THE "SECULAR" IMAGE:
THE TYRANNICIDES AND THE CREATION OF THE POLITICAL MONUMENT IN DEMOCRATIC ATHENS

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Master of Arts in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Lincoln Thomas Nemetz-Carlson, B.A.

* * * * *
The Ohio State University
2007

Masters Examination Committee:
Dr. Nathan Rosenstein, Adviser
Dr. Greg Anderson
Dr. Anthony Kaldellis

Approved by

Adviser
Graduate Program in History
ABSTRACT

At some point during the last decade of the sixth century, public statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were erected within the Athenian Agora. The commission of this monument to the so-called Tyrannicides was exceptional in multiple respects. These statues seem have been the first public portrait sculptures in Greece without any traditional religious, funerary or votive function. Furthermore, the murder that this monument commemorated evidently had a negligible effect on both the removal of the Peisistratids and the foundation of democracy. After first explaining how these men could have received such an honor, this thesis looks into the specifics surrounding the creation of this new political monument in an attempt to explain how the novel use of statuary was incorporated into Athenian society.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I first want to thank my parents, who know that I may never spend my entire life trying to save the world as they have, but have supported me unquestionably in every decision I have ever made. I can firmly say without bias that they are the two greatest people I have ever known.

I would like to thank Annie for, quite simply, keeping my life together. She has somehow found time in the middle of Medical School to proofread every one of my papers and remove colloquialisms.

I thank Professor Greg Anderson for assisting me in the research and composition of this paper from its very inception.

Lastly, I want to extend a very special thanks to my professors and friends, Art and Kosta, for changing the way I thought about the ancient world, higher learning and, most importantly, myself.
VITA

September 11, 1981......................Born – North Adams, Massachusetts

2004..................................B.A. History (Departmental Honors),
Classical Philology (Departmental Honors),
Latin American Studies Minor, Beloit College

2004..................................Teaching Assistant, Dartmouth College

2004 – present.........................Graduate Teaching Associate, The Ohio State
University

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract................................................................................................................................... ii
Acknowledgments.................................................................................................................... iii
Vita.............................................................................................................................................. iv
List of Figures............................................................................................................................... vi

Chapters:

1. Introduction.......................................................................................................................... 1

2. Historiography..................................................................................................................... 6
   2.1 The Slaying that Made the “Slayers”: The Truth Behind the Tyannicides Legend.............. 6
   2.2 The Tyannicides Statues: Unlocking Antenor’s Original Vision......................................... 18

3. Arguments............................................................................................................................. 24
   3.1 Hero Cult, the Tyannicides and Patrios Nomos................................................................. 26
   3.2 Athletes and their Statues................................................................................................. 38
   3.3 Sixth-century Aristocratic Power Struggles and Cultural Innovation................................. 42
   3.4 Adaptation of Religious Symbols and the Response of the Community............................ 48

4. Conclusions.......................................................................................................................... 53

Appendix: Figures....................................................................................................................... 55

Bibliography............................................................................................................................... 59
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Antenor’s Kore</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Roman Copies of the Tyrannicides of Critios and Nesiotes</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Oinochoe Fragments of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In an article on Greek political monuments, Tonio Hölscher begins his survey with a discussion of the Tyrannicides statues that were erected in the Agora soon after the foundation of Athenian democracy in 508/7 B.C.:

This was the first truly political monument in Greece, without any religious function in the sense of cult or votive practice . . . Familiar with the monuments of Washington, Garibaldi or Bismarck that furnish our modern squares, we find it difficult to imagine what an unprecedented act the erection of this one was: neither cult statues nor votive dedication to a deity nor sepulchral statues, they did not belong to any traditional category of sculptures.¹

If what Hölscher alleges is true, both the creation and erection of the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton represent a dramatic transition from the past. Here for the first time in Athenian history, the complicated political meanings behind public artwork were openly presented without any religious façade. The great lengths to which politicians, tyrants, and civic leaders previously went in order to conceal their messages in traditional mediums were completely and suddenly disregarded. It would have been nothing less than a revolution in the way the art of sculpture was employed in the civic arena.

But how do we account for this paradigmatic shift? As powerful and emphatic as Hölscher’s comments are, he seems generally uninterested in trying to explain why or how such a revolution in the use of artwork and the nature of public monuments could have taken place. For Hölscher, the reforms of Cleisthenes, the landmark piece of legislation that brought about popular rule, created a sphere of politics and the novel statues were created as an outward expression of a new political identity.\(^2\) Democracy created new political realities, and thus new corresponding artistic forms were created as well. It is almost as if the fact that this secular, ideal-inspired monument was an anomaly, not only in Athens but in the entire Greek world, needs no explanation: the oddity of the statues is rationalized by the oddity of the very thing they represented.\(^3\)

It is tempting to accept this answer. In the aftermath of the democratic reforms of 508/7 B.C., Athens saw many social and cultural innovations. These reforms profoundly altered not only the forms of government but also the mindset of the individuals who lived in Attica at that time. Consequently, it would be easy to attribute every one of these transformations to the advent of democracy, isonomia, and popular rule. If the Athenians could invent a complicated new style of government, with its complex tribal reorganization and geographic integration, then surely they would have been able to concoct novel ways of promoting such a system.

---


\(^3\) Hölscher (1998) 155, states that political monuments were invented to “create and strengthen political and social identity.” This may well be true, but this explanation lacks a discussion of just how political monuments came about. Although Hölscher (1998) 157-8, does suggest the *tropaion* as a forerunner to the political monuments, he does not show how they evolved into or how they were connected with the Tyrannicides.
There are objections to this line of thinking, however, which should give us pause before accepting Hölscher’s explanation for the Tyrannicides statues. The idea that democracy alone was responsible for this particular innovation in public sculptural artwork suggests that Athens was previously in a cultural vacuum. Before 508/7 B.C., Athens had a long political history and deep-rooted artistic practices, and although democracy introduced many changes, it certainly did not wipe the slate clean. In the search for the impetus behind cultural innovation, it is crucial to realize that democratic Athens was not chronologically or geographically sealed off from outside influences.

There is another flaw in this line of reasoning. Although it may be unintentional, Hölscher’s comments quoted above are somewhat misleading. When Hölscher moves from the portraits of Harmodius and Aristogeiton to those of Washington and Bismarck, he implies that the practice of monumental political image-making began with the Tyrannicides and continued without interruption down to the modern era. In reality, the Athenians would not erect another public portrait statue of a recent historical figure in Athens until the fourth century.¹ If the new system of government truly allowed its backers the freedom to experiment with new power symbols, such as a public portrait models, it would seem that this experimentation both began and ended with the Tyrannicides monument.

Rather than accept this internal model, we need to broaden our search for the origins of these statues beyond the years of democracy, the late sixth century, and even beyond Athens itself.

¹ Demosthenes 20.70. The eminent Conon was the next recipient of this honor after Harmodius and Aristogeiton.
While the composition of the statues, their symbolism, and their function within the framework of the democratic program have been thoroughly discussed in academic literature, there has been very little scholarship about the origins of these statues. In light of the small amount of available information, it is not hard to see why. Indeed it is surprising that we know so very little about the Tyrannicides statues, given the apparent importance they had in democratic Athens. The few sources that mention the monument all indicate the immense significance of these portraits. Demosthenes states that Harmodius and Aristogeiton were the only Athenians to be honored in sculpture during the entire fifth century.  

Pausanias testifies that two different Tyrannicides statue groups still stood side by side in the Agora over 600 years after they were originally erected. And the Marmor Parium tells us that as early as two years after the Persians plundered the original statues, Athenians were busy commissioning, designing, and erecting their replacements while these same citizens allowed the remaining monuments of the city to lie in ash and rubble for the next 30 years.

Despite the prominence of the Tyrannicides, some of the most basic details about the original sculptures are unknown. We cannot say for certain when the original statues were erected, who was behind their commission, or even what Antenor’s Tyrannicides looked like. As with many of the details surrounding those early days of democracy, scholars searching for answers are hindered on two fronts. Not only is the last quarter of

---

5 Demosthenes 20.70.
6 Pausanias 1.8.5.
7 Sture Brunsåker, *The Tyrant-Slayers of Kritios and Nesiotes* (Håkan 1955) 35, 84-86. The Marmor Parium (FgrH 239 A54) states that the new monument was dedicated during the Archonship of Adeimantos or the year 478/477 B.C.
the sixth century obscured by the profound lack of source material, but we also must contend with the Athenians' manipulation and misunderstanding of their own history.

As a result, much of this thesis paper will be devoted to a wide range of issues concerning both Athens and Greece in general. The second chapter of the thesis will attempt to separate the truths about the statues and their subjects from the convoluted tradition that surrounds them both. In the third chapter, the thesis will venture into what has long been one of the most difficult questions facing ancient historians: how exactly does one explain change in such a traditional society? In an attempt to understand this complex interplay between pатрис номос and cultural innovation in Greek society, I will propose four possible ways by which these novel statues could have been integrated into the civic life and consciousness of Athens. Although these discussions of hero cult, aristocratic power struggles, athletic victor monuments, and adaptive practice might not lead to definitive answers, the process of examining these possibilities will hopefully yield positive results. Hölscher is correct in noting that Western societies have employed this type of portrait sculpture to commemorate great political actors and thereby to advance a wide spectrum of ideologies. It therefore seems crucial to look for some sort of explanation behind this innovative shift in Greek art as it first became employed for secular, political uses.

---

8 The paper will look at the statues in connection with such diverse topics as Archaic Greek politics, the origins of the Tyrant Slayers legend, the reign of the Peisistratids, the foundation of democracy, the invention of the Athenian state funeral, the cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton and the phenomenon of hero cult in general, and the architecture of early democracy. Some readers, looking for a straightforward analysis of Athenian statuary, might be put off by this indirect approach. But due both to the paucity of source material and to the immense importance of the surrounding cultural, political, and social setting, this simply cannot be helped.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORIOGRAPHY

This section will attempt to piece together, within the context of the late sixth-century Athens, tidbits of information about the Tyrant Slayers themselves and their commemorative statues. With these few facts and the important works of the scholars who have searched for answers about the Tyrannicides, I hope to provide the necessary framework to address how two homicidal lovers were honored with statues that, aside from eventually coming to represent the Athenian character itself, changed the very way public sculpture was employed.

2.1 - The Slaying that Made the "Slayers": The Truth Behind the Tyrannicides Legend

No examination of the Tyrannicides statues can begin without first disentangling the confusing and often contradictory tradition surrounding the Tyrant Slayers themselves. According to later tradition, the tyrannical rule of Athens, which Harmodius and Aristogeiton were credited with ending, was a relatively new phenomenon. In two separate failed attempts, an Athenian aristocrat named Peisistratus tried to seize power in 561/60 and 556/55 respectively, only to be rebuffed and exiled from the city. On his

---

10 The reader should keep in mind that the term "tyrant" here, a translation of the Greek tyrannos, or sometimes tyrannis, which means a sole leader, does not have the same negative connotations which our modern usage implies and should not be construed as such. This will be explained in more details later.
third attempt, in 546/45, Peisistratus returned to Athens with a large private army and established himself as the dominant force in Athenian politics. He remained so until his death in 528/7, at which time his power passed to his two sons, Hippias and Hipparchus.

Despite the fifth-century praise heaped on Harmodius and Aristogeiton for ending Athenian tyranny, recent scholarship suggests that the reign of Peisistratus was hardly despotic. Though Peisistratus's immense wealth and access to armed men undoubtedly made him the most powerful man in Athens, he and his family shared power with the city's most prestigious families through alliances. A partial list of Archons from the time of the Peisistratidai shows that members of rival families often served in the most powerful positions of government during the tyranny. Even Cleisthenes the Alcmeonid, the man credited with convincing the Spartans to expel the Peisistratids and thereafter designing in their absence a democratic system of government for Athens, served as an Archon during the 520's.

The cooperation of elite families and the benevolent rule of the Peisistratids would not last. Regardless of the goodwill that the ruling family had built up for themselves through public works projects and their promotion of arts and literature, the fortunes of the Peisistratids would soon change dramatically. At the center of the calamitous events which began this reversal of fortune were two lovers: Harmodius and Aristogeiton.

---

Not much is known about the two men who would later be called the *tyrannoktonoi* besides the mismanaged murder of Hipparchus that gave them their title. The only information we have about them which is not related to their infamous deed is that both men belonged to the same clan, the Gephyraioi, whom Herodotus alleges were of Phoenician descent and had immigrated to Athens after being exiled from Boeotia.\(^1\) Because Herodotus and Thucydides gave accounts, we do, however, have a surprisingly detailed picture of events surrounding the murder itself.

Harmodius, the younger of the pair, was apparently quite good looking and attracted the attention of Hipparchus.\(^2\) After Harmodius twice rejected the advances of the Peisistratid, Hipparchus tried to take revenge before the Panathenaic festival of 514 B.C. In Thucydides's narration, Hipparchus insulted Harmodius's sister, whom he had formerly invited to be a basket bearer in the festival procession, by revoking his invitation and calling her unfit for the task. In the version by Herodotus, Hipparchus, who had seen his death foretold in a dream the previous night, wisely did not tempt fate by offending anyone before the procession.\(^3\)

According to Thucydides, the slighting of his sister upset Harmodius, who went to his lover (*erasist*) Aristogeiton. Already angered by Hipparchus’s overtures, Harmodius found this fresh insult intolerable. Aristogeiton and Harmodius agreed to murder both Hippias and Hipparchus later that day.\(^4\) The would-be killers later saw Hippias

---

\(^1\) Herodotus 5.55, 5.57.1-2; Michael Taylor, *The Tyrant Slayers: The Heroic Image in Fifth Century B.C., Athenian Art and Politics* (New York 1981) 10. Taylor points out that the Gephyraioi were politically active into the late third century.

\(^2\) Thucydides 6.54.2-3.

\(^3\) Herodotus 5.56.1-2.

\(^4\) Ibid.
conversing before the procession and assumed he had been alerted to their scheme.18 The pair then focused instead on Hipparchus, whom they murdered in the Agora beside the Leocorion. Harmodius was killed immediately after, presumably by Peisistratid bodyguards, while his partner Aristogeiton was captured later and “died no easy death.”19

When the dust had settled, Hippias remained alive, and his family continued their leading role in Athens for four more years after his brother’s death. The Peisistratid domination of politics ended only when the Spartans, at the urging of the Delphic Oracle and the Alcmeonid family, invaded Athens and forcibly removed Hippias in 511/10. So did Harmodius and Aristogeiton actually kill the Tyrant, as their title would suggest?

Herodotus was the first to point out that Harmodius and Aristogeiton, despite their fifth-century reputation as tyrant slayers, did nothing of the sort.20 A generation later Thucydides also discussed the inaccuracy of the Tyrannicides legend, not once but twice, despite writing his history on an all-together unrelated topic.21 Thucydides spilled so much ink trying to debunk the myth of the Tyrant Slayers, that Lorenzo Valla, when translating his text into Latin during the fifteenth century, thought the historian must have been a descendent of the Peisistratids.22 The efforts undertaken by these historians to correct the misnomer shows that by the end of the fifth century, Harmodius and

---

18 Thucydides fails to say why Hippias was targeted as well, but the sad ending of the story seems to indicate their motives. Based on Hippias’s response to the assassination and their eventual deaths, it seems that the pair were correct to include Hippias in their plot. This would imply that the lovers knew full well that this murder would cost them their lives, since they could not kill Hipparchus and avoid Hippias’s revenge.
20 Herodotus 6.123.2.
21 Thucydides 1.20.2, 6.54-57.
Aristogeiton were widely regarded as the killers of both the Tyrant himself and tyrannical rule in general. This is firmly supported by a plethora of fifth-century evidence which suggests that the pair were wildly popular in Athens.\(^{23}\) The reputation of the Tyrannicides was due in great part to an intentional manipulation of the historical tradition. For reasons that will be reviewed below, the state tirelessly promoted Harmodius and Aristogeiton as the men behind the expulsion of the Peisistratids and eventually as the founders of democracy.

A century after the act itself, the prominent public statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton would have reinforced the reputation of the pair as tyrant slayers. But in order to erect the statues in the first place, the legend must have already been conceivable. It is hard to believe that the state would have been able to advance a legacy that was completely disconnected from reality. The statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were most likely erected within fifteen years of the murder.\(^{24}\) An understanding of how such a tradition could have been accepted by the residents of sixth-century Athens, many of whom had personally witnessed the events in question, is very important to our conception of the Tyrannicides statues. If the Athenians did not in some respect believe that Harmodius and Aristogeiton had done something admirable or worthy of praise, the statues would have been nothing short of a joke.

---


\(^{24}\) See below.
Of course, these statues were not a joke. They were a prominent feature of the new civic center and an important tool for shaping Athenian ideology. Therefore any investigation into the origins of these statues must first reconcile the accounts of Herodotus and Thucydides with the honors bestowed by the portraits. While Herodotus demonstrated that the murder did not immediately remove tyrannical rule from Athens and Thucydides revealed the motives of Harmodius and Aristogeiton to be anything but political, one can glean even from these cynical accounts how the Tyrannicides tradition, and by extension the statue group, was at least feasible.

Thucydides presents evidence that Hippias was the oldest Peisistratid and therefore the only brother to hold power. Looking to get beyond the cluttered oral tradition that had formerly led the Athenians astray, Thucydides turns to epigraphic evidence in an attempt to determine the birth order of Peisistratus’s children. After the expulsion of the Peisistratids, the Athenians erected a stele atop the Acropolis, on which were engraved the names of the Peisistratids who were exiled from Athens for their injustices (adikia). While the pillar showed the names of five of Hippias’s children, there were no offspring attributed to Hipparchus or their other brother, Thessalus. For Thucydides, this seems to be ample proof of Hippias’s primogeniture, but this evidence is hardly conclusive.

Even if we accept that Hippias produced five adult offspring to Hipparchus’s none, this does not necessarily mean he was the elder of the two. Procreation in ancient Greece rarely held to steadfast rules. With infant mortality rates in ancient Greece as

\[\text{\textsuperscript{25} Thucydides 6.55.1-2.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.}\]
high as 35%, a list of children who lived to adulthood tells us surprisingly little about
one’s age.\textsuperscript{27} Hipparchus’s childless status could have been due to any number of factors-
-from a wife’s (or wives’) premature death(s) to his own sterility. Furthermore, the only
thing we know about Hipparchus’s personal life—his reckless pursuit of young
Harmodius—does not portray him as family man with an interest in progeny. There are
too many questions here to accept the list of names on the stele as determinative evidence
of Hippias’s identity as the older brother and therefore the ruler.

Thucydides does offer another argument that Hippias was in fact the Tyrant. The
historian insightfully notes that if Hipparchus were the dictator, it would have been
difficult for Hippias to establish his power on the very day of the murder.\textsuperscript{28} Indeed, in
Thucydides’s account Hippias is shown rounding up suspects and commanding men
almost immediately after his brother’s death.\textsuperscript{29}

Then again, there might be another explanation for this which, perhaps due to the
perception of tyranny and the Peisistratids during his time, Thucydides was unable to
consider. The Greek term tyrannos denotes specifically the rule of one man. Although
by the end of the fifth century, tyranny was beginning to take on a negative connotation
more in line with our modern usage, the term originally designated “a variety of sole rule
with different origins and characteristics,” as Rauflaab puts it.\textsuperscript{30} By the second half of

\textsuperscript{27} For more information, see: Cynthia Patterson, “‘Not Worth Rearing’: The Causes of
Infant Exposure in Ancient Greece,” Transactions of the American Philological
Association 115 (1985) 103-123.
\textsuperscript{28} Thucydides 6.55.3.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid 6.58.1-2.
\textsuperscript{30} Rauflaab (2003) 60. Rauflaab claims that the distinction between basileia and
tyrannis, respectively denoting good and bad forms of monarchy, first occurs in
the fifth century, clearly people were questioning whether Harmodius and Aristogeiton had really killed the Tyrant. However, neither Herodotus nor Thucydides thought to question if, technically speaking, Hippias (or Hipparchus) was a tyrannos at all.

For Thucydides, this sort of analysis may not have been possible. When he describes the accomplishments of the Peisistratid "turannoi," he names several things that were administered by the Athenian state during Thucydides' own time--namely taxing the public, building monuments, making the proper sacrifices, and carrying out war. In his mind, Thucydides has seemingly conflated the state and the tyrant and thus ascribes all the powers of the state to the Peisistratids. As a result, he is interested in finding out which one of the two sons was the eldest and thus had inherited the position of tyrannos and the complete and formalized control over the state that came with it.

Recent scholarship has begun to question not only this depiction of the Peisistratid tyranny, but also our view of Archaic Greek tyrants in general. In his article "Before the Turonnoi Were Tyrants: Rethinking a Chapter of Early Greek History," Greg Anderson has demonstrated that Thucydides' view of sixth-century tyranny shares little in common with the politics of the Archaic Age. By the late fifth century, Athenians came to view past tyrants as extra-legal autocrats who imposed their complete authority over a preexisting constitution—rulers, for example, such as Dionysius of Syracuse. But

Thucydides. While this may be true in some cases, Thucydides, 6.54.5, specifically refers to the Peisistratids as tyrannoi in the midst of praising them as just leaders. 31 Thucydides 6.54.5. 32 Anderson (2005). 33 John Salmon, "Lopping off the Heads? Tyrants, Politics and the Polis," in The Development of the Polis in Archaic Greece, eds. L.G. Mitchell and P.J. Rhodes (London 1997) 61-2. This would explain why Thucydides ascribes all the powers of the state to Peisistratus.
Anderson points out that the weak Archaic institutions of government would not have allowed Peisistratus to control his rivals through the state. Working within the law, Peisistratus accumulated this de facto power through unconventional means in the unregulated political landscape.\textsuperscript{34}

If we accept that, in sixth-century Athens, "Tyrant" was not a firmly established position to be passed on to an eldest son, these new conclusions call into question a vital piece of Thucydides's argument. Thucydides insisted that, because of the authority he wielded directly following his brother's death, Hippias must have been the proper Athenian Tyrant at the time. But since this authority was merely de facto, one could argue that Hipparchus would have wielded the same sort of power if Harmodius and Aristogeiton had struck his brother down first. The elements that made the Peisistratid domination of Athenian politics possible—such as wealth, command of armed men, and political alliances—were not invested in one sovereign individual as Thucydides assumed. Instead, these things belonged to the family and thus all of the sons of Peisistratus had access to them. Hippias's ability to wield power was not due to an autocratic position but rather to his family's leading position in Athens.

Regardless of their respective ages, both brothers must have wielded some degree of power. And if these men truly did accumulate political capital by sponsoring monumental building,\textsuperscript{35} then the historical record indicates that the Peisistratids were more interested in spreading the wealth among each other than in building up the prestige

\textsuperscript{34}Anderson (2005) 214.
\textsuperscript{35}The fact that Thucydides compliments them in this respect shows how public building projects could advance the reputation of a family to such an extent that not even a century of government-sponsored mudslinging could lessen such achievements.
of one member. The name of Hippias’s son, also called Peisistratus, was inscribed on both the Altar of Pythian Apollo and on what might have been the most significant monument built under the Peisistratids, the Altar of the Twelve Gods in the Agora.\textsuperscript{36} The herms, which were set up all over Attica to mark distances from this altar, were attributed to Hipparchus. Clearly members of the first family shared these symbols of power if not the ability to initiate building projects themselves.

Although up to this point scholars seem to have been more comfortable accepting Hipparchus as a trouble-making little brother than as a co-regent, the evidence indicates that Hipparchus played a significant role in maintaining his family’s claim to power. Michael Taylor, who has written perhaps the most extensive account of the Tyrannicides tradition, describes the “effete” brother as a “\textit{bon vivant} and patron of the arts, a man whose position and natural inclinations made him something a good deal less than a mainstay of the tyranny.”\textsuperscript{37} But as Osborne has pointed out, supporting the arts was one of the many ways the Peisistratids kept themselves in the public eye and gained prestige among elites from Athens as well as the rest of Greece.\textsuperscript{38} Art patronage did not reflect a distraction from wielding power, as Taylor suggests, but a keen interest and investment in political capital for one’s family.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{36} Thucydides 6.54.7.
\textsuperscript{37} Taylor (1981) 2; Mark Fullerton, \textit{Greek Art} (Cambridge, UK 2000) 46, describes Hipparchus as “ineffectual.”
\textsuperscript{38} Osborne (1996) 283.
\textsuperscript{39} Alan Shapiro, \textit{Art and Cults under the Tyrants in Athens} (Mainz 1989) 3. Shapiro neatly divides the responsibilities of the two, speculating that Hippias was “responsible for governing the city” while Hipparchus was a “Minister of Culture.” Due to his portrayal of the “tyranny” as a monarchical regime, however, Shapiro’s analysis does not seem tenable. Shapiro (1989) 3, suggests that Hippias and Hipparchus fit Polybius’s description of those who inherit monarchical powers and indulge in extravagance and
There is another piece of evidence which points to the importance of Hipparchus to the Peisistratids’ control of the political system. In the year following Hipparchus’s death, 513 B.C., the exiled Alcmeonids gathered a force at Leipsydrion and made an unsuccessful attempt to unseat their rival family as the dominant clan in Athens. 40

Though they were defeated in armed conflict, the timing of the coup attempt may be significant. We can be fairly sure that Cleisthenes, who was undoubtedly one of the most prominent Alcmeonids, was behind this attack. After all, when Hippias was finally expelled three years later, it was Cleisthenes’s bribing of the Delphic Oracle that set the events in motion. Cleisthenes had served as Archon in the 520’s and therefore must have been thoroughly familiar with the Peisistratids to secure such a position. Perhaps the Alcmeonid knew that Hipparchus was an important part of the Peisistratid power structure and therefore perceived his death as an opportunity to strike. Although this is

even states that, “It may not, then, be utterly inappropriate to speak of the ‘court’ of the Peisistratids.” After claiming that Peisistratus came to power after “years of struggle and the deployment of his considerable resources,” Shapiro (1989) 3, draws a line between the relatively modest tastes of the father and those of his sons who “had grown into middle age amid immense wealth and privilege.” This depiction is problematical in several respects. Besides the obvious criticism that the latter description of the sons could also be applied to almost every other political figure in the ancient world, it is puzzling why Shapiro thinks that corrupting elements produced these unspecified luxurious habits not during their formative younger years (“after knowing adversity in their youth”) but in middle age. In no place is it ever indicated in the sources that the brothers engaged in regal excess (unless one counts Hipparchus’s supposed advances to Harmodius, as Shapiro does). As we have seen above, the alliance of Cleisthenes and the focus on art shows that the sons worked hard to maintain their family’s position. It is difficult to say where Shapiro and others (Taylor 1981) get this picture of Hippias and Hipparchus as spoiled and irresponsible Bourbon princes. After all, it was not ostentatious displays of wealth or mismanagement of the state that brought down Hippias, but the force of the Spartan army. Even the patriarch Peisistratus, for all his resourcefulness, could not have fended off such an overpowering foreign military threat. 40 Osbourne (1996) 285.
purely speculation, it is hard to believe that someone as politically astute as Cleisthenes would plan an opportunistic attack in the aftermath of an insignificant brother’s death.

In light of these new conclusions about the nature of Athenian “tyranny,” we are now better able to understand how Hipparchus’s murder might have been later misconstrued as a “Tyrant Slaying.” While it is clear that Hipparchus was not a Tyrant, it is equally apparent that Hippias probably not an autocratic leader. Both men, regardless of age, were members of the leading aristocratic family in Athens and mutually exerted their influence on the city and its residents. Due to the similar roles these men played, the portrayal of Harmodius and Aristogeiton as *tyranoktonoi* and the honor bestowed by the sculpture group is not as irrational as Herodotus would have us believe.

There might be another, more logical explanation for the small kernel of truth behind the illogical Tyrannicides tradition. According to Thucydides, before Hipparchus’ death the Peisistratid family was decidedly inoffensive. Yet after his brother’s death, Hippias began executing citizens out of fear (*dia phobou*) and also began looking for marriage alliances with other Tyrants in order to strengthen his position.\(^{41}\) Whether this account of a reign in a sort of chaos bears any resemblance to the truth, we cannot say, though one could hardly blame Hippias for his paranoia. In the last years of his reign, the Peisistratids had to fend off not only the attack from the Alcmeonids but four separate assaults from the Spartans.\(^{42}\) In the years directly following Hipparchus’ death a series of tumultuous events occurred, which culminated in the Peisistratids’ leaving town. As Castriota points out, it would not have been hard for an Athenian to see Harmodius and

\(^{41}\) Thucydides 6.59.2-3.

\(^{42}\) Osborne (1996) 292-3.
Aristogeiton at the head of this sequence.\textsuperscript{43} And if the Alcmeonid attacks were inspired by a perceived vulnerability of the Peisistratids due to Hipparchus’s death, then this connection may have had some substance.

Despite whatever small bits of truth lay behind the legend of the Tyrant Slayers, we can be fairly confident that, just as Herodotus and Thucydides told us 2500 years ago, Harmodius and Aristogeiton were not responsible for expelling the Peisistratids from Athens. But the creation of the statues also indicates that the Athenians of the sixth century must have been able to connect the murder of Hipparchus with the fall of the Peisistratidai. An understanding of how this connection was possible is therefore essential for reconstructing the creation of the statues. Before we can look for answers behind its origin, we must first establish some basic facts about the Tyrannicides monument on which we will ground our discussion.

2.2 - The Tyrannicides Statues: Unlocking Antenor’s Original Vision

Josiah Ober has called the question of dating the Antenor statues “unanswerable.”\textsuperscript{44} Indeed the paucity of evidence makes dating the monument extremely challenging and the lack of a scholarly consensus on this issue illustrates its elusiveness. For obvious reasons, it is clear that the piece was not commissioned before the Peisistratids were exiled, and thus we are able to set the year 510 B.C. as the very earliest


18
date for the statues’ creation. Likewise, the abduction of the sculpture group by the Persians in 480 B.C., offers a definitive terminus ante quem. We know for a fact that the statues were made sometime during the intervening period of 30 years, but little else can be said with certainty. Yet, despite Ober’s pessimism, the evidence does suggest some very strong probabilities.

The only literary source to explicitly give a date for the first statue group is riddled with its own set of problems. In his *Natural History*, Pliny the Elder claims that Antenor’s original group was erected in the Agora in 509 B.C.\(^{45}\) The fact that Pliny, writing more than 500 years later, identifies a date that perhaps too coincidentally corresponds to the expulsion of the Kings from Rome raises some doubts to its validity. Still, some scholars have endorsed this date. Taylor points out that the date fits nicely with the historical events of the time, as it seems likely that the statues appeared shortly after Hippias was forced into exile.\(^{46}\) Fornara humorously states that, “not even Pliny would be simple enough to synchronize statues of Athenian Tyrannicides with the same year *quo et Romae reges pulsi* for the poetry of it.”\(^{47}\)

While Fornara is probably correct in noting that Pliny probably did not change the date himself, it is more than a suspiciously coincidental date which makes his account suspect. Brunnsäker has shown that Pliny’s description of the statues contains several

\(^{45}\) Pliny, *NH* 34.17.


\(^{47}\) Charles W. Fornara, “The Cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton,” *Philogus*, Band 114, Heft 3/4 (1970) 157, n. 19. Despite the efforts of the ancient historians, Fornara advocates in this article, albeit unconvincingly, that Harmodius and Aristogeiton were true Tyrant Slayers because Hipparhus was the proper Tyrant. As we have seen earlier, this sort of discussion now seems outdated with our new understanding of the Peisistratid power structure and it therefore does not seem worthwhile to spend time critiquing the specifics of Fornara’s argument.
“grave errors” which cannot be attributed to the errors of medieval scribes.\(^48\) Pliny mistakenly attributes the statues to two different artists, Antignotus and Praxiteles, who lived over a century after his 509 B.C. date.\(^49\) Although Brunnsåker eventually accepts Pliny’s date due to lack of further evidence, the political situation of Athens during that year suggests that the Roman was probably mistaken.

If the statues were truly created in 509, then they would have been erected amidst the politically unstable years following Hippias’s departure. During this time Cleisthenes the Alcmeonid, who had successfully bribed the Pythian oracle to convince the Spartans to remove the Peisistratids, was trying to collect on his investment. A political rival named Isagoras, however, stood in his way.\(^50\) Isagoras developed ties with the Spartans when they removed Hippias and he eventually called on their King, Cleomenes, to help exile Cleisthenes as well.

Castriota has insisted that the monument could not have been commissioned in the volatile era before Cleisthenes’ reforms of 508/7.\(^51\) Due to the fact that the statues downplayed the role of the Spartans in expelling the tyrants, they could not have been built until after Isagoras was exiled in 508/7 when a “leaderless mob” forced him and the Spartans out of Athens.\(^52\) Given the very public nature of the monument, Castriotia appears to be correct in dating the origin of the statues to sometime after 507.

\(^{48}\) Brunnsåker (1955) 43.
\(^{49}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{50}\) Herodotus 5.56-5.69.
\(^{51}\) Castriota (1998) 206-207. Castriota makes a plausible case that the statues were primarily an anti-Spartan monument.
\(^{52}\) For more details and an interesting take on this event see: Josiah Ober, “The Athenian Revolution of 508/7 B.C.: Violence, Authority and the Origins of Democracy,” in *The
The identity of the artist also would seem to indicate that the Tyrranicides were made sometime in the last decade of the sixth century. Pausanias identifies original statues as having been made by the artist Antenor.\textsuperscript{53} whose only known work is dated around 520 B.C.\textsuperscript{54} The base of a \textit{kore} (Acropolis Kore 681), dedicated by the potter Nearchos on the Acropolis, attributes the votive statue to Antenor (see Figure 1).\textsuperscript{55} On the basis of this \textit{kore}, scholars have subsequently credited a sculpture on the East Pediment of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi to Antenor as well. Since the renovations of the temple were initiated and paid for by the Alcmeonids, it generally has been assumed that it was Cleisthenes who chose Antenor to make the Tyrranicides statues and that somehow Cleisthenes was behind their commission.

Reconstructing the appearance of the Antenor statue group is especially complicated because those sculptures were replaced soon after they were created. During the sack of Athens in 480/479 B.C., the original statues were plundered by the Persians and taken to Persia.\textsuperscript{56} The artists Critios and Nesiotes were chosen to construct a new


\textsuperscript{53} Pausanias 1.8.5; Mario Rausch, \textit{Isonomia in Athen: Veränderungen des öffentlichen Lebens vom Sturz der Tyranntis bis zur zweiten Perserabwehr} (Frankfurt, 1999) 41-42, views the identification of Antenor as the artist as "unbestritten" (incontestable). Siting also the Nearchos statue found on the Acropolis that bears Antenor's name, Rausch dating original statues as having been created in the late sixth century.

\textsuperscript{54} Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, \textit{The Archaic Style in Greek Sculpture} (Princeton 1977) 206-10; Fullerton (200) 45, endorses the circa-520 date and claims that the dedication of such a large and finely crafted votive by an artisan illustrates a "dissemination of aristocratic values to the more prosperous of the working class"; J.J. Pollitt, \textit{The Art of Greece 1400-31 B.C.: Sources and Documents} (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1965) 33, gives the years 510-500 as the date for Antenor's \textit{kore}.

\textsuperscript{55} Rausch (1999) 41.

\textsuperscript{56} It is unknown whether the statues were in Susa or Babylon during their captivity before being returned by Alexander or one of his generals.
group to replace the stolen one. The replacement monument was commissioned quickly, it seems, as the Marmor Parium dates this new group to the archonship of Adeimantos, or the year 478/477 B.C. Though we have Roman copies of these dramatic sculptures, constructed in a new severe style which had begun to take shape in the 480's (see Figure 2), it is unlikely that Antenor's work would have resembled the replacements.

No doubt the best clue about the appearance of the original statues must be comparison with Antenor's known work. Pausanias' description of the originals as "archaios" implies that they were somehow different from their stylistically-striking successors. It would be hard to believe, however, that the style of the statues differed greatly from the kore attributed to Antenor. Based on this, and upon contemporaneous styles in Athenian sculpture, we can assume that the original Tyrannicides statues were either typical kouroi or closely resembled this type of sculpture.

Most of the kouroi and korai statues produced before the artistic advances of the early fifth century are extremely similar in their form, style, and design, yet they seem to have had multiple uses and meanings. This paradox has troubled scholars looking into the role of these statues and led to some very different interpretations about how the kouroi were employed. After years of debate over what exactly these generic statues signified, scholars seem now to agree that kouroi were used for a wide variety of

---

57 Pausanias, 1.8.5., only identifies Critios as the artist, while Lucian, Philopseudes 18, says that the replacement statues were made by Critios and Nesiotes. It is probable that Critios sculpted the model, while Nesiotes (or his workshop/foundry) was in charge of the complicated bronze casting process.

58 Brunsdacker (1955) 84-86.

59 Pausanias 1.8.5., "tous archaios epiōsen Antenor."

purposes. The sculptures could be used malleably as funerary markers (sema) or memorials (mnema); they could represent Apollo; or they could be set up in a sanctuary as votive offerings to a god or hero.⁶¹

The issue whether the original Tyrannicides statues were just kouroi or had some individualized features seems to be generally insignificant. What is important is that they were supposed to depict these two recently-deceased individuals and that there was most likely an inscription saying as much. According to Hölscher, the revolutionary aspect of the original statues was not their style but their function (or lack thereof) and subject.⁶²

The Antenor statues did not represent a leap in the style of art and neither did the version by Critios and Nesiotes. The former group just happened to be abducted after the Classical style of statuary had taken hold of the Athenian art community; thus its replacements had the good fortune of being created in a refreshing and visually-arresting new style. Now let us move forward to discuss how this dramatic change in function may have come about.

---

CHAPTER 3

ARGUMENTS

In his account of Roman society under Augustus, Karl Galinsky attempts to clarify the weighted term “propaganda” so often associated with the Princeps.63 Bemoaning the many definitions of the term as well as its carelessly ubiquitous usage, he points out that the only thing people seem to agree on is that propaganda attempts to influence people.64 And in this respect we can safely say that the Tyrannicides statues, from their inception, were indeed propagandistic. Although we are unsure of the exact messages the original statues were supposed to convey, it is certain these statues were meant somehow to influence the thoughts of those who saw them in the Agora.

Yet, as Galinsky points out, there is more to propaganda than intention. In order to further refine this definition, Galinsky quotes Foulkes, who notes that the power of propaganda lies in “its capacity to conceal itself, to appear natural, to coalesce completely and invisibly with the values and accepted power symbols of a given society.”65

63 Karl Galinsky, Augustan Culture: An Interpretative Introduction (Princeton 1996) 39-40. Perhaps due to the influence of Syme, the term ‘propaganda’ has been used to describe nearly every aspect of Augustus’s cultural program. As a result, Galinsky is almost forced to deal with this loaded term. His discussion is both illuminating and relevant to our study.

64 Ibid 40.

In other words, propaganda involves an interplay between those promoting a message and those whose minds it is supposed to influence. Political leaders are obliged to comply with societal norms in order to champion their political system or regime. If leaders of a traditional society choose to nakedly endorse themselves without the trappings of time-honored media, they run the risk that their message will be rejected or ignored.

The Athenians understood this well. Despite the state's tireless promotion of their radical democracy, the Athenians were surprisingly conservative in depicting their recent achievements in monumental arts. As Castriota notes, "Athenians were reticent about celebrating the democratic constitution by direct visual artistic means; for much of the Classical period, they evidently preferred the more indirect approach." As part of this "indirect approach," the Athenians of the fifth century chose to conceal their propaganda within a sculptural and monumental program that emphasized the mythical past over the historical one. Instead of fighting Persians at the Battle of Marathon in hoplite armor, the Athenians represented on the Parthenon fight Centaurs, Amazons, and Giants in the nude. In fact, fifth-century Athenian monumental sculpture is so wrapped up in allegory that scholars still debate the political meanings of the works. It is only towards the end of the fifth century, almost 100 years after the reforms of Cleisthenes, that Athenians

---

66 Boedeker (1998) 186-7, gives a good summary of the debate between David Francis, who believes that the mythical scenes on the Parthenon all correspond to specific historical events, and other scholars, such as Hölsher, who think the scenes are much more symbolic (self vs. other, order vs. chaos, etc.).
became more comfortable in depicting historical figures and in erecting monuments which openly celebrated *demokratia*.

If we accept Hölscher’s claim that the statue group was an unprecedented political monument, this is clearly at odds with Foulkes’s definition of propaganda. While the Antenor statues might have adhered to the artistic conventions of the day, their function was anything but traditional. Unlike a coin or a pediment, public commemorative statues of historical figures would not have been an established power symbol and thus would have lost much of their potential to persuade. What are we to make of this?

This section will explore the question of how such a blatant public display of ideology could have been incorporated with good effect into the workings of a traditional society. But before we look at this, I want first to suggest an intriguing scenario that has yet to be proposed by scholars—the idea that the Antenor statues, rather than defying cultural norms, actually had a concrete religious function.

3.1 - Hero Cult, the Tyrannicides and *Patrios Nomos*

As Shapiro has noted, almost every event surrounding the expulsion of the tyrants and the foundation of democracy has an element of religiosity. Hipparchus was killed near the Leocorion, a hero shrine, during the Festival of Athena, yet the fall of the tyranny only came about with the help of the oracle Apollo at Delphi who also approved

---

68 *Ibid* 187-88. The monumentalized depictions of recent historical events are first attested to in the friezes of the temple of Nike. Built sometime in the 420’s, the artwork on the temple might represent historical battles with the Persians and even the fresh conflict with the Spartans.

69 Shapiro (1994) 123.
Cleisthenes’s tribal reorganization. It is no surprise then that Cleisthenes and his supporters, in the promotion of their reforms, advanced the legacy of the Tyrannicides through the use of traditional hero-cult worship.

Compared to our knowledge of the statues bearing their likenesses, little is known about the cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. The date for the foundation of the Tyrannicides’ hero cult is unknown, but it is generally assumed that the cult was instituted shortly after Hippias was sent into exile or sometime during the last decade of the sixth century.  

Although it might seem odd that these members of the community were given honors comparable to legendary heroes such as Heracles and Theseus so soon after their deaths, the Greeks had little problem creating new hero cults in order to serve political needs. In perhaps the most famous example, Thucydides tells how the citizens of Amphipolis buried the recently deceased Brasidas “pro tes nun agoras ouses” and then sacrificed to him as a hero. In fact it seems that Athenians saw no real difference between the Tyrannicides and legendary heroes. In fifth-century vase painting, Theseus was often shown in the pose of Harmodius from the Critios and Nesiotes statue group and many have noted how their iconographies often blended together during this period.

---

70 Ibid.  
71 Taylor (1981) 21, who views the role of the Tyrannicides as founders of a new polis, places the formation of the cult around 510.  
73 Thucydides 5.11.1. One suspects this must have been especially hard for Thucydides to accept.  
74 H. Alan Shapiro, “Religion and Politics in Democratic Athens,” in The Archaeology of Athens and Attica under the Democracy: Proceedings of an International Conference celebrating 2500 years since the birth of democracy in Greece, held at the American
The creation of a hero cult to the Tyrannicides would have been an ideal way to celebrate the pair, as hero cults seem to have been immensely popular in Athens during this period. In search of names for his ten new tribes, Cleisthenes is said to have submitted 100 names of heroes to the Pythia at Delphi from which to choose. The fact that Cleisthenes had available the names of 100 heroes, all probably recipients of cult activity, has led Garland to speculate that hero cults were more popular in Athens than anywhere in Greece at that time.

Our only reference to the cult of the two heroes in question comes from Athenaios Politeia, in which we learn that it was the duty of the Polemarch to administer sacrifices to the cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. The word used for sacrifices in the Ath. Pol., enagismata, first attested in Herodotus, indicates a specific sacrifice for a dead hero. It is unclear from the sources, however, what making an enagisma actually involved. Commonly, though by no means exclusively, hero-cult activity in Athens, as well as Greece in general, was centered around the tomb or remains of the hero.

---


77 Ath. Pol. 58.1. This same information is later given by Pollux, 8.91, but is thought to be excerpted from the Ath. Pol.; Taylor (1981) 20.
78 Gunnel Ekroth, The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults (Liège 2002) 83-85. Herodotus, 2.44, in his discussion of the double cult of Heracles, states that people sacrifice to him as an Olympian (thyein) and also as a hero (enagizein), thus pointing out the difference between the two.
Pausanias, the only literary source to testify to the existence of such a tomb, mentions that Harmodius and Aristogeiton were buried along the road to the Academy.\textsuperscript{79} If Pausanias is correct in his identification of the tomb, as most scholars assume, this would place their tomb within the Demosion Sema, the public cemetery in the Ceramicus.

This presumed location of the tomb corresponds with the strong connection the Tyrannicides had with the military and war dead during the fifth and fourth centuries.\textsuperscript{80} As the \textit{Ath. Pol.} has attested, it was the Polemarch, the military archon, who was in charge of arranging the funeral games \textit{“tois teleteutekoin en toi polemos”} and also of sacrificing to the Tyrannicides.\textsuperscript{81} Loraux was the first to show that the state cared for the descendents of the Tyrannicides much as it cared for those orphaned by war.\textsuperscript{82} The sacrifice to the cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton is thought to have been conducted during the annual funeral rights encompassed by what Thucydides's Pericles famously called \textit{“patrios nomos”}.\textsuperscript{83}

While these practices may have been preformed during the time of Aristotle, studies of the Demosion Sema and the culture surrounding the state funerals indicate that such was not always the case. In his landmark article “Patrios Nomos,” Jacoby first demonstrated that the public cemetery in the Ceramicus (and the extensive funeral rituals

\textsuperscript{79} Pausanias 1.29.15.
\textsuperscript{80} Bruno Currie, \textit{Pindar and the Cult of Heroes} (Oxford 2005) 95.
\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Ath. Pol.} 21.6. The Polemarch might have originally been the commander of the army, but this most likely ended in 488/7 when the Athenians made this position, as well as those of the other archons, chosen by lot.
\textsuperscript{82} Loraux (1986) 26-7.
\textsuperscript{83} Taylor (1981) 23.
which took place within it) was a fifth-century invention rather than an ancestral tradition.\textsuperscript{84} Loraux dates the creation of the state funeral ten years earlier than Jacoby, around the year 475 B.C., yet the 470’s remain the very earliest date for the origin of these customs.\textsuperscript{85}

Along with funeral games and speeches, the passage from the \textit{Ath. Pol.} indicates that the Polemarch’s yearly sacrifice was a part of the newly-invented \textit{patrios nomos}. The practice of the Polemarch sacrificing to a cult did not begin until after the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C. The ritual was created when the commander at the battle was put in charge of administering the honors to the cult of the \textit{Marathonomachoi}.\textsuperscript{86} The \textit{enagisma} to the Tyrannicides intentionally imitated the honors given to the dead of Marathon and therefore could not have been performed in this manner until after the Persian Wars. In fact, it is likely that the characterization of Harmodius and Aristogeiton as self-sacrificing soldiers originated during the culturally innovative period following the Persian Wars.

It not hard to see how the Persian Wars could have produced this association between Tyrannicides and the war dead, particularly those who had fallen at Marathon. In 490 B.C. the Athenians had prevented the Persians from restoring Hippias who had accompanied the Persians in their attack on Attica. The Peisistratid alliance with the Persians meant that, in a sense, Harmodius and Aristogeiton and the hoplites at Marathon

\textsuperscript{86} Jacoby (1944) 47.
had fought a common enemy. After the Wars, the Athenians heavily promoted the idea of the honor and distinction of dying for the state, as exemplified by the creation of the state funeral and public cemetery. This too would have led to a strong link in the public mind between the Tyrannicides and those Athenians who had died in battle.\textsuperscript{87}

While the First Persian War might have planted the seeds for such an association, the abduction of the Tyrannicides statues during the Second Persian War secured it.\textsuperscript{88} The bold statues erected in their place would forever remind the citizens what had happened to the original portraits. As Ajoon has astutely observed, “When Kritios and Nesiotes set up their replacement group, its meaning would have been even more charged with political implications, since the original memorial had been stolen by the Persians. The new pair struck out at local despots, at the Medes themselves, or at those who sided with them.”\textsuperscript{89} This description illustrates not only how the new statues might have reflected and reinforced the connection between the dead of the Persian Wars and Tyrannicides, but also how the replacement group could have even created this association.

The evidence suggests that the military connotations of the Tyrannicides and the yearly sacrifice to their cult by the Polemarch were part of the many innovations of the

\textsuperscript{87} Rausch (1999) 61.
\textsuperscript{88} It is unclear why the Persians took the statue group. Perhaps they assumed that the statues had some sort of prominence due to their placement within the Agora. Regardless of the intentions of the Persians, the theft probably seemed premeditated to the Athenians and they might not have been wrong. It is possible that Xerxes knew about the significance of the Tyrannicides and purposefully abducted the statues as a favor to the Peisistratids.
470’s. For some modern scholars, these factors would point to a later foundation date for the cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, and this reassessment might be justified. It is certainly easier to argue that the cult was the responsibility of the Polemarch from its inception than to explain why the procedures of the cult were altered.

But if one thing becomes evident from examining the mythology and traditions surrounding the Tyrannicides, it is that from the moment Harmodius and Aristogeiton died, the significance, symbolism, and function of their images in the public consciousness of Athens were constantly changing. Many different regimes co-opted the legacy of the Tyrannicides, and it is conceivable that Cimon did the same in the 470’s when the Polemarch was put in charge of the preexisting cult. We must also remember that the Tyrannicides were given heroic honors similar to those for men who had died in war. Yet they were not explicitly considered part of the war dead, and their cult evidently remained separate. This might testify to the preexistence of the cult.

If the cult truly dates to the time of Cleisthenes rather than the time of Cimon, we need to explore its activities during the thirty years between these eras. This period may be the key to determining the origin and function of the original Tyrannicides statues. Instead of being erected as a secular political monument, the statues in the Agora--the traditional site of Greek hero worship--may originally have been used for hero-cult activity.

Supposing Harmodius and Aristogeiton were buried in the Ceramicus, as Pausanias suggests, it is likely that their *enagismata* were conducted there. There seem to be some serious doubts, however, about the authenticity of the two men’s presumed grave. The Tyrant Slayers had died forty years before the formation of the Demosion
Sema and six years before the reforms of Cleisthenes even made the idea of a public cemetery possible. Jacoby suggested that Harmodius and Aristogeiton might have been buried in a separate tomb in Athens, where sacrifices were made to them, then symbolically moved to the new resting place in the Demosion Sema.\(^90\) In this case, someone other than the Polemarch, perhaps a member of the Gephyraioi clan, administered the sacrifice before the duty was taken over by the Archon.\(^91\)

This scenario, however, seems unlikely. After they completed their daring murder, Harmodius was immediately killed rather unceremoniously by a vengeful Hippias while Aristogeiton was executed at a later date.\(^92\) In light of the especially cruel ways in which they were executed, and of the terror that he reportedly inspired even after their deaths, it is unlikely that a grieving Hippias would have afforded his brother’s murderers a dignified burial.\(^93\)

Even if Hippias had been civil enough to allow their families to inter the murderers, he would not have allowed these two partners to be buried together. Their joint tomb would have celebrated the murder of Hipparchus and been a strong anti-Peisistratid symbol, much as the statues would later serve these purposes. As

---

\(^90\) Jacoby (1944) 50, n. 64.
\(^91\) This is pure speculation and it should be regarded as such, but I want to propose an idea: what if the Athenian state essentially paid off the descendents of the Tyrannicides with special privileges in exchange for the right to control the cult? If the state had officially recognized Harmodius and Aristogeiton as fallen soldiers, its next step would have been to give them the sort of honors equivalent to the other war dead. Both allowing the descendents of the Tyrannicides to dine on the dole (like the orphans of war) and including their sacrifice among the “\textit{patrios nomos}” would have followed such a solemn declaration. Perhaps the state accorded these privileges, which included the best seats at the theater (\textit{proedria}) and exemption from liturgies (\textit{atelia}), in compensation for the cult.
\(^92\) Thucydides 6.57.4.
\(^93\) Taylor (1991) 6-7.
Thucydides’s narrative shows, Harmodius and Aristogeiton were killed at separate times.\textsuperscript{94} This too would have hindered the possibility of being buried together. Given these factors, as well as the overwhelmingly coincidental resting place, it seems clear that both men were not originally buried together in the Ceramicus.

It is possible that the bones of the Tyrannicides were somehow recovered specifically to construct a tomb among the Athenian war dead. As strange as this might sound, there seems to be a precedent of exhuming the remains of Athenian heroes during this period. In 475 B.C., Cimon led a mission to Skyros in order to bring back the bones of Theseus.\textsuperscript{95} In the case of this mythical hero, the bones of “Theseus” (or whomever those relics once belonged to) were used to arouse Athenian patriotism. Perhaps the remains of the Tyrant Slayers experienced a similar discovery and burial during the 470’s, following what looks to be a trend, in order to include their tomb in their cemetery of Athenian heroes.

But, as always, actuality is probably much less exciting than a story about the serendipitous rediscovery of lost relics. In all likelihood, the Tyrannicides’ “grave” in the Ceramicus was more akin to the tomb of Solon than to the heroon of Theseus with its mysterious Skyrian bones. Aelian identified Solon’s tomb as being located in front of the Dipylon Gate.\textsuperscript{96} Although there are conflicting stories about the location of Solon’s

\textsuperscript{94} Thucydides 6.57.4.
\textsuperscript{96} Aelian, VH 8.16. Unless we are willing to except that public burial could be dated back to Solon’s time, we should, following Clairmont (1983) 8, assume that this was a cenotaph.
remains, they were certainly not in that tomb.\textsuperscript{97} As in Solon’s case, the most feasible explanation is that there were no bones of Harmodius, Aristogeiton or any other stand-in where Pausanias claimed the Tyrannicides were buried. The grave marker was probably only a cenotaph.\textsuperscript{98} Despite the lack of remains, this site still could have been used for cult activity starting in the 470’s. In her extensive study of hero cult in Attica, Kearns states, “Heroes could be worshiped even when their bones were thought to be elsewhere.”\textsuperscript{99}

Recently, Mario Rausch has proposed that the sacrifices to Harmodius and Aristogeiton originally took place near the statues in the Agora before the construction of the tomb.\textsuperscript{100} This suggestion is both plausible and intriguing. Without the physical remains of the two heroes, the Athenians could have celebrated the Tyrannicides in proximity to the site of their memorable deed. If this was in fact the case, the statues must have played some role in sacrificial rituals, and it would be logical to assume that this was the original function of the group.

The creation of statues without any traditional religious or funerary function must have come after 480 when the Persians abducted the original bronzes. Although the tomb in the Ceramicus was probably constructed around this time and the sacrifice to the

\textsuperscript{97} Plutarch, \textit{Solon} 32, who cites Aristotle, claims that Solon’s ashes were spread over Salamis.

\textsuperscript{98} Clairmont (1983) 3, suggests that the Tyrannicides’ tomb possibly was a cenotaph as well.

\textsuperscript{99} Emily Kearns, \textit{The Heroes of Attica} (London 1989) 3. Granted, worshiping the hero without his remains would have been abnormal, but significantly less anomalous than putting up a statue with no funerary, cult, or religious function.

Tyrannicides was incorporated into the funeral rituals, the Athenian government would have been compelled to replace the missing statues in the Agora even though they lacked a specific function. As we have seen, post-Persian Wars Athens was a society that was inventing unique ways of celebrating the polis. The erection of the first secular portrait statues would seem to correspond better with the innovations of this period than with the state-sponsored emphasis on continuity and tradition during the end of the sixth century.\textsuperscript{101}

Finally, though this might be an intriguing possibility, it simply cannot be corroborated by the available evidence. This scenario raises more questions than our sources can answer. Without a firm date for the cult’s foundation, we cannot connect the statues to any sort of sacrifice or cult activity, even though it might seem tempting to do so. But whether or not we accept the idea that the Antenor statues had a traditional religious function, the cult of Harmodius and Aristogeitón remains crucial to our understanding of the statues.

Contemporary research indicates that the special designation of the “cult statue” itself may not be valid. Alice Donahue has recently challenged our strict modern

\textsuperscript{101} For arguments concerning the government’s emphasis on continuity in the emerging world of early Athenian democracy see: Anderson (2003). Anderson has argued that the early champions of the reforms of Cleisthenes promoted the idea that democracy was an ancestral Athenian tradition rather than a new invention. In the last decade of the sixth century, the unique and novel nature of Athenian democracy was minimized, suppressed and contorted by its leaders. According to this state-sanctioned view, it was the tyrants who had interrupted the natural flow of Athenian history, and it was the new regime that restored traditional society.
categorizations of ancient Greek statuary. The classification of cult image (image de culte, Kultbild) defines those statues that were the recipients of cult activity as opposed to those images which were not. Yet, as Donahue illustrates, this sort of terminology is a modern construct and the fact that there is no corresponding term in Greek proves that the Greeks themselves did not make such a distinction. While we may not be ready to disregard these scholarly terms just yet, Donahue’s work is a fair reminder that the Greeks did not classify statues in terms of their function. Although there seems to be discernable patterns in the ways statues were employed, the division of sculpture into votive, cult, and funerary categories would have been a foreign concept to the Athenians.

Perhaps attempting to connect directly the statues and the cult misses the point. While they might not have been technically attached to cult activity, there can be no doubt that the statues were meant to evoke traditional hero-cult statues. Nigel Spivey claims that the Tyrant Slayers, despite being portrait statues, were given a costume of what he calls “heroic nudity.” And although he is referring to the Critios and Nesiotes edition, the same description could probably apply to Antenor’s statues as well. Even if the Antenor statues did not receive sacrifices, their placement in the Agora and their “heroic nudity” would have suggested that these men were equivalent to legendary heroes. Regardless of their function, these statues primarily served to confer hero status

---

103 Ibid 33-4.
104 I agree with Donahue’s main point, but I am not convinced that we should abandon all modern categorization of cult statues. Categorization, although messy and clouded by our own biases, still is extremely useful to the study of Greek art.
105 Spivey (1996) 114-5. This refers to the fact that Harmodius and Aristogeiton were not actually naked when they killed Hipparchus and thus the nudity is a costume.
upon Harmodius and Aristogeiton, with or without *enagismata*. As the next section will show, this sort of “hero-izing” treatment of athletes appears to have been occurring elsewhere in Greece around the time of the Antenor statues.

3.2 - Athletes and their Statues

Towards the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the fifth century, there is some evidence that poleis were dedicating statues of contemporary athletes in their respective Agoras. Pausanias attests to multiple statues of early-fifth-century victors, such as the famous sculpture of Theagenes of Thasos.\(^{106}\) An Olympic victor in 480 and 476,\(^{107}\) Theagenes was given the honor of a portrait statue in the Agora. But when his statue fell on and killed a man who had been flogging the sculpture, it was convicted of murder and thrown into the sea. Soon afterwards Thasos experienced a famine and the Delphic Oracle suggested that the Thasians should recover the angry statue. Fortunately, fishermen rediscovered the statue of Theagenes and it was restored to the Agora, where it received sacrifices.

Like Theagenes, Euthymus of Lokroi and Astylus were victors at Olympia in the 480’s and were given similar statuary honors in their hometowns.\(^{108}\) The Achaeans dedicated a statue to Oibatus of Dyme in the 460’s even though his Olympic victory had

---

\(^{106}\) Pausanias 6.6.5-6, 6.11.

\(^{107}\) Steven Lattimore, “The Nature of Early Greek Victor Statues,” in *Coroebus Triumphs: The Alliance of Sport and the Arts*, ed. Susan J. Bandy (San Diego 1988), 245. Theagenes is said to have had at least 1200 victories in his illustrious athletic career.

\(^{108}\) Lattimore (1988) 246-7; for Euthymos of Lokroi see: Pliny the Elder, *NH* 7.47.152; Pausanias 6.6; for Astylos see: Pausanias 6.13.
come 300 years prior.\textsuperscript{109} While we know that all of these athletes were posthumously
given hero-cult honors, unlike in the case of Theagenes, it is unclear whether or not their
statues played any role in hero-cult activity.\textsuperscript{110} The story of Theagenes implies that his
statue was not given sacrifices before the famine and therefore originally would have
been honorific. These examples might reflect a Pan-Hellenic pattern of erecting honorary
statues during the early sixth century, however these monuments all came after the
creation of Antenor’s Tyrannicides and could not have been precursors to the Athenian
statue group.

There is a record of one athletic statue that may have predated the Tyrannicides
and possibly even inspired their conception. In 564 B.C., a pankratiast\textsuperscript{111} named
Arrachion died while in competition at the Olympic games and his corpse was crowned
the winner.\textsuperscript{112} In the only surviving literary reference to the statue erected in his honor,
Pausanias gives a description that closely correlates to his remarks about the Tyrannicides
of Antenor. In both accounts, he describes the statues (\textit{andrias / tón andriantón}) as being
located in the Agoras of their respective cities and, in the writer’s opinion, Arrachion’s
statue looks old-fashioned (\textit{archaios}) in the same manner as the original Tyrannicides
(\textit{archaious}).\textsuperscript{113} As opposed to his discussion of Antenor’s sculpture group, Pausanias
specifically lists the arcaic elements of the piece. The statue of the Olympic victor was

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{109} Pausanias 6.3.8.
\textsuperscript{110} Lattimore (1988) 247.
\textsuperscript{111} The \textit{pankration} was some sort of violent combination of boxing and wrestling.
Judging by the fate of Arrachion, it seems that it was a dangerous and sometimes fatal
event.
\textsuperscript{112} Pausanias, 8.40.2.
\textsuperscript{113} Pausanias, 8.40.1; 1.8.5.
\end{flushleft}
made out of stone, its feet were close together and its arms were at its sides--this was a typical sixth-century *kouros*.

The style of this statue and the date of Arrachion's death imply that the monument to the victor was set up sometime in the sixth century. The use of the *kouros* as an honorary statue in the Agora may have been an established practice for honoring athletes at this time. Our knowledge of sixth-century Phigaleian politics is slim, but this statue was probably an expression of community pride rather than a political monument. It is conceivable that Antenor and Cleisthenes were intentionally imitating this kind of athletic victor statuary when they created their political monument to the Tyrannicides within the Agora.

Ajootian suggests that the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were an integral part of the athletic competitions associated with the Panathenaic festival. On an *oinochoe* from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Tyrannicide sculpture group by Critios and Nesioites are shown standing on a base next to some sort of column (see Figure 3). The statues, depicted from the side, are crowned with wreaths that resemble

---

114 Ridgway (1977), 48; Pausanias, 8.40.1.
116 Boedeker (1998) 188, notes that the Tyrannicides were similar to athletic statues, but in this comparison she is referring to the fluid and active Critios and Nesioites monument. In the replacement group, a specific act is being depicted through the simulated movement of the statues and in this way they were analogous to early athletic statuary. But the Antenor pieces predate this development in statuary by 30 years and could not have imitated portraits of athletes in this respect. Most likely the original statues were similar to the stiff sculpture of Arrachion.
laurels worn by athletic victors. Ajoottian points out the similarities between the column 
on the ladling cup and turning point markers depicted in racing scenes on other vase 
paintings.\textsuperscript{119} She proposes that the cup shows a scene from the foot and equestrian races 
in the Agora and that the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were crowned as athletic 
victors during this part of the Panathenaic festival.\textsuperscript{120} Although Ajoottian does not 
suggest the sculptures were adapted from honorary athletic statues, this association with 
athletics might date back to the time of Cleisthenes. Therefore the allusions to heroic 
athletes through the statues and their role in the Panathenaic races may have been an 
instrument in the promotion of the Tyrannicides since the beginning of democracy.

In the end, it is difficult to determine if the Tyrannicides were meant to draw on a 
tradition of athletic sculpture because we do not know exactly what that tradition was. 
The celebration of athletes within the Agora of their hometowns is attested to, but does 
not seem to have been a widespread practice in the sixth century. Besides Arrachion, this 
honor is not documented until the early fifth century. While Pausanias’s brief description 
of Arrachion’s statue is similar to his remarks about Antenor’s Tyrannicides, we cannot 
know when the Phigaleians commissioned this monument or if the statue was used for 
hero-cult worship. Without more evidence about sixth-century athletic statuary, one is 
hesitant to state with any certainty that the statues of the Tyrannicides by Antenor were 
modeled on athletic victor monuments.

\textsuperscript{119} Ajoottian (1998) 8.
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Ibid} 8-9.
3.3 - Sixth-century Aristocratic Power Struggles and Cultural Innovation

Scholarship on the subject of the Tyrannicides statues commonly situates and encounters them in the shadow of the giant that is fifth-century Athens. The available riches of historical source material, as well as the manifest achievements of this century, create a strong gravitational pull into which all discussions of Ancient Greece may be drawn. Instead of looking forward to the role these monuments played in the democratic consciousness of fifth-century Athenians, I want to look back to the sixth century. By placing the Antenor statues within the context of struggles for power among aristocratic families during this era, we might begin to explain the type of cultural innovation that produced this unique monument.

In the previous section, we saw how the employment of Antenor has led scholars to assume that Cleisthenes was somehow behind the commission of the original statues and thus that the portraits were created to promote his newly enacted reforms. As a result, interpretations of the symbolic meaning of the statues, their poses, and their placement in the Agora within the democratic culture of the fifth century have been discussed at length. Assuming it was the father of democracy himself who commissioned the piece, and I think this is a plausible assumption, must we necessarily presume these statues were specifically meant to endorse the new system of government?

\(^{121}\) For some very interesting interpretations see: Castriota (1998); Raaflaub (2003) examines how the statues fit into the state's use of the shadowy tyrant figure and the nonexistent threat of tyranny in order to keep citizens in line during the fifth century; Anderson (2003), 204-5.
In his classic article “Kleisthenes and Attika,” D.M. Lewis attempted to demonstrate the self-serving goals behind the reforms of Cleisthenes. Taking what Ober describes as a “cynical realist” view of Cleisthenes, Lewis looked at the creation of the tribes from the new demes and trittyes, and identified some negative consequences that stemmed from this realignment. According to his interpretation, by naming demes after powerful rival families such as the Boutadai (who would eventually change their name to the Eteoboutadai or the Real Boutadai), and by organizing the trittyes in a manner which disconnected families from important religious centers, Cleisthenes sought to weaken the power of influential families.

Although Lewis eventually takes this menacing characterization a little too far, the article presents some insight into Cleisthenes’s possible motives. While it cannot be discounted that Cleisthenes was attempting to solve tangible political problems with his reforms, it would seem that he designed and proposed them partly to assert his family’s dominance. This interpretation would be supported by Herodotus, who claimed that Cleisthenes only enlisted the support of the people (τον δημον προσεταίριζεται) when it appeared he would come out the loser in the power struggle with Isagoras. The

---

125 In my opinion, Lewis (1963) focuses too strongly on the results of the reforms that could have benefited the Alcmeonids and virtually ignores the other major positive developments which the reforms made possible, such as the unification of Attica and the strengthening of the army.
126 Herodotus 5.66.2; 5.69.2.
proposed reforms allowed him to gain influence and consequently forced Isagoras to turn to Cleomenes and the Spartans for help.\textsuperscript{127}

Since the reforms of Cleisthenes functioned as a tool, albeit an exceptional one, in these ongoing sixth-century aristocratic power struggles, the Tyrannicides statues could be seen in the same terms. One of Cleisthenes’s main goals was to restore the Alcmeonid clan to a prominent position among the elite Athenian families. It is possible that the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were also erected primarily to serve this end.

Though the Peisistratids had been exiled, the threat of their return loomed large over the city and would be a realistic possibility until 479 B.C.\textsuperscript{128} The Alcmeonids, who had recently returned from exile themselves, knew their situation was precarious and could change momentarily. After all, the Spartans, who had originally removed the Peisistratids from power, had been expelled from Athens by an angry mob in 508/7. It is safe to say that Cleomenes would not again offer Spartan assistance.

To discourage the return of the Peisistratids, a pillar was erected atop the Acropolis listing the names of the offending \textit{Peisistratidai}.\textsuperscript{129} While we have no way of knowing if the Alcmeonids were actually behind this commission, the powerful position of Cleisthenes and their bitter feud with the Peisistratids indicate that it is a strong possibility. This prominent new \textit{stele} monumentalized the “crimes of the tyranny” in the city’s most sacred precinct.

The Tyrannicides, most likely erected around the same time, could have been a corresponding monument in the Agora. The \textit{stele} documented the names of the criminals

\textsuperscript{127} Herodotus 5.70.1.
\textsuperscript{128} Raafraaub (2003) 62.
\textsuperscript{129} Thucydides 6.55.1-2.
and the statues would have served as a visual reminder of their victims. Spivey comments that, "The cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton focused not so much on the fact that they ended the tyranny, but that the tyranny ended them." While he is specifically discussing their hero cult, this characterization may be equally applicable to the statues.

Conceivably, the sculptures could have been erected by the Alcmeonids in part to remind the Gephyraioi, as well as the rest of the community, who had killed their kinsmen. Seen in the Athenian context of familial feuds and alliances, the complementary iconography of the sculptures and the column could have helped the Alcmeonids both gain the support of powerful families like the Gephyraioi and deter other clans from aligning, or realigning, themselves with the Peisistratids.

When Cleisthenes had earlier chosen Antenor to work on the pediment at Delphi, it was also part of a creative plan to restore the Alcmeonids to power and to undermine the Peisistratidai. If Cleisthenes had asked Antenor to craft the statues of the Tyrannicides in order to secure his family's preeminent position, the basic objective would have correlated to the other job completed in the service of the Alcmeonids. 

---

130 Spivey (1996) 115.
131 John Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Archaic Period* (London 1996) 83, says "Antenor's work on the Delphi pediment, paid for by the exiled Alkmaionids, and then on the tyrant-slayers, seems to indicate some rapport with anti-tyrant patrons." This is certainly a romantic view of the artist but I doubt if Antenor's motives were primarily political. Instead, I think we follow the interpretation of Pierre Lévêque and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Cleisthenes the Athenian: An Essay on the Representation of Space and Time in Greek Political Thought from the End of the Sixth Century to the Death of Plato*, trans. David Ames Curtis (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 1996) 57, who state about Antenor, "...one is tempted to say, played towards Cleisthenes the same role Calamis played towards Cimon and Phidias played toward Pericles." I am personally inclined to favor this portrayal of Antenor as an intelligent businessman, looking to please his influential client.
But if the Tyrannicides statues represented the last remnants of sixth-century familial rivalries, does this circumstance account for their novelty? A study of aristocratic infighting indicates that this might have been the case.

Throughout the sixth century in Athens, aristocratic competitions for power caused families to search for creative ways to surpass their rivals. Originally exiled because of a curse fabricated by adversaries, the Alcmeonid patriarch of the mid-sixth century, Megacles II, would be responsible for the unusual and decidedly imaginative Phye Procession.\textsuperscript{132} In the case of Peisistratus, it is hard to know which stories about his many innovative ploys are true because he later acquired a reputation as a “tyrant-trickster.”\textsuperscript{133} And despite all of his ingenuity, Peisistratus’s family would ultimately be forced from power as a result of the inventive scheme of Cleisthenes to bribe the Pythian Oracle.

These families often reached outside of cultural norms in order to achieve their goals, and Robert Connor has observed the same sort of phenomenon in the way processions were used for political purposes in sixth-century Athens.\textsuperscript{134} He has termed this process “\textit{mimesis},” or creative adaptation, and says it was fairly common in Archaic Greek politics.\textsuperscript{135} But far from adapting established traditions in order to trick the citizens, Connor believes this involved a complicated interplay between the politicians and the Athenian people.

\textsuperscript{132} See below.
\textsuperscript{133} Anderson (2003) 71.
\textsuperscript{135} Connor (1987) 50. He does not state it explicitly, but he is probably adapting this usage from Plato.

46
Perhaps the most famous example both of the creativity of these politicians and of their use of variations on established religious customs is the bizarre incident of the Phye Procession.\textsuperscript{136} In 556/5, the Alcmeonids and their patriarch, Megacles II, entered into an alliance with the exiled Peisistratus in order to defeat Lycurgus of the Boutadai clan.\textsuperscript{137} Apparently, when Peisistratus returned to Athens, Megacles arranged for him to be brought back into the city in a procession.\textsuperscript{138} In a strange twist, a six-foot-tall woman named Phye, dressed as the Goddess Athena and in impressive fashion, drove Peisistratus into the city on a chariot.

The goals behind this incident are debatable.\textsuperscript{139} For our discussion it is not the symbolism of the procession with “Athena” that is important but rather the use of the procession itself. On the surface, this event might seem like a standard religious procession, but it seemingly had no set ritual purpose and did not conform with the conventions for imitating a divinity. As Connor comments, “... although there was a cultural pattern among the Greeks of dressing up as a divinity on certain occasions,

\textsuperscript{136} Herodotus 1.60.2-5; \textit{Ath. Pol.} 14.4. If you want to somehow make sense of this strange tale see: Connor (1987); Josine H. Block, “Phye’s Procession: Culture, Politics and Peisistratid Rule,” in \textit{Peisistratos and the Tyranny: A Reappraisal of the Evidence}, ed. H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (Amsterdam 2000) 17-48. Block’s article does not focus purely on the procession and is mostly concerned with the culture of the arts under the Peisistratids.

\textsuperscript{137} Block (2002) 39-47, proposes a new date for the procession. She claims it could not have taken place until after Peisistratus’s glorious return to the city after the Battle of Pailene in 546/5. Although this is an interesting argument, its author does not explain the involvement of Megacles in this new scenario.

\textsuperscript{138} Anderson (2003) 69, points out that the sources explicitly state that Megacles had arranged this spectacle although most scholars have ignored this detail.

\textsuperscript{139} Block (2000) 45, claims that Phye’s role was to symbolize Athena’s role in returning Peisistratus to power; Anderson (2003) 70-1, sees the event as an attempt to undermine the Boutads’ association with Athena Polias.
Peisistratus did not use it.\footnote{Connor (1987) 45.} In this case, Megacles and Peisistratus took an established religious tradition and tweaked it to fit their immediate political needs.

Not unlike his forebear, Cleisthenes similarly may well have modified the kouroi to construct a political monument in the hopes of undermining another powerful family. In light of this, it seems that the erection of the Tyrannicides statues was not a result of the new political sphere brought about by democracy, but followed the pattern of mimesis set by both the ancestors and enemies of Cleisthenes in sixth-century politics. While this may illuminate some of the reasons why Cleisthenes might have used this creative adaptation, it does not explain how or why these innovations were accepted in this traditional society. This problem will now be addressed below.

3.4 - Adaptation of Religious Symbols and the Response of the Community

In an attempt to reconcile Galinsky’s definition of propaganda with the unique nature of the Tyrannicides monument, we have looked at possible ways in which Cleisthenes and the champions of isonomia may have introduced this new type of monument. Up to this point, I have proposed various ways in which the Tyrannicide statues could have conformed to previously established traditions so that they might be accepted by and persuade the community. But if we turn the problem on its head, another very likely alternative presents itself: the idea that adapting religious symbols for secular ends was a socially accepted practice in Archaic Athens.

In ancient Greece, the boundaries between “sacred” and “secular” were not nearly as neat as their division in modern Western society. In many cases the lines were
nonexistent. (By contrast, when religious symbols are used for blatantly non-religious purposes in modern-day America, it is bound to draw a lot of attention. For example, if a Brooklyn artist should cover a portrait of the Virgin Mary in excrement, or a small town display the Ten Commandments in front of a courthouse, public outrage would usually not be far behind.)

In an ancient society where religion pervaded almost every aspect of life, the use of religious archetypes would not have been considered blasphemous. Invoking established religious associations likely would have added to the sanctity of a statue rather than marking it as sacrilegious. This is best demonstrated by architectural evidence from both the time of Cleisthenes and throughout the fifth century.

The Athenian Agora, where the early democratic government would focus its building program, was initially monumentalized under the Peisistratids.\textsuperscript{141} In 522/1 B.C. the Peisistratids constructed the Altar of the Twelve Gods, a religious structure laden with political significance and distances to all villages in Attica were measured from this point. According to Hölscher, this reflects an attempt to give the highest religious significance to the area.\textsuperscript{142}

In this sacred locale, the new regime then constructed their government buildings. The Old Bouleuterion, where the Council of 500 would meet, and the Stoa Basileos were built around 500 B.C. These were secular buildings without religious function, but they were constructed in the Doric order. These are the first Greek buildings that we know of,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Anderson (2003) 88.
\item Hölscher (1991) 365.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
other than traditional religious sanctuaries, to use monumental stone architecture and possibly the first to employ the Doric order.¹⁴³

Although we cannot say for certain how this use of religious architecture was received by the public, the fact that this sort of appropriation of sacred style continued down through the fifth century indicates that there was no considerable objection to this practice. One of the most renowned buildings in all of Athens, the Parthenon, was designed almost exactly like a temple and even housed a cult statue. Yet there was no cult associated with the building and its primary function, aside from displaying the wealth and power of Periclean Athens, was as a treasury.

But the state’s continued use of religious architecture for its governmental buildings does not necessarily prove that this sort of adaptive civic practice was inoffensive to the masses. How can we gauge the public perception of the employment of the sacred for the political?

To answer this question, we need to return for a moment to the Phye episode. In what may be the most revealing part of the story, Herodotus gives as a rare depiction of the crowd’s reaction to the procession led by a costumed Athena. Apparently instead of rejecting this stunt, the Athenian people cheered and celebrated as Peisistratus and Phye drove by.¹⁴⁴ Herodotus, claiming that the Athenian people were actually duped by the

---

¹⁴⁴ Herodotus 1.60.5.
charade, finds it humorous that such a sophisticated people fell for this duplicitous trick.\footnote{145}

Connor claims that it was not the Athenian populus but Herodotus who misconceived this scene. Compatibly with Foulkes's discussion of propaganda, Connor sees the citizen body's expressing its approval of the procession as a prime example of an ongoing dialog between this community and its leaders.\footnote{146} Civic rituals, he states, are a means of communication in both directions between politicians and the public.\footnote{147} He theorizes that the Athenian people knew perfectly well that this tall women was not a Goddess, but were distinctively amused by this adaptation of the religious procession. To quote him in full:

"The politics of that [Archaic] age cannot be fully understood as the manipulation of those [traditional] patterns, but must also be seen as the invention, articulation and adaptation of ceremonial to the changing needs and consciousness of the community."\footnote{148}

Possibly the Tyrannicides statues were created and received in the same spirit. The new democratic political reality may have inspired the Athenians to become more active than ever in their public expressions of shared identity. Perhaps the people truly did embrace the statues and the Tyrannicides legend much as they did the Phye procession. After all, the people of Athens crowned the Tyrannicides statues,\footnote{149} reproduced their poses on pottery,\footnote{150} and quickly replaced them when they were stolen.

\footnote{145} Herodotus I.60.3.  
\footnote{146} Connor (1987) 50.  
\footnote{147} Ibid 41.  
\footnote{148} Ibid.  
\footnote{149} Ajootian (1998) 8-9.  
For all the discussion about the reaction of the community to this novel monument, in the end there may not have been much of a response at all. While Hölscher might be correct that the statues themselves were unprecedented, the adaptation of religious mediums for political purposes was not. To many sixth-century Athenians, these statues would have seemed ordinary rather than revolutionary.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

It is fitting that Harmodius and Aristogeiton were most likely represented as kouroi in Antenor’s original statue group. (I personally can think of no other better symbol to represent the legacy of Tyrannicides.) The kouroi and korai statues were apparently a flexible medium. These statues could be used for multiple purposes and represented whatever their dedicators wished. Similarly, the legend of the Tyrannicides was constantly adapted to suit different eras, regimes, and political situations. Cleisthenes and his supporters used the Tyrannicides to celebrate the fall of the Peisistratids and to prevent their return. In the hands of Cimonian Democracy, Harmodius and Aristogeiton became fallen soldiers who had died for their country. For Thucydides, they were jealous lovers whose legend exemplified the dangers of historical distortion.

But, also like kouroi, this malleability makes the Tyrannicides difficult to study. With so many ideologies, stories, and allusions successively attached to their names, it becomes harder to pin down what exactly Harmodius and Aristogeiton meant to Athens at any given time. The many uncertainties surrounding these men and what they actually accomplished made them ideal subjects for promoting any number of ideals. In turn, this exploitation of an already murky tradition makes the search for historical fact even more
elusive. The public portrait statuary of the Tyrannicides may have been created as a tool in aristocratic power struggles. It may have evolved from traditional hero worship or copied athletic models. Or it may, properly for its age, have been adapted from religious to secular purposes amidst a period of radical societal change. Although the lack of evidence about the Antenor statues presents some formidable hurdles in determining which one of these possibilities reflects concrete historical reality, the question proposed in this paper remains an important one to ask. Further examination of this question may aid and encourage more discourse and exploration about the origin of the “secular” image.
Figure 1: Antenor’s Kore (681). Káraksi (2003) plate 148.
Figure 2: Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Museo Nazionale, Naples 6-4103. Ajootian (1998) 2.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Fullerton, Mark, *Greek Art* (Cambridge, UK 2000).


Karakasi, Katerina, Archaic Korai (Los Angeles 2003).


Miller, Stephen G., Ancient Greek Athletics (New Haven, CT 2004).


Rausch, Mario, Isonomia in Athen: Veränderungen des öffentlichen Lebens vom Sturz der Tyranniz bis zur zweiten Perserabwehr (Frankfurt 1999).


Shapiro, Alan, Art and Cults under the Tyrants in Athens (Mainz 1989).


International Conference celebrating 2500 years since the birth of democracy in Greece, held at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, December 4-6, 1992, eds. W.D.E. Coulson, O. Palagia, T.L. Shear, Jr., H.A. Shapiro and F.J. Frost (Oxford 1994),


