Demosthenes' suit against Meidias is a liturgy in and of itself, not performed as part of an elite feud, or even as protection for himself from a hubristic enemy, but rather as a defense for the people of Athens from an out-of-control aristocrat. The speech began with just such an image, where Demosthenes selflessly campaigns on behalf of the democracy: πολλοί μοι προσιόντες, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ δικαστηρίῳ νῦν ὄντων ὑμῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πολιτῶν ἠξίουν καὶ παρεκελεύοντ' ἐπεξελθεῖν καὶ παραδοῦναι τοῦτον εἰς ὑμᾶς ("many came forward, men of the jury, even some of those now present in the courtroom and many others, and asked and begged and called upon me to bring this man to justice before you all," 21.2).[70] Demosthenes' opponent becomes a figure familiar from Athenian literary tyranny: the dangerous monarch intent on the destruction of the democracy and the enslavement of Athens.

Conclusion

If the *Against Meidias* is to continue as a primary source for explorations of *hubris* in Athenian society, then researchers and students alike must be aware of the extent to which Demosthenes' language and rhetorical examples misrepresent Meidias to fit a preconceived concept of Greek tyranny.[71] Demosthenes himself was aware that this tactic of overblown accusations and insinuating vocabulary could be effective, and although he employed it at will, he nevertheless criticized his contemporaries for doing so. Thus he comments on the clumsy use of similar fear mongering among his fellow speakers:

> ἀνέῳξαν δήπου πρώην τινὲς τὸν ὀπισθόδομον. οὐκοῦν οἱ παριόντες ἅπαντες τὸν δῆμον καταλελύσθαι, τοὺς νόμους οὐκέτ' εἶναι, τοιαῦτ' ἔλεγον. καίτοι, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, (καὶ σκοπεῖτ' ἂν ἀληθῆ λέγω) οἱ μὲν ταῦτα ποιοῦντες ἄξι' ἐποίουν θανάτου, ὁ δῆμος δ' οὐ διὰ τούτων καταλύεται. πάλιν κώπας τις ὑφείλετο: μαστιγοῦν, στρεβλοῦν πάντες οἱ λέγοντες, τὸν δῆμον

69. Cf. the peroration (21.223–25).

70. Many Athenians shared Demosthenes' troubles with Meidias; cf. 21.75, 129, 137, 159.

71. Few scholars note Demosthenes' reliance on Athenian apprehension concerning the security of the democracy; see MacDowell (1990) 37 and cf. Wilson (1991) and Fredal (2001), who consider Meidias' anti-democratic behavior in greater depth. On the importance of familiarity with a case's legal background, see Todd (1990) 175.

> καταλύεσθαι. ἐγὼ δὲ τί φημί; τὸν μὲν ὑφαιρούμενον θανάτου ποιεῖν ἄξια, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνοι, τὸν δῆμον δ᾽ οὐ διὰ τούτων καταλύεσθαι. (Dem. 13.14)[72]
>
> You know that a day or two ago the back room [of the Parthenon] was broken into. So all the speakers in the Assembly cried out that the democracy was overthrown, that the laws were no more, and these sorts of things. And yet, Athenians, though the culprits (and you will see that what I say is true) deserved death, it is not on their account that the democracy is endangered. Again, some oars were stolen: "Whip them, torture them," all the orators shouted; "the democracy is dissolved." But I say, just like the others, that the thief deserves death, but not that the democracy is endangered on account of this.

Demosthenes presents himself as a measured speaker and a reasonable, moderate Athenian who would not engage in the kinds of popular hysteria that undermine or endanger the normal functioning of the democracy. In a similar derogatory passage from the *Against Meidias* Demosthenes anticipates that his opponent will level the same sort of accusation at himself: that he is an orator (καὶ ῥήτωρ ἐστὶν οὗτος, 21.189) whose use of rhetoric will exaggerate the gravity of the current legal action. The term "orator" (ῥήτωρ) has negative implications, as the contrast Demosthenes draws in the same passage between himself and those speakers he later calls "shameless" (ἀναιδεῖς, a term semantically tied to Meidias' *hubris*) implies. Demosthenes even counts himself among the democratic citizenry when he contrasts his blameless rhetoric with that employed by less scrupulous speakers (ῥήτωρ ἐστὶν οἵους ἐνίους τῶν λεγόντων ἐγὼ καὶ ὑμεῖς δ᾽ ὁρᾶτε, "the orator is one of those speakers you and I see speaking out," 21.189). The entire section (21.189–92) strives to distance the speaker from exactly the type of rhetoric in which he was engaging and that which he cites in 13.14.

Three years after the *Against Medias*, Aeschines accused Demosthenes of just such deplorable tactics: ἐνεχείρησε δ᾽ ἀπεικάζειν με Διονυσίῳ τῷ Σικελίας τυράννῳ, καὶ μετὰ σπουδῆς καὶ κραυγῆς πολλῆς παρεκελεύσαθ᾽ ὑμῖν φυλάξασθαι ("he [Demosthenes] tried to compare me with Dionysius, the tyrant of Sicily, and afterwards urgently and loudly he called upon you to defend yourselves against me," Aesch. 2.10).[73] Aeschines corroborates the tyrannical fear-mongering found in the *Against Meidias,* including the patriotic call to arms, that is, that the jury could fight alongside the Tyrannicides

72. Greek text quoted from Butcher (1903).

73. The comparison is not found in Demosthenes' edited speech. I owe many thanks to my colleague Jeff Yeakel for bringing this citation to my attention.

in defense of the democracy by convicting Meidias or Aeschines. Not only was Demosthenes conscious of this particular strategy, but by the 340s it had become a weapon in his rhetorical arsenal.

Demosthenes applied his anti-democratic bogey-man[74] to the forensic courtroom in the *Against Meidias*. Meidias pays off his supporters like mercenaries in a manner similar to that exercised by other Demosthenic tyrants, including Philip.[75] In the first *Olynthiac* Demosthenes argues that friendship with Philip had (by the late 350s) earned the Olynthians little more than the prospect of slavery (ἀνδραποδισμοῦ, 1.5); like Philip Meidias is a *hubristēs* who "treats free men as slaves" (21.180). According to Demosthenes both Philip and Meidias are duplicitous, scheming, and immoral: Philip turned on his allies who helped him capture Amphipolis and Pydna (1.5);[76] Meidias feigned friendship with Aristarchus while publicly accusing him of murder (21.116–22) and will attempt to deceive the *dikastai* (ἐξαπατᾶν, 21.24). Demosthenes repeats this strategy when lambasting Charidemus in the *Against Aristocrates*. To show Charidemus deserved none of the honors proposed by Aristocrates, Demosthenes claims he is a treacherous man (23.126–28) ready to give up his professed friends (in this case the Athenian people) for the advancement of his own political career. Charidemus is considered parallel to a certain tyrant Philiscus who began to occupy and terrorize Greek cities. Should the tyrannicides who killed Philiscus (Thersagoras and Execestus) face execution without trial? They would, Demosthenes argues, under Aristocrates' law protecting Charidemus (23.141–43). To vilify Charidemus Demosthenes compares his political career with the tyrant Philiscus, and finds their choice of lifestyle to be quite similar (23.141).

The depiction of Meidias as a tyrant matches the invective strategy Demosthenes later used to great effect in his *On the Crown*. In his analysis of the speech, Cecil Wooten notes a striking overlap between Demosthenes' picture of Philip, and the conspiratorial threats to American sovereignty broadcast by the

74. The foreign king in the Athenians' midst, ready to strike at the heart of the democracy, was fundamental to Demosthenes' political speeches against Philip. See Worthington (2000) 94, referring to Alexander's campaigns outside Greece (citing Dem. 8.2, 14, 18, 60 and 9.6–19): " . . . without an actual Macedonian king active in Greece, Demosthenes was perhaps robbed of the one thing he needed to make his fiery oratory work."

75. Meidias: Dem. 21.139; Philip: Dem. 6.21–25; cf. Dem. 23.142 on Philiscus; Arist. *Pol.* 1311a4–7.

76. He put them to death despite promises of leniency, lest they betray him as well; see Trevett (2011) 33. For Philip's deceptive tactics, cf. Dem. 9.10–14 and 2.6–7.

purveyors of Hofstadter's paranoid style.[77] Meidias, like Philip, fits Wooten's paranoid paradigm because Demosthenes treats him as a similar tyrannical threat to Athens. Demosthenes sees Meidias as the head of a "gigantic yet subtle machinery of influence set in motion to undermine and destroy a way of life," when he emphasizes his treacherous band of goons and elite companions, and calls him an enemy of the people and the laws themselves. [78] Meidias, like Philip, is "a plotting genius who can only be stopped by concerted state action," hence a public suit is necessary, as opposed to a private one (both of which were plausible options following the initial *probolē* procedure).[79] The fight between Demosthenes and Meidias pitches "absolute good" against "absolute evil" and is reimagined as "a confrontation of opposed interests which are (or are felt to be) totally irreconcilable and thus by nature are not susceptible to the normal processes of bargain and compromise," so Demosthenes fails at every turn to settle his feud through traditional legal means.[80] Meidias, like Philip, is "cruel, sensual, luxury loving, and possessed especially effective techniques for fulfilling his desires." Finally, Philip, the single greatest threat to Athenian sovereignty in the fourth century, apparently availed himself of the same devious weapons found in Meidias' arsenal: "money, treachery, and secrecy."[81]

University of Miami t.hendren@miami.edu

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77. Embodied in the rhetoric of various paranoid political parties in the United States, such as the anti-Mason, anti-Catholic, and anti-Communist movements; see Hofstadter (1965) 7–10. Quotes are taken from Wooten (1979) 325 and Hofstadter (1966) 29–40.

78. Dem. 18.29; 21.139, 187–88.

79. Dem. 21.28, 176; any citizen who opposes Meidias risks disenfranchisement (e.g., Strato at 21.88; cf. 209–211). On the *probolē*, see Harris (2008) 80.

80. Dem. 18.39 and 21.187–88, 223–25; cf. the failure of arbitration at 21.83–95.

81. Dem. 18.34; 21.24, 98, 133, 138–39, 158.

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