

ALCIBIADES AT THE OLYMPICS: PERFORMANCE, POLITICS AND CIVIC IDEOLOGY*

INTRODUCTION

The Olympics of 416 B.C., at which Alcibiades entered seven chariots in the chariot race, took first, second and fourth places, and staged a display of personal and civic wealth and power surpassing both previous competitors and those who would come after, had arguably a more significant historical effect than any other Olympic festival in the ancient world.¹

Alcibiades staked a vast sum on a carefully staged performance designed to outbid his rivals both at home and abroad. His display played a central role in the Peace of Nicias ‘Cold War’ between Athens and Sparta in the years 420–415, in the debate about the Sicilian expedition which followed shortly after the festival, and (if [Andocides] 4 is to be believed) the ostracism of Hyperbolus. In Alcibiades’ vision, it provided a conspicuous display of Athenian power in the Peloponnese to complement his policy of alliance with Argos (Thuc. 6.16.6). It established Alcibiades’ reputation, not only as one of the pre-eminent political figures in the Greek world, but also for overweening expenditure and ambition; and involved him in a catastrophic level of expenditure which in Thucydides’ view contributed significantly to the downfall of Athens (6.15.3).²

Despite the importance accorded by Thucydides to Alcibiades’ Olympic attendance and expenditure as affecting Athenian politics in 416 and (indirectly) the course of the whole war, and despite its obvious centrality to our understanding of Alcibiades as a person and as a politician, the Olympics of 416 has received relatively little attention from historians.³ More attention has been paid to it in the

* I am very grateful to Adrian Kelly for his many comments and suggestions which greatly improved this article, for most helpful guidance from the anonymous reader of *CQ*, and also for comments, references and guidance from Chris Pelling, Bruno Currie and Simon Hornblower.

¹ Isoc. 16.34: ‘not only did he surpass his rivals, but also all previous victors’; Thuc. 6.16.3: ‘more chariots than any individual previously’; in the epinician ascribed to Euripides, Alcibiades achieved what ‘no other Hellene’ has achieved. It was ‘der grösste agonistische Erfolg der gesamten Antike’ according to C. Mann, *Athlet und Polis im archaischen und frühklassischen Griechenland* (Göttingen, 2001), 103. For the dating to 416 see e.g. S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides Volume 3* (Oxford, 2008), 343.

² According to Thucydides it was Alcibiades’ spending beyond his available resources on *hippotrophia* and other expenditure, and the distaste it caused in the Athenians, which ‘was not the least cause of the downfall of the city’.

³ The best biography of Alcibiades is still J. Hatzfeld, *Alcibiade* (Paris, 1940), who treats the Olympics at pp. 130–1. For Alcibiades at the Olympics, see L. Moretti, *Olympionikai: i vincitori negli antichi agoni olimpici* (Rome, 1957). See also now D. Stuttard, *Power Games: Ritual and Rivalry at the Ancient Greek Olympics* (London, 2012), which was published as this article was going to press.

burgeoning study of ancient sport, without, however (for the most part), particular focus on the wider political aspects.⁴

Articles by Goldhill and others⁵ have brought out the ‘political’ dimension in an Athenian festival like the Dionysia – the way in which it was influenced by, and sought to influence, conceptions of the city both to outsiders and itself. In this article, I want to focus on the Olympics of 416 to explore the ‘political’ aspect of a Panhellenic Greek festival,⁶ to show how the surviving descriptions of this festival (which see the events from an Athenian viewpoint) reveal that Athenians were acutely aware of how the city was on display at the festival, creating a tension between the presentation of the city at Olympia and the official presentations ‘back home’. Moreover, at the Olympic festival, the rivalry of cities was set against the rivalry of individuals (freed to a large extent from the rules and customs which sought to control individual competitive display in the city). I will try to show how the festival of 416 shaped, and was shaped by, the power relations within Athens and between Athens and the other cities of the Greek world, and how the ancient Olympic festival was the occasion for a variety of contests (*agônes*), of spending and of aristocratic display, both between individuals and states.⁷

⁴ None of the previous specific treatments of this episode explains it in terms of its political context. Mann (n. 1) analyses Alcibiades’ competition at Olympia, focussing on the presentation of Alcibiades in the Euripides epinician fragment but, strangely, largely ignores the other aspects of Alcibiades’ display. By contrast, P. Schmitt Pantel, *La cité au banquet: histoire des repas publics dans les cités grecques* (Rome, 1992) presents an excellent analysis of the ‘tents and banquets’ element of Olympic display (the only treatment of this aspect), setting out the discourses and patterns of spending, but does not deal with the specific political context which gave rise to Alcibiades’ remarkable display. Z. Papakonstantinou, ‘Alcibiades in Olympia: Olympic ideology, sport and social conflict in Classical Athens’, *Journal of Sport History* 30 (2003), 173–82, is interested in the episode for what it reveals about changing Athenian attitudes to sport. D.G. Kyle, ‘The only woman in all Greece: Cynisca, Agesilaus, Alcibiades and Olympia’, *Journal of Sport History* 30 (2003), 183–203, builds a convincing analysis of the Cynisca and Agesilaus aftermath (see below). S. Hornblower too, in *Thucydides and Pindar: Historical Narrative and the World of Epinician Poetry* (Oxford, 2004), treats the festival of 420 extensively (see below), but has little to say about the festival of 416. See also D. Gribble, *Alcibiades and Athens* (Oxford, 1999), 61–9.

⁵ S. Goldhill, ‘The Great Dionysia and civic ideology’, in J.J. Winkler and F.I. Zeitlin (edd.), *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?: Athenian Drama in its Social Context* (Princeton, 1990), 97–129. See also J. Griffin, ‘The social function of Greek tragedy’, *CQ* 48 (1998), 39–61; R. Seaford, ‘The social function of Attic tragedy: a response to Jasper Griffin’, *CQ* 50 (2000), 30–44, P.J. Rhodes, ‘Nothing to do with democracy: Athenian drama and the polis’, *JHS* 123 (2003), 104–19.

⁶ That the Olympic and other Panhellenic festivals were not just a forum for the Panhellenic cultural community but were also linked to the competition between Greek city states is well known. On one occasion, in 364, the Olympics became the occasion of a pitched battle (Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.28–33), and at another, in 420 (explored further below), the Spartans, excluded from the festival and sacrificing at the temple, came close to using armed force to overturn their exclusion. The rivalry between states and groups to secure political influence over the festivals has also been explored: see A. Hönle, *Olympia in der Politik der griechischen Staatenwelt von 776 bis zum Ende des 5. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 1968); C. Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles: The Transformation of Olympia and Delphi in the Eighth Century B.C.* (Cambridge, 1990); N. Spivey, *The Ancient Olympics* (Oxford, 2004), 169–92; and Hornblower (n. 4), 263. By contrast there has been little focus on the role of the festivals themselves in political propaganda, the war of images between the competing cities.

⁷ On the centrality of competitive performance in Greek culture (activity structured into an *agôn* before a watching audience) see e.g. S. Goldhill, ‘Programme notes’, in S. Goldhill and R. Osborne (edd.), *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge, 1999), 2: ‘a culture where authority and status are contested, struggled over and maintained by men, families,

INDIVIDUAL AND ANCESTORS

From around 420 onwards (the date coincides with his entry into political life, and also, as we shall see shortly, with the wealth acquired through marriage into the family of Hipponicus), Alcibiades appears to have begun engaging seriously in chariot racing. The listing of Panathenaic amphorae among his possessions confiscated after the Mysteries affair suggests a victory at the Panathenaic games – probably those of 418.⁸ Paintings recorded in later sources, showing Alcibiades in association with figures thought to represent Nemea and Pythia, also suggest pre-416 Panhellenic competition.⁹

Alcibiades' own *oikia* provided both the means and motivation to engage in *hippotrophia* (i.e. prestige rearing and racing horses for Panhellenic competition). It provided wealth and (presumably¹⁰) an established stable to supply the horses, trainers and other support required to compete at this level. But more than that, it provided the *credentials* to engage in this form of competition. This could not be lightly acquired, as we can see from Plutarch's account of the reaction to Themistocles' displays of aristocratic *poluteleia* at Olympia:

Going to Olympia, and competing with Cimon around dinners and pavilions and the other brilliance and preparations, he displeased the Greeks. They thought it right to excuse this sort of thing in Cimon because he was young and belonged to a great family. But Themistocles, who did not come from a distinguished family [lit. 'was not a *gnōrimos*'] and seemed to be raising himself beyond his station without adequate means, incurred the charge of imposture.¹¹ (Plut. *Them.* 5.3)

Panhellenic horse racing, and the aristocratic display and entertainment that went with it, is an embodiment and test of the quality of the elite individual, not in the sense of his athletic prowess, but as a person of ancestry and wealth, 'matters of birth'.¹²

The achievements of ancestors, memorialized in poetic works, in statues and in family and civic memory, were not just a prerequisite of equestrian competition, but also exerted an intense pressure on the individual to match and outdo his predecessors. Success in Panhellenic competition was central for Alcibiades' family.

My father on the male side was of the Eupatrids, whose nobility is easy to recognize from the name itself, and on the female side of the Alcmaeonids, who have left behind

states, in a series of hierarchical and oppositional institutions and behavioural practices'. *Theōria* (the word for participation at the ancient festival) is seen by Goldhill (ibid. 5–6) as inherent in political participation: 'to sit as an evaluating, judging spectator'.

⁸ J. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families, 600–300 B.C.* (Oxford, 1971), 21.

⁹ If Alcibiades secured victories in these games, they are undateable, but must have been earlier than 416: after that he was not in a position to compete. However cautiously one should treat these paintings as evidence (see below), it is likely enough that a man who entered seven chariots at the Olympics of 416 had teams capable of winning victories at other crown games in the years leading up to this festival.

¹⁰ The evidence that the wealthy individuals who entered Panhellenic competitions themselves bred the horses they entered seems to be primarily that they were called *hippotrophi*.

¹¹ On this passage, see Davies (n. 8), 215, and cf. Arist. *Eth. Eud.* 1233b11–13. The obvious implication of this passage is that Cimon and Themistocles had entered chariot teams, and that their Olympic spending competition was linked to their domestic political competition.

¹² Schmitt-Pantel (n. 4), 187–8: 'La victoire et la générosité sont affaires de naissance', available only to a 'cercle restreint des grandes familles'.

a very great memorial of their wealth, for Alcmaeon was the first of our citizens to win a victory with a chariot team at Olympia. (Alcibiades' son at Isoc. 16.25)

'Prestige from ancestors' (*ἀξίωμα προγόνων*, Thuc 5.43.2) was one of the defining features of the political profile which allowed Alcibiades to rise to early prominence. Though his father's family was prominent enough, with (the inscriptional evidence suggests) its own early equestrian victories at crown games,¹³ it is with the Alcmaeonid tradition (in which, following the death of his own father, Alcibiades had been brought up) that Alcibiades particularly associates himself. When it came to equestrian competition, the last Athenian winner of the Olympic chariot race, and the only other Athenian winner since the establishment of the democracy, was the Alcmaeonid Megacles V, the brother of Alcibiades' mother, in 436. And his maternal grandfather Megacles IV had won the Pythian games shortly after his ostracism in 486 (celebrated in Pind. *Pyth.* 7).¹⁴ It is no wonder that in Aristophanes' *Clouds* of 425 the Alcmaeonids were synonymous with conspicuous *hippotrophia*.¹⁵

The need to establish a memorial of lasting fame worthy of his ancestors at the crown games drove the ambitious Alcibiades psychologically, quite as much as his instrumental use of hippotrophic prestige politically:

After he reached his majority ... he did not think it appropriate to live an easy life, vaunting the virtues of his ancestors, but straight away set his ambitions at such a level (*οὐτῶ μέγ' ἐφρόνησεν*) that he thought it right that *their* deeds be remembered through *him* ... (Isoc. 16.29)

This same attitude is evident in Alcibiades' speech in Thucydides:

'It befits me more than others, Athenians, to hold a position of power ... and at the same time I think I am worthy of it. The things which have brought me such notoriety [the reference is apparently both to civic and Olympic expenditure¹⁶], all this brings honour to me and to my ancestors, and benefit to my fatherland.' (Thuc. 6.16.1)

Alcibiades sees himself by his own actions as bringing honour to his ancestors: he and they exist in a mutual relationship of honour, each conferring reputation on the other.¹⁷ Victories – at Olympia or in battle – instantiate, represent and add to his family prestige. Moreover, they justify his position of power within the city: ancestors and victories make him more worthy than others to hold office. In general, Thuc. 6.16 depicts a man with a deeply 'aristocratic' value system – ancestors, honour, bold ambition, immortal memory privileged over contemporary envy – and not afraid to display such attitudes before a democratic audience. In his style of expenditure, most scholars have seen him as a throwback to a previous era.¹⁸

¹³ Davies (n. 8), 15, though the family was probably not in any sense 'Eupatrid'.

¹⁴ Moretti (n. 3), 105. Davies (n. 8), 379–81. On the Alcmaeonid record in *hippotrophia*, see D.G. Kyle, *Athletics in Ancient Athens* (Leiden, 1987), 157–8.

¹⁵ The unfortunate Strepsiades is forced into a life subsidizing his son's horse-related debts when he marries the daughter of 'Megacles, son of Megacles' (Ar. *Nub.* 47).

¹⁶ Alcibiades has just mentioned domestic liturgies, but the context suggests he is talking about his conspicuous spending in general and Olympic spending in particular.

¹⁷ Cf. E. Csapo and M. Miller, 'Towards a politics of time and narrative', in D. Boedeker and K. Raafaub (edd.), *Democracy, Empire and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens* (Cambridge, 1998), 97–9; Hornblower (n. 4), 88 n. 10. Cf. Archidamus at Thuc. 2.11.9.

¹⁸ Cf. L. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise: Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy* (Ithaca, NY, 1991), 172: Alcibiades' words 'hearken back to an older aristocratic ethos'. L. Kallet,

For Alcibiades, Olympic participation, display and victory was an end in itself, but must have been pursued to enhance political profile too. However, there is no evidence that, after Cimon, conspicuous *hippotrophia* and Olympic spending were engaged in by those Athenian politicians who aspired to leadership of the *demos*. Unlike civic liturgies, it was apparently not pursued under the Athenian democracy as an active element of political self-presentation and a form of political spending. It is likely that it was eschewed because of its uncertain place within the structure of civic spending, and the disturbing and excessive *kudos* it could bring a victor. As far as we know it was not pursued by the Alcmaeonid Pericles, or even Alcibiades' own immediate paternal ancestors.

This decline in interest in *hippotrophia* on the part of Athenian politicians is not necessarily a sign that there was a decline in the honour or the impact of a crown-game victory in general. Hornblower, for example, rightly points to contemporary evidence which illustrates the continuing fascination with athletic success and its relationship to cult and individual status in the Greek world,¹⁹ and it is likely that Athens was no exception. What we can observe, however, is a backing away from it as a facet of political self-projection, in favour of spending in the official liturgical system. In the Athenian democracy Alcibiades, who pursued it on a massive scale, stands out as the glaring exception to this rule.²⁰ Why did he do it?

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN ATHENS

One likely explanation is that conspicuous *hippotrophia* offered Alcibiades a chance to rapidly build a personal profile both at home and abroad, and in particular to compete with his main political rival Nicias, a man of greater years and experience, and perhaps also wealth, whose prestige within the city had been built up over many years of carefully organized, more orthodox, liturgical expenditure. Between 420 and 415, Alcibiades built relationships and influence inside and outside the

'Accounting for culture in fifth-century Athens', in Boedeker and Raaflaub (n. 17), 43–58, argues that Alcibiades' spending is 'a vestige of the old style, pre-democratic aristocratic expenditure', and thus, unlike most liturgical spending, was perceived as a threat. J. Davies, *Wealth and the Power of Wealth in Classical Athens* (New York, 1981), 98–9, claims that Alcibiades' defensive tone is due to the fact that this view of the rights conferred by spending was under challenge in 415. P. Millett, 'The rhetoric of reciprocity in Classical Athens', in C. Gill, N. Postlethwaite and R. Seaford (edd.), *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 1998), 227–53, at 245 sees him as a 'throwback to an earlier phase of Athenian history'. Alcibiades' speech in Thuc. 6.16 is meant to be seen as outrageous (it helps explain why the Athenians were disgusted with him [6.15] and why shortly he will be suspected of aiming at tyranny). Nevertheless, it is also evidence of the possibility of a 'patronage'-type approach to the Athenian *demos* in the latter part of the fifth century. The fact that the presentation in Isoc. 16 is remarkably similar to his speech in Thucydides makes it more likely that Alcibiades could in fact have spoken in this way.

¹⁹ Hornblower (n. 4), 260.

²⁰ On *hippotrophia* as part of political activity, see M. Golden, 'Equestrian competition in ancient Greece: difference, dissent and democracy', *Phoenix* 51 (1997), 327–44; Davies (n. 18), 100–5; Hornblower (n. 4), 254–60; and Hornblower (n. 1), 345–6. These works discuss when to date a 'decline' in Athenian pursuit of *hippotrophia*. But the question is not very sharply focussed: is it a decline in *hippotrophia* in general, or as an instrument of political activity? The conclusion from the lists assembled by Davies and Golden is apparently that the only aspirant to leadership of the *demos* to engage actively in *hippotrophia* and Olympic *megaloprepeia* after Cimon and Themistocles in 476 (see above) is Alcibiades. On the political significance of athletic competition and victory in Athens, see Mann (n. 1), ch. 3, including an extensive discussion of Alcibiades.

city, to wrest the diplomatic and political supremacy from Nicias. There is evidence that this competition was carried out also in the field of political expenditure.

Nicias was famous for his *chorégiai*²¹ and, although Alcibiades father and son do mention Alcibiades' *chorégiai*, it was probably difficult to establish a significant differentiator against Nicias in this area.²² *Hippotrophia* on the other hand offered a form of expenditure competition, in which Nicias probably could not (because he lacked the necessary status or a stable) and would not (because its excessive flamboyance and risk were antithetical to his character) compete. *Hippotrophia* complemented a self-presentation designed to set Alcibiades apart from the older, more cautious and low-born Nicias. With its associations with athletics, battle and energy,²³ it established a youthful, vigorous image.

On the political level, the specific spur to Alcibiades' Olympic display may have been Nicias' sponsorship of the Athenian entry to the choral competition at the Delos festival, which archaeological evidence suggests probably took place in 417.²⁴ Like Alcibiades' Olympic display, the context for this was an extra-civic religious festival: a variety of cities took part in the Delos festival, primarily from among Athens' allies. Like Alcibiades, Nicias appears to be spending in these years to enhance his links and image abroad. Unlike Alcibiades' spending, however, Nicias' at Delos was in the context of a liturgy – Nicias was the Athenian *architheōros* – and the festival was one intimately linked to Athens and her empire, and a form of expenditure in keeping with Nicias' previous spending strategy: choral competition, and an act of piety. Nicias used expenditure lavishly but carefully so as to turn the festival into a spectacle which was remembered long afterwards.²⁵ Apart from the rich equipping of the chorus and the expenditure on banquets and ritual victims, Nicias (according to Plutarch) had a gilded bridge pre-constructed and transported to Delos, so that the Athenian chorus could advance across the bridge in state, rather than being hastily landed by ship. So that Nicias' own role in the spectacle would be commemorated, he dedicated a palm tree of gold worth 10,000 drachmas and an estate to pay for an annual banquet at which the islanders would pray for Nicias' blessings.

This, then, was an expenditure 'spectacular' cementing Nicias' prestige in Athens and the empire and internationally, against which Alcibiades intended to compete with his own Olympic display in 416. This was the first Olympics that Athenians could easily attend since 432,²⁶ and Alcibiades had surely already been planning to compete there for some time. However, the intensity of the rivalry for political influence in Athens must have raised the stakes and contributed to the urgency of the need for a victory and a display of spending that would eclipse that of Nicias. But to understand fully the reason for Alcibiades' intense effort in 416, we also

²¹ Plut. *Nic.* 3.1–2. On Alcibiades' liturgies see Davies (n. 18), 20; on his *chorégiai* see P. Wilson, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia: the Chorus, the City and the Stage* (Cambridge, 2000), 146–55.

²² Thuc. 6.16.3; Isoc. 16.35 (presenting his *chorégiai* as eclipsed by his Olympic achievement).

²³ Isoc. 16.33; Golden (n. 20), 337.

²⁴ F. Courby, 'Le Sanctuaire d'Apollon Delien' *BCH* 45 (1921), 174–241, at 185 argues that the archaeological and inscriptional evidence strongly suggests 417. But J. Coupry, 'Architheoroi eis Delion', *BCH* 78 (1954), 285–94, at 288 notes that the evidence is not decisive for this date. On the interpretation of Nicias' display at Delos, see Schmitt-Pantel (n. 4), 189–92.

²⁵ Plut. *Nic.* 3.4–6.

²⁶ S. Hornblower, 'The religious dimension to the Peloponnesian War', *HSPH* 94 (1992), 169–98, at 190.

need to consider the *intercity* political agonism which characterized the Olympic festival in general, and particularly during the years of the Peace of Nicias.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN GREECE

The ancient Olympic festival was an expression and definition of common Panhellenic cultural and religious identity among the Greek cities,²⁷ but also an arena for the intense competition between them.²⁸ The festival's shared rituals emphasized the equivalence of the participating cities, but the athletic competitions, and the *agôn* of spending, put on display their rival power and wealth. Moreover, in a world where travel was difficult, the Olympic truce allowed a rare opportunity for individuals and cities to come together for 'political' purposes. The 'fringe' of the Olympics was infused with politics, through the intercity diplomacy carried out there,²⁹ the speeches of rival rhetors and the calls for tyrants to be ejected or to unite against a common enemy. Many of the competing cities were at war with each other. The Olympic site was itself a showcase not just for the religious identity of the participants but also for the conflicts between them, and it was decorated not just with temples and statues of gods and athletes but also with the memorials of previous intercity wars.³⁰ The festival took place against a backdrop of memorials celebrating the victory of city over city, where civic wealth and status, instantiated in bronze, marble and treasure, were conspicuously displayed.³¹

At no time was the interstate propaganda battle underlying the Olympics more in evidence than in the years of the Peace of Nicias. The competition between the two leading cities of Greece, and between the competing cities of the Peloponnese, was played out in a war of influence over the Olympic shrine and the Olympic festival.

At the Olympics of 420, intercity politics had spilled over in dramatic fashion into the festival, a festival recorded explicitly – and exceptionally – by Thucydides.³² Immediately before the festival of this year, the alliance between Argos, Athens, Mantinea and Elis had been concluded. This treaty, a direct challenge to Spartan supremacy in the Peloponnese, was memorialized not just in stone in the political

²⁷ Cf. Pl. *Resp.* 470e; Isoc. *Paneg.* 43; Ar. *Lys.* 1128–34 (the Greeks gather as brothers about the altar of Zeus in Olympia, yet wage war against each other).

²⁸ In general on intercity competition at the Olympics, see Spivey (n. 6), 184–92.

²⁹ Thuc. 3.8–15; the Mytileneans attend the Olympics of 428 to appeal to the Peloponnesians for help in their revolt from Athens; their speeches are heard at a meeting of the Spartans and her allies after the festival. Alexander the Great used the Olympics of 324 to announce an amnesty for political exiles (Diod. Sic. 18.18.3–5). There was an arbitration court at Olympia for resolving disputes among Greek cities in the 470s; see D.G. Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World* (Oxford, 2007), 128. For diplomatic activity of the *theōroi*, see M. Dillon, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in Ancient Greece* (London, 1997), 22–4.

³⁰ Pl. *Resp.* 5.469b–71c. The temple of Zeus itself was financed by war spoils: Paus. 5.10.2. For the Spartan dedication commemorating Tanagra, see Paus. 5.10.4; and for Elean spoils at Olympia from their war with Arcadia: Paus. 5.24.4.

³¹ See Kyle (n. 29), 111–13. On the commemoration of victories in statuary at Olympia, see Spivey (n. 6), 147–65. On the use of the Olympic site by city states as a venue for political statements expressed in marble and treasure, see Spivey *ibid.*, 180–2. Particularly relevant in this context is the iconographic contest between the Messenians and the Spartans focussing on Nike statues at Olympia – Paus. 5.26.1. See T. Hölscher, 'Images and political identity: the case of Athens', in P. Low (ed.) *The Athenian Empire* (Edinburgh, 2008), 294–326, on these depictions and 'Denkmalspolitik' in the Peloponnesian War.

³² On this episode see Hornblower (n. 1), 122–35, and the works cited there.

focal points of the participants, but also on a bronze pillar³³ erected at joint expense at Olympia. The ceremony for the erecting of the pillar apparently took place at the actual festival before the eyes of the watching Greeks (Thuc. 5.47.11). The centrality of the Olympic festival in intercity politics is clear here; the bronze pillar commemorating the alliance of Sparta's rival for Greek hegemony with its leading rivals in the Peloponnese joined the bronze statues commemorating the victories of individual over individual and state over state. The act established Olympia as the focus of the new alliance and signified a kind of appropriation by the anti-Spartan Peloponnesian alliance of the site and the festival.

More dramatic even than this spectacle was the exclusion of Sparta herself from the sanctuary through the agency of Elis, which exerted an influence disproportionate to its size through its control of the Olympic festival and sanctuary.³⁴ In 420, following a border dispute with Sparta, and emboldened by their membership of the new alliance, the Eleans used this influence to exclude the Spartans from the pre-eminent Panhellenic festival. 'All the other Hellenes' took part, Thucydides says (5.50.2), but not the Spartans. Most keenly felt by the Spartans, and emphasized by Thucydides, was their exclusion from the temple, and their inability to sacrifice to Zeus with the other Greeks at the appointed time.³⁵ The risk that the Spartans would attempt to overturn this exclusion and 'sacrifice by force' was so acute that the festival was held with the Eleans themselves under arms and supported by 1,000 hoplites each from Argos and Mantinea, and cavalry from Athens.

So seriously, then, did the Spartans regard the political effect of their humiliating exclusion from the festival, before the eyes of their allies and the other Greeks, that they contemplated breaching the Olympic truce and restoring their reputation by armed force. The relationship between the Olympic festival and the struggle for dominance in Greece could not be clearer.

The tension was dramatically increased when Lichas, a senior Spartan and previous Olympic victor,³⁶ attended the festival despite the ban, having entered and won the chariot race with a team entered as a 'public' chariot of the Boeotians. Lichas' personal entry looks like an attempt to undermine the banning of the Spartan *polis*, and to re-establish Spartan prestige through his own victory in the teeth of the anti-Spartan alliance. To identify the victory as his own (and by extension Sparta's) he came forward himself to crown the charioteer. In response he was publicly beaten by the Elean officials (Thuc. 5.50.4). This additional humiliation before the watching Greeks was not forgotten by the Spartans, and later identified as one of the main motivations behind their campaign against the Eleans in 402–400 (Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.21–2).

This episode showed that the Peace of Nicias had resulted only in the underlying political-military competition of the city states being diverted from the battlefield to

³³ Bronze was apparently the material regularly used for inscriptions at Olympia: see R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1992), 84.

³⁴ On the conflict between Sparta and Elis, see J. Roy, 'Thucydides 5.49.1 – 50.4. The Quarrel Between Elis and Sparta in 420 bc and Elis' Exploitation of Olympia', *Klio* 80 (1998), 360–8.

³⁵ Thuc. 5.50.2. Hornblower (n. 1), 125 and 130 emphasizes the prohibition from competing in the games (suggesting that 'sacrifice' stands for participation in the games), but it was participation in the sacrifice, the religious festival itself, which established and renewed the participation of the city and its religion in the Panhellenic cult (see below).

³⁶ On Lichas, see S. Hornblower, 'Thucydides, Xenophon and Lichas: were the Spartans excluded from the Olympic Games from 420 to 400 bc?', *Phoenix* 56 (2000), 278–81.

the stadium. So the puzzlement of commentators as to why Thucydides dedicates so much narrative to these events is itself puzzling. Hornblower³⁷ collects explanations by a number of other scholars for Thucydides' narrative attention to this festival, and himself sets out six possible explanations, including that the episode could be a 'narrative relief', or that 'two hearts beat in Thucydides' breast and that the prose chronicler of warfare had some of the poet of Pindar in him'. But Thucydides in the description of the games of 420 is precisely not interested in the athletics, but in the politics.

What happened at the Olympics of 420 was historically important, certainly in Thucydides' conception of historical importance, and intrinsic to his argument and narrative strategy in Book 5. The diplomatic contest and campaigning, the posturing and display, the projection of power and influence which Thucydides has described in his account of the diplomacy in Book 5 were all continued at the festival, to the extent that the competing alliances almost came to battle. It is an integral part of the Peace of Nicias 'Cold War' set out by Thucydides in this book – not really peace at all, but war without the fighting (5.26.2). At least when it was sufficiently important to the political and military events which are his focus, as in 420 and 416, Thucydides in his narrative is well aware of, and indeed emphasizes 'the way the Panhellenic festivals were exploited as part of the fifth-century struggle between the larger Greek cities'.³⁸ In the case of 416, certainly, the treatment is delayed³⁹ and dealt with in the context of the political and military events they most influenced – the Sicilian debate of the following year. In 420, the events at the festival are recorded as part of the diplomatic and military narrative to which they are integral.

Instrumental in the anti-Spartan alliance was of course Alcibiades himself. His relations with Sparta were complex. Notwithstanding the renunciation of the *proxenia* by his grandfather, the *xenia* relations between Alcibiades' family and leading Spartans were deep and ancestral,⁴⁰ and despite his attempts to overthrow Spartan hegemony during the Peace of Nicias period, he went to Sparta after his exile from Athens (Thuc. 6.88.10 – having been persuaded by them to come). Alcibiades' anti-Spartan alliance had been thwarted at Mantinea in 418, and Spartan prestige in Greece and the Peloponnese decisively restored. Now, in 416 (as Hornblower⁴¹ plausibly argues, the ban on the Spartans had probably by now been lifted) Alcibiades saw the opportunity to use the games once again as a vehicle to display the influ-

³⁷ Hornblower (n. 4), 272–86. Hornblower elsewhere in his book is keen to emphasize the link between the festival and the competition for influence (see next note).

³⁸ The quoted words are from Hornblower (n. 4), 263, with the claim that Thucydides shows 'little overt awareness' of this. Hornblower means here things like Sparta's attempt to enhance its influence on the Delphic Amphictyony, or the activity explored for the Archaic period by Morgan (n. 6), rather than behaviour at the festivals themselves. But Thucydides' account of the festival of 420 shows him only too well aware of the role of the festivals in international politics, at least in the sense I have set out above. That is why he takes the trouble to describe it.

³⁹ Hornblower (n. 1), 215–6: unlike the games of 420, the games of 416 'have no place in Thucydides' narrative'. This is true, in the sense that they are not described in the narrative of 416, but in 6.13–16 their importance is fully recognized, for their effect on Athenian politics and on the reputation of Athens.

⁴⁰ Davies (n. 18), 15–16.

⁴¹ See n. 36; also Hornblower (n. 1), 125–6 and Roy (n. 34), 360–8. There is no conclusive textual evidence either way, but Hornblower argues that it is most unlikely that Greece's leading land power was excluded for five successive Olympiads, particularly after Mantinea.

ence of Athens and the alliance in the Peloponnese, and to win that victory which Lichas had snatched for Sparta in 420, in the all-prestigious *tethrippon*, which had been dominated by the Spartans over the last 30 years.⁴²

Such a victory would demonstrate decisively the continuing power of Athens, in a Peloponnesian context. As Thucydides' Alcibiades puts it:

'The Hellenes regarded our city as greater, perhaps even in excess of its power, as a result of the magnificence of my Olympic *theōria*, previously expecting that it had been worn down by the war.'⁴³ (Thuc. 6.16.2)

Like the victory of Lichas in 420, that of Alcibiades in 416 would be read politically by the watching Peloponnesians and the rest of the Greek world. Lichas had gone to extraordinary lengths to secure his victory: Alcibiades's effort would be unprecedented.

In addition to the propaganda war in the Peloponnese, it is possible that a desire to extend his own and Athens' influence and reputation in Sicily, and to help position himself against his rivals as the leader of a potential Athenian Sicilian expedition, also played a role in Alcibiades' display of 416.⁴⁴ Western Greece was disproportionately represented at the Olympics.⁴⁵ As we shall see, Alcibiades' spending display calls to mind the Olympic displays of past (and future) Sicilian tyrants, as does his victory, in an equestrian event for which the Sicilians were especially famed. Victory in the crown games signified for the Greeks not just extraordinary personal enterprise, but also a godlike and talismanic achievement, a quasi-cultic individual honour.⁴⁶ The Olympic victory transformed the failed architect of the Mantinea campaign overnight into a person seen as capable of leading the high-profile expedition to Sicily.

⁴² We know of Spartan victors in the event in 448, 444, 440, 432, 428, 424 and 420, i.e. in every Olympics in Alcibiades' lifetime except for 436 when his uncle Megacles had won it. They also went on to win in 396, 392 and 388. For the particular association of the chariot race with Sparta see Hornblower (n. 4), 235.

⁴³ Indeed, Alcibiades regards even his civic liturgies as creating an impression of power to the rest of the Greek world (Thuc. 6.16.3). This is a measure of the extent to which he regarded his performances as directed towards an international audience.

⁴⁴ The Segestan embassy to Athens in the winter of 416/15 (Thuc. 6.6) was the immediate trigger for Athenian designs on Sicily, but Thucydides presents Athenian designs on Sicily as dating back to 427 (3.86.1, cf. 4.65.3).

⁴⁵ Olympia was easily accessible by boat from southern Italy, and many western Greek colonies had an Olympic connection: see Kyle (n. 29), 82; Spivey (n. 6), 183.

⁴⁶ Victors in the crown games seem to have been regarded as having the power to convey military success or found colonies: L. Kurke, 'The economy of *kudos*' in C. Dougherty and L. Kurke (edd.), *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece* (Cambridge, 1993), 131–63. The Spartans placed Olympic victors next to the king in battle (Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 2.5.2). Milo, an Olympic victor, went into battle wearing his Olympic crowns, and was said to have been responsible for the subsequent victory (Diod. Sic. 12.9.5.2). On the phenomenon of the 'victor oikist', see Kurke (cited above), 136; Hornblower (n. 4), 235, noting Phrynon, the Olympic victor and leader of the Athenian expedition to Sigeum around 600 B.C. (Paus. 3.14.3) and Miltiades, oikist in the Thracian Chersonese (Hdt. 6.35–6 – the text draws attention to this victor status as though a qualification for his leadership of the expedition); also Leon, one of the Spartan founders of Heracleia Trachinia in 426 B.C. (Thuc. 3.92), probably the *Olympionikēs* (Moretti [n. 3], no. 332).

EXPENSE

He surpassed not only his fellow competitors, but also all previous victors of the event. For he entered chariots which were so many in number, that not even the greatest cities had ever competed with so many: and of such quality, that he not only came first, but second and third as well.⁴⁷ (Isoc. 16.32)

‘... I entered seven chariots, more than any private citizen (*ιδιώτης*) previously, and I won the victory and came second and fourth, and provided everything else in a manner worthy of the victory.’ (Thuc. 6.16.2)

Being held in esteem by the citizens, he pursued desires which went beyond his available means both with regard to *hipprotrophia* and the other forms of expenditure. This later destroyed the city of the Athenians to no small degree. (Thuc. 6.15.3)

No one else ever entered seven chariots at the Olympics whether private citizen or king (*ιδιώτης οὐδέ βασιλεύς*) but only him. (Plut. *Alc.* 11.1)

We know of other multiple entries,⁴⁸ but Alcibiades father and son say explicitly that no one had ever entered so many. Plutarch goes further: *βασιλεύς* probably looks back to the Sicilian tyrants,⁴⁹ but also to subsequent Hellenistic rulers, and indeed Roman emperors. Given the effectively unlimited resources available to such dynasts and their strong motivation to secure recognition in the Greek world, this is a remarkable achievement. It raises the question of how a single private individual could achieve what the tyrants of past eras had failed to do. In 416, in a race where the whole Greek world could take part, roughly a quarter of the entries (including the best team, and three of the best four teams) belonged to one man. Relatively little attention has been paid to the methods Alcibiades used to bring seven teams of competition quality to Olympia. How did Alcibiades pay for it?

The litigation following Alcibiades’ own *hipprotrophia* provides our source for the scale of the cost of a chariot team. The suit of Tisias against Alcibiades’ son was for five talents (Isoc. 16.46–7), while according to Diodorus, that of Diomedes against Alcibiades himself in 408 was for eight talents: moreover this claim was by that time so significant to Alcibiades that it helped persuade him to choose exile rather than return to Athens.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ As this passage shows, the point of specifying all the places is to show the quality of the teams and hence the extent of the display. These are not just any teams. Thus it is natural that Alcibiades mentions the places when advertising his victory. On the enumeration of the places and the discrepancy between Thucydides and the ‘Euripides’ poem and Isocrates 16, and Thucydides’ ‘correction’ see Hornblower (n. 1), 343–5 (though I am not sure Thucydides is correcting ‘Euripides’: he could just as easily be correcting an Alcibiades-originated popular version, since Isoc. 16.34 also records the ‘wrong’ places).

⁴⁸ e.g. Dionysius of Syracuse in 388 (Diod. Sic. 14.109).

⁴⁹ Cities did not normally compete, and when Isocrates says (16.32) that not even the greatest cities had ever achieved such success, he really means ‘tyrants’, whose entries may have been in some sense civic, but for obvious reasons is loath to make the specific comparison. The comparison with tyrants is also surely the point of *ιδιώτης* in Thucydides 6.16.2, and cf. A.W. Gomme, A. Andrewes and K.J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1945–80), 4.246.

⁵⁰ Diod. Sic. 13.74.3. On the cost of a team see Davies (n. 18), 100 (such a price for a high quality, trained crown-games team appears realistic).

Supposing five talents to be the right order of magnitude for an Olympic-quality team, the cost of the seven teams would be 35 talents. The wealth of Hipponicus, said to be the richest man in Greece, was estimated at 200 talents; that of Alcibiades himself at 100 talents.⁵¹ If that is right, a third of Alcibiades' entire capital wealth was racing at the hippodrome that day in 416 in Olympia.

Moreover, that is just the capital cost of the team. The running costs of seven teams (feeding, training, driving) and of transportation of at least 28 horses safely to and from Olympia must be reckoned in as well.⁵² Moreover, Alcibiades' 'other expenditure' at Olympia, was, as he himself puts it, on a scale which was in keeping with the expenditure on the race, including a magnificent sacrifice and a feast 'for the whole festival', remembered ever after. There is not much readily available comparative information to calculate the cost of all this, but it must have run to many talents.

Two conclusions seem inevitable: first that Alcibiades must have drawn heavily, presumably through loans, on his capital resources to fund this participation. Secondly, he must have had a lot of help and, indeed, there is plenty of evidence for both conclusions.

We can surmise that Alcibiades' marriage to Hipparete, the daughter of Hipponicus, was crucial to the liquid sources of funding. This had brought an unparalleled dowry, apparently ten talents on the marriage itself, and ten on the birth of a son (Alcibiades IV was born probably slightly before the Olympics of 416⁵³). This massive sum probably represents an investment by Hipponicus in Alcibiades' political career. Moreover the alliance with this leading hippotrophic family (signalled by the very names of the bride and her father: Hipponicus' name commemorating a sixth-century Olympic victory) both deepened Alcibiades' own family-based hippotrophic claims, and provided moral and financial support for his ambitions. Perhaps Hipponicus and Callias assisted in other ways, for example with loans, horses or expertise.

Alcibiades apparently received assistance from other Athenians specific to the festival. In the first place, from Tisias, probably the general of 417/16 and an ally of Alcibiades,⁵⁴ who contributed financially to the purchase of the team from Argos and subsequently either regretted the association, or Alcibiades did not recognize his contribution as agreed, or (most likely) was simply unable to pay him back, resulting in the lawsuit underlying Isocrates 16.

And then there is Diomedes, who according to Diodorus was:

one of Alcibiades' friends who had sent a *tethrippon* to Olympia together with Alcibiades [*συμπέμφαντος*] ... at the official entrance procedure, Alcibiades had had the team put down as his own, and after the team had won,⁵⁵ took the honour of the victory for himself and did not give the horses back to the one who had entrusted them to him.

(Diod. Sic. 13.74.3)

⁵¹ Davies (n. 18), 260, Andoc. 1.130 (Callias); Lys. 19.52 (Alcibiades).

⁵² Golden (n. 20), 337 on other costs.

⁵³ Davies (n. 18), 19.

⁵⁴ Hornblower (n. 1), 229. Tisias was campaigning in Melos at the time of the Olympics.

⁵⁵ The reading is uncertain, but the meaning is apparently that it was Diomedes' team which won, i.e. took first place.

Since Plutarch, there have been various attempts to reconcile the Tisias suit with the Diomedes suit by treating them as one and the same action,⁵⁶ on the grounds, presumably, that there could hardly have been two Athenians who provided support to Alcibiades to send teams to Olympia and who later started actions against him in relation to the teams. However, as we have seen, that Alcibiades received support from more than one quarter to finance his Olympic competition is not just likely but almost certain, and the better conclusion is that Diomedes and Tisias are *different* individuals who *both* assisted with a team. The pre-Plutarch sources suggest different lawsuits: one for eight talents directed against the father in 407, in which Alcibiades at the entrance procedure uses his influence to have a team of Athenian origin (Diomedes') inscribed as his own, and one for five talents directed against the son relating to a team bought from the Argive state (initiated by Tisias). It is likely that Plutarch has made an editorial intervention to try to reconcile the discrepancy of names.⁵⁷

As well as competing (presumably) with a team or teams from his own personal stud, Alcibiades appears to have been buying teams to win the victory, through behind-the-scenes deals. Does the use of teams acquired from others undermine the all-important quality of the victory, its *megaloprepeia*? Perhaps, but [Andocides] 4 (examined further below) seems concerned rather by the underhand methods used than by the acquisition of the teams themselves. We do find chariot racing criticized on the grounds that success is achieved by money rather than virtue,⁵⁸ but it is likely that the all-important thing was the victory itself, and how it was won was secondary.

Moreover, as I argued above, there is evidence of support for Alcibiades' Olympic competition from the anti-Spartan alliance: Argos. The team which Tisias alleged Alcibiades had taken from him was bought from the city of Argos (Isoc. 16.1): it was presumably from the Argive public stud,⁵⁹ which had produced a victory in the Olympic chariot race in 480 and 472. To effect this, Alcibiades probably used his connections among the leading men of Argos, which had been pivotal in his Argive policy of the preceding years. This is Plutarch's conclusion (*Alc.* 12.3): he says (probably his own suggestion rather than from a source) that he used his influence in Argos (*μέγα δυνάμενον καὶ φίλους ἔχοντα πολλούς*) to persuade them to sell him the chariot team. The willingness of the Argive state to hand over their public team to an individual from a foreign city is remarkable. If the team was capable of beating the Spartans in 416, it is most surprising that Alcibiades was allowed to race it: this 'stepping in' to the position of the Argive

⁵⁶ See Gribble (n. 4), 98–100 and the works cited there.

⁵⁷ Plutarch had the Isocrates speech to hand as he wrote the *Life*, but not [Andocides] 4 (see below).

⁵⁸ Xen. *Ages.* 20.1: Agesilaus persuades Cynisca to enter a chariot at Olympia, wishing to show the Greeks that 'victory was not won by any *areté*, but wealth and expense'. As Kyle (n. 29), 191 notes, such a sentiment may be partly inspired by Alcibiades' victory, and by Spartan bitterness at being so eclipsed in 416.

⁵⁹ ἄρμα δημόσιον (Plut. *Alc.* 16.1): S.G. Miller, 'The organisation and functioning of the Olympic games', in D.J. Phillips and D. Pritchard (edd.), *Sport and Festival in the Ancient Greek World* (Swansea, 2003), 1–41, at 27 suggests that the creation of a public stud to breed teams for Olympic victory allows the city to achieve a victory which is truly that of the city rather than an individual, and may suggest a move by the city to rein in the influence of aristocratic victors. If so, it is interesting that Athens never created such a resource. Alcibiades was in Argos earlier that summer (Thuc. 5.84), which gave him the opportunity to negotiate the deal.

polis parallels his fulfilling of roles which might be expected to belong to his own city, Athens, which we will explore further below.

Finally, there is the story that Athenian allies, presumably as a result of client or *xenia* relations with Alcibiades, contributed to his Olympic competition and display:

The Ephesians erected for him a Persian pavilion twice as big as the civic pavilion, the Chians provided sacrificial victims and provisions for the horses; the wine and the other expenditure he exacted [*προσέταξε*] from the Lesbians.⁶⁰ ([Andoc.] 4.30)

This anecdote is hard to analyse, for it must be read through the filter both of its invective context, and the uncertain status of [Andocides] 4. I have argued elsewhere⁶¹ that this speech – which purports to be a speech directed against Alcibiades at a debate associated with the famous ostracism of Hyperbolus – is a later composition, but one which contains a wealth of historical detail which, when capable of being tested, is accurate, and that the author went to some pains to achieve this: that he was a student of history as well as declamation. To gather his facts, the author must have supplemented oral anecdote with his knowledge of written texts, for example those speeches against Alcibiades and his son from the Olympia lawsuits which have not survived. So I think that in this passage we are not dealing with pure invention, and that real behaviour by these cities or individuals in them underlies this text.⁶² (Whether we can always read the arguments of the speech as the sort of thing a person might have said against Alcibiades in the late fifth century is less clear.)

In the normal pattern of civic expenditure, spending proceeds from the giver to the beneficiaries, as evidence of his wealth and magnificence and to establish a bond of hospitality between them. As Schmitt-Pantel points out,⁶³ Alcibiades' spending, as depicted in [Andocides] reverses this: or rather there is a two-way flow of goods, the clients supporting the patron. Indeed, this may be the point of [Andocides'] invective: Alcibiades' display was not really *megaloprepeia*; he could not really afford the spending. This invective depiction suggests his display was achieved by a personal exaction, of a sort of 'tribute' (*προσέταξε*) from Athens' allies. It is intended to suggest another form of gift relations – a 'feudal' tax showing personal subjection to an individual, like that of Themistocles or the Persian King, rather than a money contribution more fitting to Greek cities, allies of Athens.

The very unaffordability of Alcibiades' Olympic participation gives credibility to claims that he was assisted by cities from the Athenian alliance. It is perhaps more likely to have come from individual men of substance in the relevant cities, rather than from the cities themselves. There is other evidence of specific connections between Alcibiades and leading people in allied states. Alcibiades' father had probably been responsible for the Tribute Decree, and Alcibiades himself had participated in a commission to reassess the tribute in 425.⁶⁴ So there was

⁶⁰ Satyrus at Ath. 12.534b adds Cyzicus, providing the victims for sacrifice.

⁶¹ See D. Gribble, 'Rhetoric and history in [Andocides] 4, *Against Alcibiades*', *CQ* 47 (1997), 367–91.

⁶² Schmitt-Pantel (n. 4), 199, noting the difficulty of analysing the reality of the behaviour of the allies, concludes that such behaviour may have been explicable by the fascination which everyone felt for Alcibiades.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 200.

⁶⁴ Tribute Decree: Davies (n. 18), 16. On the 425 reassessment: [Andoc.] 4.11, with convincing circumstantial detail.

ample opportunity for Alcibiades to build up a base of influence among Athenian allies, specifically, it appears, in Ionia.⁶⁵ The motivations for assisting Alcibiades in this way could have included a desire for influence with a man rapidly becoming the leading political figure in Athens, a repaying of favour, or a deposit for future favour, or simply a desire to be associated with Alcibiades' astounding and unrepeatable display. Alcibiades' Olympic participation in 416 seems to have taken on a semi-official character, supported from a variety of quarters, including leading Athenians. In this context, the support from the allied cities is less surprising: they saw it as supporting Athens.⁶⁶

ALCIBIADES' DISPLAY AND ENTERTAINMENT AT OLYMPIA

Because of the sensation caused by Alcibiades' victory and attendance at Olympia and their effect on politics, we have more evidence (through Thucydides, Isocrates 16 and in particular [Andocides] 4) for Alcibiades' *theôria* than for any other individual in the Classical period. Putting this together with our knowledge of the festival from other sources, we can reconstruct the details of his attendance.

Alcibiades' athletic competition was accompanied by performance of wealth display and aristocratic entertainment. This was a form of competition almost as important as the athletic one, designed to establish the reputation of the spender for *megaloprepeia* on a Panhellenic stage. It was a competition where the spender found himself competing not just with other individuals, but with other cities, and potentially with his own *polis*.

Apart from all this, in his sacrifices, and the other expenditures in relation to the festival, so lavishly and magnificently did he conduct them that the public displays of the others [τὰ κοινὰ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων] appeared inferior to his own private displays.⁶⁷ (Isoc. 16.34)

Isocrates is vague about the details – tents and feasts were probably harder to square with the concept of an expense which enhanced the prestige of the city. But Alcibiades' enemies were keen enough to describe it, and the details are recorded in [Andocides].

First, there was his magnificent pavilion. At Olympia, as many as 80,000 spectators populated a Glastonbury-like tent city surrounding the sanctuary.⁶⁸ Standing out

⁶⁵ See Gribble (n. 4), 82–9 and n. 144 specifically on Ionia.

⁶⁶ Some support for the idea that accepting help in this way was conceivable comes from its treatment by Plutarch (*Alc.* 12.1) who merely treats the allies' behaviour as *philotimia* enhancing the glory of Alcibiades' display (though perhaps he is influenced by later 'client'-type patterns of patronage and spending of his own day). It may have been possible for Alcibiades to accept support of this kind without undermining the fundamental point of his hospitality, though it left him open to the kind of negative depictions we see in [Andocides]. We see that here, as elsewhere, Plutarch did not use [Andoc.] 4 in composing the *Life*, though he is aware of most of the details in it. He repeats the details of the story of the allies' support of Alcibiades exactly as in [Andocides], but without any apparent awareness that it is a hostile depiction.

⁶⁷ Likewise Thucydides' Alcibiades says he 'organized the other things in a way worthy of my victory' (6.16.2).

⁶⁸ On conditions at the festival, see Kyle (n. 29), 133; also N. Crowther, 'Visiting the Olympic games in ancient Greece: travel and conditions for athletes and spectators', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 18.4 (2001), 37–52. On pilgrims, see Dillon (n. 29).

among the tents were the 'public' tents of the official religious delegates of the cities and the magnificently decorated pavilions of powerful and wealthy individuals, like that of Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, which Lysias in his Olympic oration in 388 B.C. urged the Greeks to tear down:

... decorated with gold and purple and much other wealth. For Dionysius had sent delegates (*theôroi*) to the festival bringing a sacrifice to the god, and magnificent was the equipment of the delegates in the sanctuary and expensive, so that the tyrant would be more admired by Hellas.⁶⁹ (Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 29)

This gives an idea of what Alcibiades' 'Persian' pavilion at Olympia must have looked like. According to [Andocides] it was distinguished by its size ('twice as big as that of the city') and was richly decorated. An extensive description of such a structure survives in Euripides' *Ion*, the magnificent pavilion Ion uses to entertain the Delphians: 100 feet square, 'large enough to entertain the whole town', decorated with marvellous mythical and astronomical scenes, and hung with tapestries showing mythical battles and naval battles between Greeks and Persians, with Athenian significance.⁷⁰

Others at Olympia will have had a pavilion for entertaining, but the greater its size and splendour, the more likely were comparisons to the 'tyrannical' pavilions of Dionysius, or those of Hieron, tyrant of Syracuse, which Themistocles is said to have asked to be torn down in 476.⁷¹ These dynasts used the Olympics both to demonstrate their magnificence and to gain acceptance through symbolic incorporation into the Greek world by their presence at the Hellenic festival. Though the Greeks had good enough reasons to want to pull down these dynasts' tents, their sumptuous individual displays, embodied in rich pavilions, suggest the replacing of the city by the individual,⁷² and the excessive display of wealth by an individual.

In the case of Dionysius or Hieron, the tyrant's display replaced, or constituted, the display of the *polis*: it was not clear whether it was Dionysius' or Syracuse's, or both. In the case of individuals and dynasts of other cities, their display of wealth *coexisted* with those of the cities, individual competing with city, including potentially their own city. Their hospitality and grand sacrifices took place outside the context of the sumptuary customs of the *polis*, or liturgical laws which curtailed spending, and harnessed it in the service of, within the rules of, and to the glorification of the city. In the festival of entertainment and display outside the sanctuary boundaries, individuals and cities competed jealously to create an impression of power, just as they did within the sanctuary through monuments and statues. In 416, the watching Greeks could decide for themselves whether Alcibiades' magnificent pavilion, dwarfing the official Athenian pavilion, demonstrated the vigour of Athens, or rather the disturbing power of its leading individual.

⁶⁹ Cf. Diod. Sic. 14.109.

⁷⁰ Eur. *Ion* 1142–65. On Ion's pavilion, see Schmitt-Pantel (n. 4), 216–20. Euripides' description of Ion's pavilion in this play, dated to around 414–412, may well reflect festival tents which he was familiar with, including the famous one of Alcibiades, or that of the Athenian delegation. Depictions of Salamis could be a fitting decoration for either.

⁷¹ Plut. *Them.* 25.1; Ael. *VH* 9.5.

⁷² On the relationship between city and tyrant in the participation by the Sicilian tyrants in Panhellenic festivals, see S. Harrell, 'King or private citizen: fifth-century Sicilian tyrants at Olympia and Delphi', *Mnemosyne* 55 (2002), 439–64.

Apart from signalling wealth and prestige, and presumably accommodating the individual and his entourage, the purpose of such a pavilion was entertainment, to renew and extend the network of connections, and to cement them through the bonds of hospitality.⁷³

Here again, city and individual must have competed, with leading individuals and state delegates being received both at the Athenian pavilion and that of Alcibiades (in [Andocides] the Ionians, and perhaps Sicilians and Western Greeks, anxious to create relations with Athens' leading imperialist). It was an easy step to the allegation that the allies were paying court to him, that their assistance in his achievements was not just financial support, but the paying of feissance, so that Alcibiades' pavilion becomes, in the invective depiction, a 'Persian' pavilion, like that where the Persian King receives the tribute-feasting of his Ionian subjects. Nor was suspicion of Alcibiades' personal diplomacy unjustified, for these personal links in the cities of the empire could and would be used later to bring cities in and out of the Athenian alliance. It was no empty fear that Athens' allies could be in reality clients of its leading statesman.⁷⁴

Alcibiades' 'tyrannical' display through festival competes with the Athenians' own conception of themselves as the tyrant city. The Athenians were used to, and apparently not averse to, the comparison of their own empire to a tyranny. Moreover, as Lisa Kallet shows, they regarded their civic displays, those spectacles of architecture and festival which made Athens famous through the Greek world and entertained its citizens, as funded by the tribute of the empire.⁷⁵ The Athenian festivals were both a product and a presentation of their empire. But in Alcibiades' Olympic display, at least in [Andocides'] account, Alcibiades replaces the tyrant city Athens, as receiver of allied tribute, to fund his own personal festival display, demonstrating his own tyrannical influence rather than the city's and outspending the city in magnificence.

In [Andocides], Alcibiades' undermining and insulting of the city is presented as the same type of conduct as his exclusion of Diomedes:

While the Spartans allow even their own allies to compete against them and win, Alcibiades will not even allow competition from his fellow citizens, but has made a clear statement that he will not allow anyone to engage in rivalry with him. As a result of this, it is inevitable that the [allied] cities will desire our enemies, but hate us. ([Andoc.] 4.28)

It is apparent from this that the leading cities, or their powerful citizens engaged in the competition, would attempt to put pressure on their allies not to compete, in order to secure their own victory and prestige. Cities and individuals could and would orchestrate a victory for themselves in the Panhellenic games by the elimina-

⁷³ On the role of intercity festivals in creating and cementing elite networks (and the attitude of the city towards such activity), see e.g. Morgan (n. 6), 218–19 and the articles in S. Hornblower and C. Morgan (edd.), *Pindar's Poetry, Patrons, and Festivals: From Archaic Greece to the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2007).

⁷⁴ Note Athens' fear that the Argives would leave the Sicilian expedition if Alcibiades was recalled (Thuc. 6.61); or Alcibiades' betrayal of the Athenian strategy at Catana (Thuc. 6.74). See further Gribble (n. 4), 84–5. On his *xenia* links, see G. Hermann, *Ritual Friendship in the Greek City* (Cambridge, 1987), 116–61.

⁷⁵ Kallet (n. 18). Kallet notes (56) that the *demos* were less concerned about individual expenditure because it 'outspent every individual in magnificence'. At Olympia in 416, this comfortable schema was dramatically reversed.

tion of other contestants: Alcibiades' attempt to maximize the number of his own list entries and exclude his rivals is part of a more general pattern of behaviour. But Alcibiades, [Andocides] claims, has gone a step further, cutting out even his fellow citizens, and *a fortiori* making it clear to the allies how they will be treated – a tyrannical behaviour pattern, going beyond the normal gerrymandering of the result.

It is important that the speech singles out the allies here not just as willing or unwilling participants in Alcibiades' largesse, but as a key *audience* among the Olympic spectators of the city's performance (in its widest sense) there. As recent studies show,⁷⁶ the Athenians arranged their own civic festivals, to which they invited their allies, as displays of the city's power, wealth and culture. When the city was thus on display before the watching gaze of the allies, there was considerable sensitivity to its depiction, as we see from the charges allegedly laid by Cleon against Aristophanes.⁷⁷ At Panhellenic festivals, it was not just the Spartans who were sensitive to the impact of an exclusion from the festival on their reputation among the Peloponnesians; the Athenians too were on display to their allies. In [Andocides], Alcibiades' claim in Thucydides that his personal displays of magnificence enhance the impression of the city's power is neatly turned. Instead of an impression of Athens' power, they convey her subjection (overturning the carefully orchestrated presentations of the Athenians' civic festivals):

... he, having taken the money of the allies, is not subject to any of these sanctions, but having carried out these acts, has been awarded *σιτήσις* in the *prytaneion*, and what is more makes much of his victory, as though he has not far rather dishonoured the city than won her a crown.
([Andoc.] 4.31)

EPINIKIA

The wealthy athlete's celebration of his victory – *epinikia* – can be seen as three elements: victory feast, victory sacrifice and victory song.⁷⁸

Alcibiades arranged a great victory feast on the evening of the third day of the festival, following his victory on the previous day.⁷⁹ This feast is mentioned at the beginning of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* as one of a number of famous Olympic feasts 'for the whole festival' – a victory feast financed by the victor on open invitation to the festival.⁸⁰ We can compare the feast put on by Ion in Euripides' *Ion*, which was open to all Delphians:

In the middle of the pavilion, ready for the banquet, Ion had placed mixing bowls of gold; and now a herald made a proclamation, raising himself on tip-toe, inviting any Delphian who wished to come to the feast. As soon as the place was full, they put

⁷⁶ See the articles cited in n. 5.

⁷⁷ *Ar. Ach.* 377–82, 502–3.

⁷⁸ See B. Currie, 'Epinician choregia: funding a Pindaric chorus', in L. Athanassaki and E. Bowie (edd.), *Archaic and Classical Choral Song: Performance, Politics and Dissemination* (Berlin, 2011), 255–95, at 263: 'we should think in general of an epinician celebration as a composite event comprising victory sacrifice (τὰ ἐπινίκια θύειν), a victory feast (τὰ ἐπινίκια ἐστῆν), and a victory song (ἐπινίκιοι ἀοιδαί).

⁷⁹ On the programme of the games, see H.M. Lee, 'The program and schedule of the ancient Olympic games', *Nikephoros* Suppl. 6 (Hildesheim, 2001); and Miller (n. 59).

⁸⁰ *Ath.* 1.3e. Currie (n. 78) collects texts relating to the practice of the victor's feasting of the festival.

garlands on their heads and enjoyed the lavish meal that was provided. When they had eaten to their heart's content ... [the attendant] brought jugs and poured out water for washing hands, burnt resin to scent the air, and sent gold wine cups going round ...⁸¹
(Eur. *Ion* 1170–6, tr. Vellacott)

The meat for this feast will have come from Alcibiades' victory sacrifice (also called *epinikia*) earlier in the day,⁸² which was also on a magnificent scale (Isoc. 16.34). Alcibiades' sacrifice took place, it seems, on the morning of the third day of the festival, shortly before the great procession and hecatomb to Olympian Zeus. This was the pivot of the festival, the religious event to which the games were, in one sense, an embellishment.⁸³ While the sporting events emphasized the contest between the cities, the sacrifice and the feast of the official delegates which followed emphasized inclusion and participation, and the participation of the *polis* religion in the shared cults.⁸⁴ To take part in the sacrifice was a demonstration and instantiation of the *polis* belonging to the Hellenic community; hence the lengths the Spartans were prepared to go to in order to avoid exclusion from it in 420.

No description of the procession and sacrifice to Zeus survives. However, the civic delegations (led by the official city representatives – *architheōroi*), together with the *Hellēnodikai* and Zeus' priests, will have processed through the sanctuary, watched by the all the participants in the festival, to Zeus's ash altar. The delegations will have been magnificently equipped, before the watching eyes of the assembled *theōroi*, at this most conspicuous and public demonstration of the city's religious identity.⁸⁵

Yet even here, according to [Andocides], the display of the city was both undermined and replaced by that of the individual who had eclipsed the city in all other respects at the festival and sacrifice. In this account, Alcibiades used for his own sacrificial procession the city's *pompeia*,⁸⁶ official Athenian implements to be displayed and carried in the great procession and sacrifice to Zeus:⁸⁷

To demonstrate that he was insulting not only Diomedes, but the whole city, having asked the *architheōroi* for the *pompeia*, saying he was going to use them for his *epinikia* on the day before the sacrifice [i.e. the great sacrifice to Zeus], he deceived them, and refused to give them back, wanting to use the gold hand-washing vessels and incense burners on the next day before the city could do so. So those of the foreigners who did not know they were ours, seeing the civic procession, which took place after that of Alcibiades, thought that we were using his *pompeia*; while those who had been told by Athenian citizens, or else were familiar with his ways, held us in ridicule, seeing one man more powerful (*μειζιον δυνάμενον*) than the whole city.
([Andoc.] 4.29)

⁸¹ On this passage see Schmitt-Pantel (n. 4), 209–21.

⁸² Ath. 1.3e: 'having sacrificed to Zeus he feasted the whole festival'. Satyrus at Ath. 12.534b says the Cyziceans provided the victims for sacrifice.

⁸³ There is little in modern scholarship on the religious element of the Panhellenic festivals. On the sacrifice, see Miller (n. 59), 18; Lee (n. 79), 51–2.

⁸⁴ C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'What is *polis* religion?', in O. Murray and S. Price (edd.), *The Greek City* (Oxford, 1990), 295–322, at 298. On processions as civic ritual, see A. Kavoulaki, 'Processional performance and the democratic *polis*', in S. Goldhill and R. Osborne (edd.), *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge, 1999), 293–328.

⁸⁵ Like the equipment, which Dionysius sent with his *theōroi* in 388, 'so that he would be admired by Hellas' (Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 29 – cited above).

⁸⁶ On *pompeia*: Kavoulaki (n. 84), 300–1.

⁸⁷ They are apparently generic items which could be used for either purpose, rather than specific processional items used by Alcibiades for a private purpose.

The upstaging of the city is exacerbated in this passage by a deception: Alcibiades, in borrowing the vessels, had apparently claimed that he intended to use them on the day *before* the great Zeus sacrifice, but then refused to return them.⁸⁸ In [Andocides'] invective, to the usurping of the city through display and entertainment is added the 'theft' of its religious implements, leading to ridicule at the ceremony where the city's religious and civic identity should be affirmed and the power of the city admired. In contrast to the Alcibiades of Thucydides 6.16, who portrays his displays as enhancing the impression of Athenian power, for [Andocides] they instead showcase to the international audience the humiliating subservience of the Athenian polity to the powerful individual.

Yet this story of deception conceals a more significant fact: the *architheōroi* (Athenian liturgists, who led the official delegation⁸⁹) *agreed* to lend Alcibiades the *pompeia*.⁹⁰ Perhaps they were allies of Alcibiades: it is hard otherwise to imagine the liturgist assisting in a display which cast his own expenditure for the city into the shade. Or rather, perhaps this is further evidence for semi-official complicity by the city in Alcibiades' displays, that they could be seen, as Alcibiades saw them, as contributing to civic prestige⁹¹ (with Alcibiades assisted not just by Tisias, a serving Athenian *stratēgos*, but even the *architheōroi* themselves).

The invective of [Andocides] illustrates the acute sensitivity to the effect of event and display before the eyes of the Greeks at the festival. It also exemplifies a more general unease felt by the city about the activity at Panhellenic festivals of its leading individuals, who pursued personal relations of *xenia*, put on displays, and even practised religious rites, which at best were parallel to, and potentially were in competition with, the official presentations and activity of the city itself. In the case of Alcibiades' *theōria*, there is an apparent ambiguity or ambivalence about its relationship to the reputation of the city. The official *architheōroi* assist Alcibiades by lending him the vessels, but the results of that loan are then depicted as usurping the city. Was it acceptable for Alcibiades to use the city's vessels in his own display? Or for the allied cities to provide resources for his feasting and sacrifice? Does the magnificence of Alcibiades' success enhance or undermine the city? The answers are not clear.

⁸⁸ [Andoc.] 4.29: the implication is apparently that the *architheōroi* would not have lent the vessels if they had known that they were to be used in a ceremony immediately preceding the official sacrifices. L. Weniger, 'Das Hochfest des Zeus in Olympia I: die Ordnung der Agone', *Klio* 4 (1904), 125–51 takes [Andoc.] 4.29 to mean that Alcibiades' *epinikia* in fact took place on the day before the great sacrifice to Zeus. But the better interpretation is that the words 'on the previous day' are part of what Alcibiades told the *architheōroi*. As it turned out (perhaps because there was simply no time at the end of the second day of the festival), Alcibiades' sacrifice actually took place at the very start of the third day.

⁸⁹ Their main purpose was apparently to organize the participation in the sacrifices: see N. Crowther, 'Athlete and state: qualifying for the Olympic games in ancient Greece', *Journal of Sport History*, 23 (1996), 34–43, at 37–8; Dillon (n. 29), 201. On *theōroi* and performance see Goldhill (n. 7), 6–7.

⁹⁰ We do not know who held this liturgy in 416, but it was not Alcibiades. It is sometimes claimed that he was the liturgist, presumably on the basis of Thuc. 6.16.2: but *theōria* just means personal attendance at a festival: see Hornblower (n. 1) on 6.16.2; Dillon (n. 29), 11–18. The liturgy was later held by Andocides: Andoc. 1.132. On the Athenian liturgical *theōroi* to Olympia, see Dillon (n. 29), 234 n. 125.

⁹¹ Cf. Dillon (n. 29), 22, noting the role of the official *theōroi* in assisting the city's other *theōroi*.

The third element of Alcibiades' *epinikia* was a choral performance of a poetic work which might serve as a long-lasting literary memorial of the victory. As Bruno Currie has shown, epinician choral performance was poised between the 'private' family world and the civic, with a number of possible performance and re-performance scenarios which might be more or less 'civic', and with an ambiguous relationship to civic ideology.⁹² Though commissioned privately, the epinician poem may be performed publicly in civic contexts. Though deeply rooted in an aristocratic value system, it typically positions the victor in relation to the city. The victory ode illustrates the uncertain 'halfway' status of Panhellenic competition and spending with regard to the official public life of the city.

A poem celebrating Alcibiades' victory circulated in antiquity, and was attributed to Euripides. This attribution is doubtful: all we know of it is a partial citation by Plutarch, and he records doubt about the attribution⁹³ (associations of Alcibiades with other famous fifth-century figures is typical of later invented traditions). Whoever the author, it is likely enough that the poem is a contemporary commission by Alcibiades himself.⁹⁴

Was it composed for an original performance at the festival itself? We know that some odes were performed at the festival. Currie presents support for the victory feast (particularly the 'public' feast on open invitation) as a performance context for the victory ode.⁹⁵ The idea is attractive: victory sacrifice on the morning of the third day of the festival (immediately followed by the great public sacrifice to Zeus), and great victory feast in the evening, including performance of an epinician (perhaps by Euripides himself). But there is no firm evidence for the performance context. What remains of the poem is fragmentary, the content generic. The only specific feature is the enumeration of the places in the opening lines. We could perhaps imagine these added by the poet at the last moment to an already prepared generic ode: that would be in keeping with Alcibiades' careful advanced preparation of all elements of his spending at Olympia:

⁹² B. Currie, 'Reperformance scenarios for Pindar's odes', in C. Mackie (ed.), *Oral Performance and Its Context: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece* (Leiden, 2004), 49–69, and his article cited at n. 78. On the civic context of the victory ode see Kurke (n. 18), ch. 7.

⁹³ C.M. Bowra, 'Euripides' epinician for Alcibiades', *Historia* 9 (1960), 68–79 (reprinted in id., *On Greek Margins* [Oxford 1970], 134–48), argues for Euripidean authorship. Before Bowra, Wilamowitz (U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Griechische Tragödien übersetzt von Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf* [Berlin, 1919²], at 292) thought it very unlikely that Euripides was the author: 'die Echtheit des Gedichtes, dessen Reste banal sind, war schon im Altertum bestritten, und fast immer hat in solchen Fällen der Zweifel das bessere Recht.' Bowra's arguments for Euripidean authorship are not particularly strong (mainly similarities of diction and style), but his position has since generally been accepted (though note Gomme, Andrewes and Dover [n. 49], 4.246–7; and N.J. Lowe at p. 176 in Hornblower and Morgan [n. 73]). We are now likely to be more sceptical than Bowra about ascriptions of works which link their authors to famous historical personages.

⁹⁴ But there is no reason to suppose, with Mann (n. 1), that the mere fact of Alcibiades' commissioning a victory ode would have associated him in Athenian minds with the Sicilian tyrants. D.G. Smith, 'Alcibiades, Athens and the Tyranny of Sicily', *GRBS* 49 (2009), 363–89, argues that the language of Thucydides and Euripides recalls that of Pindar's epinicians for Sicilian tyrants.

⁹⁵ Currie (n. 78), 289, but admitting we lack 'any explicitly attested link between the practice of *thysia* and *hestiasis tes panegyreous* and the performance of epinicians at Olympia'.

<p>Σὲ δ' ἄγαμαι, ὦ Κλεινίου παῖ. Καλὸν ἂ νίκα, <τὸ> κάλλιστον δ', ὃ μηδεὶς ἄλλος Ἑλλάνων <ἐλαχεν>, ἄρματι πρῶτα δραμεῖν καὶ δεύτερα καὶ τρίτατα, βῆναι τ' ἀπονητὶ Διὸς στεφθέντ' ἐλαίαι κάρυκι βοᾶν παραδοῦναι⁹⁶</p>	<p>I wonder at you, son of Clinias. Fine is the victory, but the finest is, which no other of the Hellenes has achieved, To run first and second and third with the chariot, and to go effortlessly, crowned with Zeus' olive, to give the shout to the herald.</p>
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Whether performed at the victory feast or not, the ambiguous relationship of Alcibiades' spending at Olympia to civic ideology, which is the hallmark of his Olympic *theōria*, invites us to look at the content of the victory ode in this light too. The poem pictures Alcibiades at the moment of being crowned with Zeus' olive wreath, the instant of sublime contact with the divine brought by the victory, accompanied by the sound of the herald's proclamation of his name. But the herald here is clearly announcing Alcibiades' name rather than that of Athens, the sound of a victory never before achieved among the Greeks, an individual victory then, placing Alcibiades in the Panhellenic context of the festival and the history of all participation in it. The poem encourages the reader to adopt the position of the poet-speaker in the first line, an admiring spectator at the victory ceremony, watching the effortlessly (*ἀπονητῶ*)⁹⁷ triumphant Alcibiades go forward to receive the wreath.

There is not much room for the city here, then, but it appears from another Plutarch citation of this work that the city *was* mentioned in the poem: *Χρῆν εὐδαίμονι πρῶτον ὑπάρξαι τὰν πόλιν εὐδόκιμον* ('for a happy man it is necessary in the first place that he have a city of noble renown').⁹⁸ As Bowra notes, the formulation (at least without its context) is apparently poised between the individual-centred claim that Alcibiades is capable of bringing fame to Athens and the humbler claim that his *eudaimonia* is dependent on the city. The sentiment, the interdependence of great man and great city, is similar to that of the opening lines of Pindar, *Pythian* 7, which commemorated the victory of Alcibiades' maternal grandfather, the Alcmaeonid Megacles, in the Pythian games of 486:

The great city of Athens is the finest prelude to lay down as a foundation stone of songs for the mighty family of the Alcmaeonids with their horses. For what fatherland, what house can you inhabit and name that is more illustrious in Hellas? For among all cities travels the report of the citizens of Erechtheus, O Apollo, who made your temple in divine Pytho splendid to behold.
(Pind. *Pyth.* 7.1–12)

Here the Alcmaeonid family (who carried out the renovations to the Apollo temple referred to), the city and the individual victor are linked in a complex relationship of benefaction and interdependence, but also (as the poem goes on to explain) of *phthonos* (envy), for Megacles was ostracized shortly before the date of this poem. The situations which gave rise to the two poems are strangely similar: Alcibiades,

⁹⁶ Text from Bowra (n. 93). See also R. Kannicht, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (2nd ed.), vol. 5 (Göttingen, 2004), T91, and the analysis of the poem by Mann (n. 1).

⁹⁷ Scholars are surprised by the choice of this word. It is true that Pindar typically depicts victories as won only through *ponos*, but hardly chariot victories (the exception being the self-driving Herodotus of Thebes in *Isthmian* 1.42): *ponos* is far from the man who spends the festival richly entertaining guests from the comfort of his splendid pavilion. Moreover *ἀπονητῶ* sits closely with *βῆναι Διὸς στεφθέντ' ἐλαίαι*, the moment of calm and effortless victory.

⁹⁸ The reconstruction of Bowra (n. 93), 77–8, on the basis of Plut. *Dem.* 1.1.

likewise at the pinnacle of fame and glory, was also portraying himself as the victim of *phthonos* (Thuc. 6.16.3), likewise threatened with ostracism and likewise shortly to be expelled from the city.

The elements of the 'Euripides' poem are standard stuff: wonder, unique achievement, mention of forebears, honour to city. There is nothing surprising here. What is perhaps more remarkable is how these epinician elements are repeated in 'civic' presentations: Alcibiades' speech in Thucydides 6.16 and in Isocrates 16. The recurrence of these 'encomiastic' tropes in civic presentations illustrates both the attraction of charismatic Panhellenic victory even to a democratic audience, and the arrogance, unrestrained by the normal restrictions of civic self-presentation, of Alcibiades' public speech.

VISUAL DEPICTIONS

Whether because of actual legislation or, more likely, because of the practice and custom of the Greek and Athenian *polis* in the fifth century, commemorations of the individual in a civic context (naming in writing, or particularly, physical depiction) were restricted.⁹⁹ The memorialization of identifiable individuals in the civic space through statue or painting seems to have been extremely rare: the civic space was reserved for gods and heroes, and for representations of the city itself and its victories (including the personified democratic victory of Harmodius and Aristogiton, or the Eponymous Heroes of the ten tribes).¹⁰⁰ Public visual presentations of an Olympic victor did not form part of the reception of the victory by the city: there were no statues of Alcibiades in the agora.

Later sources record visual depictions of Alcibiades' equestrian victories. Athenaeus¹⁰¹ claims:

Alcibiades returning from Olympia ἀνέθηκεν (probably 'dedicated') two paintings, and Aglaophon was the painter. The one had Olympia and Pythia crowning him, and in the other was a seated Nemea, and on her knees Alcibiades, looking more beautiful than the female faces.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ See e.g. Millett (n. 18), 246–51, arguing that conspicuous distinction was a matter not of private display but public rhetoric, and noting limited exceptions, such as choregic tripods.

¹⁰⁰ See Hölscher (n. 31), 2008 on public civic monuments in Athens and their role in establishing an Athenian political identity or ideology.

¹⁰¹ 534d; Athenaeus cites Satyrus earlier in this passage, but it is not certain that he is the source for all the material in 534 about Alcibiades.

¹⁰² Treatments of the Alcibiades paintings are vitiated by an uncritical attitude to the sources. See M. Robertson, *A History of Greek Art* (Cambridge, 1975), 415–16; J.G. Frazer, *Pausanias' Description of Greece* (London, 1898), 2.266–7; W.J. Schneider, 'Eine Polemik Polemons in den Propylaen. Ein Votivgemälde des Alkibiades – Kontext und Rezeption', *Klio* 81 (1999), 18–44. Bowra (n. 93), 72, while acknowledging Satyrus is not above reporting 'ridiculous tittle-tattle', thinks he may be trusted in this case, since the paintings could be seen by others. On depictions of Alcibiades in general see H.A. Shapiro, 'Alcibiades: the politics of personal style', in O. Palagia (ed.), *Art in Athens during the Peloponnesian War* (Cambridge, 2009), 236–64. Shapiro's article uses such later sources uncritically to develop a picture of the real fifth-century Alcibiades and his self-presentation. Nevertheless the works he collects illustrate the kind of artistic depictions (e.g. of Adonis) which may either have inspired invented accounts, or been identified with Alcibiades, or to which Alcibiades was assimilated by comic poets or biographers.

Plutarch (*Alc.* 16.7) also says that Aristophon painted Nemea having Alcibiades seated in her arms – which, despite the difference of painter's names, sounds like the same painting.¹⁰³ Pausanias (1.22.7) reports seeing in the *pinakothêkê* (by Pausanias' day, a picture gallery in the Propylaea on the Acropolis at Athens), a painting showing 'Alcibiades, and in the picture are signs of the victory of his horses in Nemea', which might be the same as the painting mentioned in Athenaeus (though it could just as easily be a different one, depicting e.g. the figure identified as Alcibiades with his chariot team).

Considerable caution is called for in approaching these texts. The paintings mentioned by Athenaeus are suspiciously suggestive of the baroque inventions of the later *bios* tradition.¹⁰⁴ It is to be expected that images of *hippotrophoi* were later identified as being those of the most famous *hippotrophos* of all, or that later artists depicted the theme. Pausanias provides evidence that a real painting existed by his day in the *pinakothêkê*, depicting a figure identified as Alcibiades and his victory at Nemea. But even if the painting Pausanias saw really was of Alcibiades, and the painting was contemporary, the context of the original presentation of such a painting is not clear. The Athenaeus passage suggests the paintings were 'dedicated', perhaps hung in a temple.¹⁰⁵ The tradition that Alcibiades commissioned Agatharchus to paint in his house does at least go back to Demosthenes rather than Athenaeus.¹⁰⁶ If Alcibiades did commission personal depictions of himself to commemorate his victories, it is more likely that they were for his own house, celebrating the victory of himself and his *oikia*, to be viewed by himself, his guests and his descendants, or perhaps in a temple or other religious structure associated with Alcibiades and his family, than that he was allowed to display them in any public, civic context.

My tentative conclusion is that Alcibiades may well have commissioned a painting of himself to commemorate a chariot victory (the surprising detail that it was for the Nemean games, a victory not recorded elsewhere in the tradition, rather than the Olympics, lends credibility) and that if so, it was for a non-civic, private context, but possibly available for public view. As far as I am aware, we have no other evidence for the use of paintings in this way to commemorate victory (it was all about statues), so the context and significance are exceptionally hard to determine. But a personal commemoration of this sort would be entirely in keeping with the self-presentation of the surviving speeches, and the poem of 'Euripides'.

¹⁰³ The reaction of the Athenians described by Plutarch (the people, delighted, flock to see the picture but the elders see it as evidence of tyranny and *anomia*) probably comes from Plutarch himself.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Duris of Samos, reported by Plut. *Alc.* 32.2: when Alcibiades returned to Athens in 407 'Chrysogonus the victor at the Pythian games piped the tune for the rowers, and Callipides the tragic actor called the stroke', etc. On such later stories, see Gribble (n. 4), 30.

¹⁰⁵ For a possible parallel dedication cf. Plut. *Them.* 22.1–2: Themistocles established a temple to Artemis *Aristoboulê* to remind the Athenians of his own excellent counsel to them, containing a portrait statue of himself. Schneider (n. 102) thinks that the Propylaea functioned already by 415 as a place where such paintings could be hung, and that Alcibiades 'dedicated' the two paintings there.

¹⁰⁶ Dem. 21.147; Plut. *Alc.* 16.5; and see Robertson (n. 102), 414–15.

THE EFFECT OF THE VICTORY

After the Olympics of 416, political events at Athens moved rapidly. Already in the winter of that year, the Athenians were beginning to contemplate intervening in Sicily, with the sending of an embassy to Eggesta (Thuc. 6.6). This returned at the beginning of spring 415 (6.8) and the Athenians immediately voted to send 60 ships to Sicily under the joint command of Nicias and Alcibiades – occasioning the debate at the beginning of Book 6 of Thucydides. According to [Andocides] 4, the ostracism of Hyperbolus also took place at around this time: the dating is unclear, but an ostracism in 416/15 must have taken place before May 415, perhaps at around the time of the Sicilian debate recorded by Thucydides.¹⁰⁷ By the summer, Alcibiades had left Athens as joint commander of the Sicilian force. Shortly afterwards he was convicted of impiety and exiled.

Judging by his speech in Thucydides ('it is right for people with grand designs not to be on a level of equality', Thuc. 6.16.4), Alcibiades' victory helped turn him into a man who feels liberated not just from the constraints of democratic conformity, but to some extent from the normal restraints of the Greek polity. This is a way of speaking which we are meant to see as dangerous and hubristic, which will explain the reaction of the Athenians presaged in the previous chapter 6.15. By 415, Thucydides suggests, Alcibiades had come to see himself as a 'great man', one who should regard opposition to him as the envy of the small, for which he would be recompensed by the admiration of generations to come, a man potentially capable of anything.¹⁰⁸ His incredible Olympic victory was instrumental both in the development of this psychology in Alcibiades, and his ability to practice self-presentation of this sort in Athens.

The scale of Alcibiades' victory had created an unprecedented success for the alliance in the war of propaganda and display in the Peloponnese: in that sense, his expenditure had paid off. But because the attention of the Greek world shifted so decisively and swiftly to Sicily and then to Ionia, and away from the propaganda war in the Peloponnese, its effect was far more limited than anticipated. It is likely that neither side had much time to pay attention either to Olympia or the Peloponnese until after 404.

When the war was over, however, the Spartans moved quickly to set matters in the Peloponnese to rights. They finally took military action against Elis; and in the Olympic sanctuary they set up a Nike monument memorializing Aegospotami, in answer to the Pylos Nike of the Messenians. The action against Elis was, according to Xenophon, an act of revenge for the humiliation of 420.¹⁰⁹ In response to Alcibiades' display of 416 (and to the other rumoured humiliations inflicted on

¹⁰⁷ See P.J. Rhodes, 'The ostracism of Hyperbolus', in R. Osborne and S. Hornblower (edd.), *Ritual, Finance, Politics: Athenian Democratic Accounts presented to David Lewis* (Oxford, 1994), 85–99.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. F.M. Cornford, *Thucydides Mythohistoricus* (London, 1907): 'It seems very unlikely that Alcibiades at such a moment would have used language so offensively boastful ... [it is designed to illustrate a certain state of mind] ... the pride of illustrious birth, the splendour of an Olympian victory such as no private person had ever gained, the superiority which cannot be expected to treat acknowledged inferiors as equals'. While agreeing with Cornford that the passage is designed to illustrate a state of mind, I find it harder to say that Alcibiades could not have used language like this.

¹⁰⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 3.221–3.

the Spartan royal house by Alcibiades), Kyle¹¹⁰ argues that Agesilaus organized a kind of anti-display, encouraging his sister Cynisca to enter and win the chariot race, a decisive demonstration that victory in this event was not a matter of manly prowess, but rather pure wealth. As there was no hope for future competitors of bettering Alcibiades' achievement (Isoc. 16.34), the only response was to undermine it. In this way, the battle of display and counter-display at Olympia went on after Alcibiades' death.

In Athenian politics, on the other hand, Alcibiades' victory had an extremely dramatic effect. If the dating of the ostracism of Hyperbolus to 415 is correct, it is likely that it was partly precipitated by the tremendous access of prestige caused by Alcibiades' Olympic victory, and that the ostracism campaign was dominated by this event, as postulated by [Andocides] 4. In the Sicilian debate, as we see in Thucydides, it was central to the reaction to Alcibiades, and to the speeches in the debate. It led to a situation where politics and the city's affairs became dominated by a debate about Alcibiades.¹¹¹

The effect of the victory was polarizing and led to polarized perceptions of Alcibiades. On the one hand, a person capable of conceiving and bringing about such an unheard-of feat on the Panhellenic stage may well be capable of conquering not just Syracuse but Sicily and Carthage. We have seen how a victor's *kudos* was sought by cities on military enterprises. Both Nicias (Thuc. 6.12.2) and Alcibiades – in his claim that his victory gives him a superior right to hold office (6.16.1) – link the Olympic success to the Sicilian command. It seems likely that for many Athenians, the participation in, and encouragement of, the expedition by the *Olympionikês* Alcibiades was itself a reason for their enthusiasm for it.

On the other hand, it suggested an uncontrollable level of intensely personal ambition of the sort which could be dangerous for the city's policies or even constitution. There was considerable concern about the scale of his expenditure, which created an urgent need for Alcibiades to recover his position through a lucrative command (Thuc. 6.16.2). In the short term, Alcibiades' victory did help bring about his appointment to the Sicilian command, but shortly thereafter led to his condemnation and exile. In the long term, it led to the cycle of appointment to and removal from command which proved so disastrous to Athenian policy.

Indeed, it is remarkable how Alcibiades' subsequent career approximates to the figure of the 'spurned athletic victor', familiar from Greek tradition, who goes on to be a subject of cult: victorious at the games, he is denied honour or *kudos*, cursed and dishonoured, with resulting disaster for the city. Only his readmittance with extraordinary honours to the city can restore the city's fortunes.¹¹² In the same way, following the exile of Alcibiades under the curses of the city's priests, Athens

¹¹⁰ See Kyle (nn. 4 and 29).

¹¹¹ Cf. (for a later date) the final question in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (1420–5).

¹¹² Kurke (n. 46); J. Fontenrose, 'The hero as athlete', *CLAnt* 1 (1968), 73–104. Kurke points out that the examples of the phenomenon mainly date from the beginning of the fifth century, the acme of the victory ode. One example with particular parallels to Alcibiades is the career of Euthycles of Locris: after he won the Olympic pentathlon, a gift from a guest-friend while serving as an ambassador aroused the disgust of the Locrians, who not only condemned him, but mutilated his victor statue; they then suffered famine until told by Delphi 'when you honour the one who is *atimos* you will plough your land', whereupon they made an altar to Euthycles and honoured his statue 'like that of Zeus' (Callim. fr. 84 and 85 Pf.). The story suggests the same mix of distrust of the influence of powerful aristocratic individuals and awe of their achievement which we find in the history of Alcibiades.

suffers disaster in Sicily and Ionia, and reinstates Alcibiades, making him *stratêgos autokratôr*, in this way re-enlisting to the city's cause not just his military ability, but surely also the spurned talismanic power of the victor.

In all these ways, Alcibiades' victory in 416 was instrumental in shaping the direction of his future career and the history of the Athenian city.

CONCLUSION

This article has illustrated how the Olympic festival was a political – and religious – festival as well as an athletic one, a showcase for the agonistic display of political imagery by the competing Greek cities. The behaviour of the elite participants was scrutinized 'politically', both by the participants at the festival and the political audience back home, for implications about their status, the status of their city and the relationship between individual and city. In the political contest at Olympia, the festival of pavilions, feasts, *hippotrophoi* and political speeches – and the display of sacrifices, processions and dinners – were at least as important as the sporting competition.

Alcibiades' actions at Olympia in 416 illustrate the political dimension of the Olympic festival. But, as this article has shown, the Olympic festival (whose significance is underestimated by modern historians, though not by Thucydides, who understood the political significance of the festivals of 420 and 416) was also crucial in the history of events: the development of Alcibiades as a political figure, the origins and eventual failure of the Sicilian expedition, and the fissure in Athenian politics which helped lead to its downfall.

In 416, Alcibiades used the Olympic festival to orchestrate a display intended not just to earn an immortal reputation for himself, but also to have a decisive influence in the history both of Athens and of Greece. In this attempt to use the festival to influence history he succeeded, but not in the way he had intended.

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