From Tyrannicide to Revolution: Aristotle on the Politics of Comradeship

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*T*reatments of collective action in political science, classical Greek history, and democratic theory often focus on the episodic and public-facing dimensions of dissent. This article turns to Aristotle for an account of solidaristic political action whose scale and tempo is sometimes obscured by such engagements. Revisiting The Athenian Constitution's account of the tyrannicides of 514 BCE and the democratic revolution of 508/7 BCE, I argue for the centrality of comradeship to Aristotle's discussions of these episodes. I demonstrate that Aristotle's attention to the politics of comradeship is also legible in Politics 5—which notes the dangers political clubs (hetaireiai) pose to tyranny—as well as Aristotle's references to comrades (hetairoi) in the Nicomachean and Eudemian Ethics. This article contributes to our understanding of the birth of Athenian democracy and how comradeship—a vice, to Aristotle, under ordinary political circumstances—becomes a virtue.

> *In poverty as well as in other misfortunes, people suppose that friends are their only refuge.*
> —Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics 1155a10–12*

INTRODUCTION

In 514 BCE two elite Athenian lovers, Aristogeiton and Harmodius, went down to the Panathenaic Festival to kill a tyrant. As reported by Thucydides, the assassins hoped that after seeing them "make the first move," others in the crowd—even those "not privy to the plot"—would follow suit and "participate in their own liberation." But that hope came to naught. The assassins met their end at the hands of the tyrant's guards (*The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians* 6.56.2–3). Despite their failure, the would-be tyrannicides became cherished ideological exempla. Symbolically and sculpturally recast as "civic heroes" and "founders" of the democracy (McGlew 1993, 153; see Taylor 1991), Aristogeiton and Harmodius came to serve myriad roles for generations of democratic citizens: as "touchstones" of civic beneficence (Azoulay 2017, 122), as representations of public spiritedness (Monoson 2000, 39), and as reminders of the incompatibility of political equality with tyranny (Raaflaub 2003, 64).

In their recent works on anti-tyranny legislation and authoritarian oligarchy in ancient Greece, David

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Teegarden (2014) and Mathew Simonton (2017) draw yet another lesson from the would-be tyrannicides. Building on Timur Kuran (1995) and Michael Suk-Young Chwe's (2001) work on collective action dilemmas, Teegarden and Simonton argue that publicly visible "first strikes"—like the attempt by Aristogeiton and Harmodius—harbor the potential to produce a "knowledge cascade" among those who, but for their more courageous comrades, would remain ignorant of their shared preferences and thus disinclined to act. Central to ancient Greek views of anti-tyrannical resistance, they argue, are the conditions that permit the public dispersal and mutual acknowledgment of shared beliefs among a wide range of actors and how such "common knowledge" brings otherwise isolated individuals together in a revolutionary "bandwagon" (Simonton 2017, 65, 156–158, 230, 246–247; Teegarden 2014, 32–43).

Simonton and Teegarden are not the first to discern the work of such bandwagons in Athenian history. Both follow the work of Josiah Ober, whose path-breaking essays on the Athenian revolution of 508/7 BCE describe how a seemingly "spontaneous riot" deposed the Spartan-backed ruler, Isagoras, and set the stage for the rise of the democracy (1996, 46; 2007). Also drawing from Kuran, Ober (2007, 103n.18), however, shines light on the revolutionary agency of the non-elite "mass" over the bravery of elites like Aristogeiton and Harmodius. It was at this "moment," Ober argues, that "the demos stepped onto the historical stage as a collective agent, a historical actor in its own right and under its own name" (86). According to Ober, the *dēmos*' "episteme-shattering-and-creating" emergence exemplifies a political dynamic often occluded by historiographic investments in the *longue durée* of historical change (89), namely, how "discrete events" and "moments of rupture" can provide long-lasting and "fundamental changes in both ideologies and institutions" (1996, 32).

In scrutinizing these moments in classical Athens, Ober, Simonton, and Teegarden join company with a range of contemporary democratic theorists interested in the episodic and public-facing dimensions of dissent.

According to Jacques Rancière (1999, 29), where dominant social orders police a "partition of the perceptible" that renders certain groups illegible, citizens nevertheless retain the ability to enact the equality those orders deny. Highlighting the ephemerality of such enactments, Rancière (2010) maintains that a "political demonstration is … always of the moment" and thus "always on the shore of its own disappearance" (39). Judith Butler (2015) similarly highlights the "embodied performance" of dissent in "the visual field," and how "unpredictable and transitory gathering[s]" demand attention to broader conditions of livability and interdependence (18–20). Describing the "fugitive" experience of democratic action as "episodic" and "rare," Sheldon Wolin draws attention to "a simple fact: that ordinary individuals are capable of creating new cultural patterns of commonality at any moment" (2016a, 97–98; 2016b, 100).[1]

Theorists of democratic disruption and collective action offer invaluable insights for citizens and scholars. They illuminate the exclusions that consolidate identitarian boundaries as well as how these boundaries are disrupted. They weaken the grip of millennia-long polemics against "the mob" and enliven our sense of political possibility. In my view, however, their common focus on the visuality and novelty of demotic power unduly compresses the temporality of dissent, thus squeezing out the slower, less-perceptible work that often precedes and conditions apparently self-contained moments of rupture. They obscure, in short, what James Scott (1990) calls "infrapolitics," which names forms of political action on the part of collectivities that, "like infrared rays," may be less visible to "a social science attuned to the relatively open politics of liberal democracies and to loud, headline-grabbing protests," but which nevertheless furnish "the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action on which our attention has generally been focused" (183–184).

To draw out the infrapolitical dimensions of collective action, this article turns to Aristotle, one of our primary sources on both the attempted tyrannicide of 514 BCE and the revolution of 508/7 BCE. I argue that Aristotle offers insight into a scale and tempo of dissent underexplored by theorists of democratic disruption and revolutionary bandwagons. Aristotle alters the scale of anti-tyrannical dissent by privileging not heroic first movers but the conduct and power of solidaristic groups. He adjusts its tempo by treating anti-tyrannical resistance as emerging over time, specifically, in the cultivation within solidaristic groups of habits of conviction, desire, and trust. Aristotle thus brings into focus features of collective action that are irreducible to social epistemology and lurk behind moments of upheaval. Providing a new understanding of "the primal scene of democracy" (Cartledge 2016, 6), I demonstrate that the scene staged by the tyrannicides and the Athenian revolution depends

less on the heroism of elites or democratic masses than on the presence or absence of comradeship.[2] Jodi Dean (2019) has recently argued that, for all of the history of political thought's focus on the citizen, there is "no account of the comrade" (61), one who, in partisanship, identifies with those "on the same side" of political struggle (26) and eschews the state as their defining "frame of reference" (72). I maintain that Aristotle provides just such an account.

When it comes to dissent, Aristotle might appear to be a strange interlocutor. Aristotle is widely considered to possess a "conservative cast of mind" that privileges political stability and tradition over revolutionary change (Bodéüs 1993, 124; Kraut 2002, 354; cf. Lockwood 2015, 73), and rejects political partisanship as a form of "discriminatory elitism" (Skultety 2008). Highlighting virtues like equity (epiekeia) that can mitigate hostilities among those who rule and are ruled in turn (Allen 2004, 129–133), Aristotle is said to prefer forms of civic friendship that seek to "remedy" the dangers of factional conflict (Frank 2005, 148), and to attend to the modest contestation characteristic of "ordinary political life" (Yack 1993, 117). Scholars argue that Aristotle is so opposed to the destabilizing effects of dissent that he would prefer to see tyrants moderate and maintain their power than see their subjects overthrow them (de Lara 2017, 29–30; Destrée 2015, 218–223). These scholars give good textual reasons to take Aristotle to be opposed to the "revolutionary term of address, 'comrade'" (Yack 1993, 123).

There are good historical reasons as well. The antique designation of comrade (hetairos) is most commonly (though not exclusively) associated with the political clubs (hetaireiai) of democratic Athens, which served primarily as fraternity-like associations—populated by wealthy aristocrats who joined together for dinners and drinking parties—and patronage systems for prominent elites and their closest associates (Calhoun 1913; Connor 1971, 25–32). Most famous for their anti-democratic revolutionary pursuits, these clubs provided conspiratorial enclaves for Athenian elites and helped usurp the rule of the dēmos to found two oligarchies: the Four Hundred in 411 BCE (War 8.48.3-4) and the Thirty in 404/3 BCE (Ath. Pol. 34.3).[3] Thucydides reports that the Four Hundred undermined trust, confidence, and outlets for political action among Athenian citizens (War 8.66), anticipating what Aristotle would later call the "three heads" of tyranny: the pursuit of small thoughts (mikra

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[1] Notably, both Ober (2007, 89) and Butler (2015, 20n.11) draw from Wolin in developing their accounts of collective action.

[2] Drawing from different sources, other scholars mindful of the solidaristic dynamics of interest in this article include Gourevitch (2015, chap. 5), Honig (2013, chap. 6), and Scholz (2008). While sometimes appearing to reduce democratic politics to moments of disruption, Wolin (1989, chap. 5) also draws out the kind of sustained and solidaristic forms of political work this article seeks to recover.

[3] For The Athenian Constitution I use the translation of Rhodes (Aristotle 1984), with modifications and references to the Greek from Rackham (Aristotle 1935). While Rhodes argues against Aristotle's authorship, I follow Frank and Monoson (2009) in treating Aristotle as the author. I provide evidence for this interpretation in "Tyrannicide and Revolution," below.

phronein), distrust (*diapistein*), and a powerlessness (*adunamia*) for political affairs (*pragmata*) among the ruled (*Pol.* 1314a10–30).[4]

Given these proximities between comradeship and tyranny, it is especially puzzling that, in this very same discussion of the "three heads," Aristotle also identifies political clubs as an exemplary associational form for those who aim to *upend* tyrannical regimes (*Pol.* 1313b1). Addressing this puzzle, I draw insights from across Aristotle's corpus that speak to how club-like associations engender habits of trust and thought feared by tyrants, as well as how comrades can avoid becoming tyrants themselves. The account of comradeship this article excavates from Aristotle is thus "anti-tyrannical" in two senses: it explains the centrality of comradeship (1) to the pursuit of revolution under conditions of tyrannical repression and (2) to minimizing the use of repression in that struggle and its aftermath.

In developing this account of anti-tyrannical comradeship, I marshal no evidence that Aristotle advocated for revolutionary dissent. On this front, I align with scholars, referenced above, who take Aristotle to worry about faction-ridden polities and to see equity as mitigating political hostilities. With the exception of *Politics* 5.11, I cite relatively few passages in Aristotle's writings that refer explicitly to tyranny and none at all offering programmatic statements about how comrades pursue anti-tyrannical revolution. I nonetheless develop what I call "Aristotle's account of comradeship." While making no claims about Aristotle's argumentative intent, I show how otherwise countervailing insights in Aristotle's corpus, when brought together, speak to the dilemma of anti-tyrannical resistance. I do so by taking as my point of departure Aristotle's attention to the dangers posed to tyranny by club-like associations, and drawing a line through the history of antique comradeship to Aristotle's discussion of comradely (*hetairikos*) friendships in *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics* (*NE* and *EE*, respectively), before returning to Athenian revolutionary history in *The Athenian Constitution* (*Ath. Pol.*). My goal is to elucidate the embedded connections between historical practices of ancient Greek comrades and the structural features of solidary associations that Aristotle identifies as granting them anti-tyrannical potential in *Politics* 5.11. The tyrant's fears of his subjects' conviction (*phronēma*), trust (*pistis*), and ability to rely on (*epitrepein*) one another, along with his fears of equitable people (*epieikeis*) and frank speech (*parrhēsia*), and his promotion of denunciation (*katagoreuein*), bring together my discussions of passages spanning Aristotle's political, ethical, and historical writings. Traveling a path for which Aristotle provides markings but did not himself explicitly explore, this article considers when and how comradeship, if sometimes a vice, becomes a virtue.

I begin, in section one, by elaborating the circumstances of tyrannical repression described in *Politics*

5.11, which, I argue, target the tyrant's subjects who might seek to pursue revolution for the sake of a just share of power. Section two explores the social and political history of comradeship in ancient Greece in order to assess the dangers clubs pose to tyranny as well as how, in Athens, they often turned to tyranny themselves. Section three gathers Aristotle's scattered discussions of comradely friendships, illuminates the interpersonal habits and virtues of such friends, and brings these to bear on anti-tyrannical struggles of power. Section four revisits the *Ath. Pol.*'s accounts of the failed tyrannicides of 514 BCE and the revolution of 508/7 BCE with which this article opened to argue that the former stages the failures of anti-tyrannical resistance in the absence of comradeship, and that the latter showcases comradeship's success. Comradeship, I conclude, is an important virtue under non-ideal circumstances, when political actors must rely on one another as resources of solidarity and refuges from oppression.

TYRANNICAL REPRESSION AND SOLIDARY ASSOCIATION

In *Politics* 5.11 Aristotle describes the tyrant's means of repression in terms of the aforementioned "three heads." There Aristotle unpacks how the tyrant uses slander and surveillance in order to spread conditions of distrust and stamp out associations in which trust and conviction may be fostered, ultimately aiming to inculcate small-souled-ness (*mikropsuchia*) among his subjects (*Pol.* 1314a15–20). Small-souledness refers to an ethical characteristic grounded in citizens' acceptance of a deficient share of "external goods," such as political power, which they might otherwise desire (*oregein*) and take themselves to merit (*axia*) (*NE* 1123b15–20, 1125a20–30).[5]

Aristotle's account of tyrannical repression secures his position as a foundational theorist of what Milan Svolik (2012) calls the "problem of authoritarian control," that is, how autocratic rulers mitigate "threats from the masses" by repressing "the majority excluded from power" (1–2). By cultivating small souls, the tyrant pursues a strategy of "preventative repression" that strikes at the psychological and desiderative capacities of would-be dissidents (see Dragu and Przeworski 2019). According to Aristotle, citizens' argumentative "claims" regarding merit reflect considered beliefs that both mediate passional responses to injustice and motivate action on those beliefs' behalf (*Rhet.* 1379a1–20, 1387b10–20; *Pol.* 1312b25–35; Schofield 1996). Indeed, as indicated by Aristotle's insistence that the tyrant seeks to undermine *phronēma*—"thought," as well as "pride" or "conviction"—(*Pol.* 1313a35–b5), the tyrant seeks to achieve more than promoting his subjects' "ignorance of one another's preferences" (Simonton 2017, 65), for such "preference falsification" leaves the beliefs of the

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[4] I rely primarily on Lord's (Aristotle 2013) translation of the *Politics*, with modifications and references to the Greek from Rackham's translation (Aristotle 1932).

[5] I use the English translation of *NE* provided by Bartlett and Collins (Aristotle 2012), with modifications and references to the Greek from Rackham (Aristotle 1934).

tyrannized psychologically intact, if misrepresented or veiled in public (Kuran 1995, 17). The tyrant aims rather to transform those preferences entirely.[6] By influencing the "strategic considerations" of his subjects (Young 2019), the tyrant seeks to vitiate the substantive ends motivating dissent—namely, their beliefs in and desires for a just share.[7]

Aristotle's attention to the disempowering effects of small-souledness shines a light on the terrain of struggle between tyrant and tyrannized. The Aristotelian tyrant is infamous for his tendency to acquire and defend what his subjects take to be a disproportionate and unjust share of material and honorific goods, like political power (*NE* 1134a35–b5). The tyrant thus transgresses citizens' sense of merit as subjects of distributive justice (*NE* 5.3).[8] The tyrant's inculcation of small-souledness thus thwarts in advance his subjects' attempts at revolutionary mobilization, through which they would seek to transform the distribution of power that defines their constitution.[9] As Aristotle explains earlier, in *Politics* 5.10, citizens who object to such overreach often "pursue equality (*zēteein isos*)" through revolution in order to restore or claim a just distribution of power (*Pol.* 1301b25–30). In *Politics* 5.11 Aristotle identifies those who are equitable (*epieikeis*) as particularly dangerous to the tyrant in this regard. They prove dangerous

> not merely because they claim not to merit (*mē axioun*) being ruled in the fashion of a master but also because they are trustworthy, both among themselves and with respect to others, and will not denounce (*katagoreuein*) one another or others. (*Pol.* 1314a20–25)

I return to the relationship between equity and trustworthiness below. My points, for now, are that the tyrant's attention is squarely fixed on his subjects' sense of their political worth and on how their self-estimation both reflects their considered beliefs about justice and motivates their hostility to the tyrant's mastery.

Of central importance to the tyrant's repressive efforts is fear (*phobos*), which he spreads throughout the *polis* in order to prevent his subjects from engaging in frank speech (*parrhēsia*) and to promote their social and political isolation (*Pol.* 1313b5–20). At the same time as the tyrant intimidates his subjects, however, he also generates a "fundamental moral hazard" for his own security (Svolik 2012, 124). As Aristotle notes in *Politics* 5.5, a "common fear (*koinos phobos*) can bring together even the worst enemies" (*Pol.* 1304b23–24). In spite of the tyrant's fearful repression, or, perhaps, because of it, his subjects might move to form associations that threaten his rule.

Such associations pose a significant threat to the tyrant. As Aristotle notes, the tyrant outlaws "clubs, common messes, education, or anything of that sort, instead guarding against (*phulattein*) anything that generates two things, conviction and trust" (*Pol.* 1313b1–4). What do these associations have in common? Most notably, they all offer opportunities for sustained contact and familiarization, precisely the features of social life that the tyrant most aims to eviscerate by disallowing leisure (*scholē*) and informal gatherings (*sullogoi*) (*Pol.* 1313b3–4). The tyrant's concern with leisure may be evidence of an anti-aristocratic orientation on his part, insofar as leisure, as well as clubs, were associated with elites (Jordović 2011, 47–51). Importantly however, common messes were nominally democratic institutions (*Pol.* 1271a30–35), and *sullogoi* often refers specifically to gatherings of democratic citizens (*War* 2.22.1; 3.27.3).[10] What these myriad groupings—of different social strata—share is their capacity to generate habits of trust and conviction. Seeking to prevent people from relying on (*epitrepein*) one another, the tyrant does everything "to make all as ignorant of one another as possible, since familiarity tends to create trust (*pistis*) of one another" (*Pol.* 1313b5–7; see Keyt 1999, 172).

Aristotle elsewhere discusses common messes and education as institutions that (correctly instituted) help to preserve existing constitutions (*Pol.* 1271a25–40, 1264a5–10, 1337a10–20). While attentive in *Politics* 5.11 to their potential to disrupt tyranny, Aristotle nowhere elaborates on this possibility. Aristotle does not expand on this possibility for clubs either. However, unlike common messes and education, clubs are distinct in belonging to a rich revolutionary history. I turn next to the history of political clubs in Athens in order to clarify the structural dynamics that grant clubs—and club-like associations generally—their anti-tyrannical potential.

COMRADESHIP IN ANTIQUITY

The term *hetairos,* comrade, appears first in Homer as a marker of solidarity among non-elite "masses and crowds," in which the call of martial comradeship entailed that "each man counts and is taken seriously" in his responsibility for "the success of the whole group" (Raaflaub and Wallace 2007, 25–26). As Oswyn Murray (2018) has shown, the *hetaireia*, political club, "begins to take on its classical political form" in the context of Archaic symposia, at which elite, all-male social groups sang drinking songs (*skolia*) and forged their own distinctive norms of in-group solidarity (18). Frank speech (*parrhēsia*) was a central component of elite conviviality at symposia (Wecowski 2014, 72). So too were interpersonal expectations of egalitarian treatment, which were enforced in order to prevent single individuals from monopolizing the conversation and "destroying sympotic equality" (66–71). All expected and were given their opportunity to speak

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[6] Kuran (1995, 16) identifies this transformative possibility as well.
[7] For further discussion of the formative effects of the tyrant's repression see Jochim (2020).
[8] Balot (2001, chap. 2) provides a sustained treatment of the Aristotelian tyrant's greed along these lines.
[9] See Saxonhouse (2015) for a discussion of Aristotle's capacious understanding of revolutionary change (*metabolē*), which includes, but is not reducible to outright conflict.

[10] As discussed extensively by Schwarz (n.d.).

and were held accountable for their failures to meet this expectation.

The poetry of Theognis—a mainstay of sympotic recitations from the Archaic period onward—attests to the character of these elite friendships, as well as to the pressures they experienced during this time of aristocratic upheaval. On Theognis's telling it was the trust (*pistis*) among *hetairoi* that was their perhaps most cherished, and also endangered, value (Donlan 1985, 226). Theognis refers repeatedly to the disappearing trustworthy comrade (*Theognidea* 415–418, 1243–4), and the rarity of those who remain trustworthy in times of perplexity (*Theog.* 645–646), in matters of seriousness (*Theog.* 115–116, 641–644), misfortune and poverty (*Theog.* 857–860, 903–930), and in myriad other adverse circumstances (see Donlan 1985, 225). Faced with the potential "disintegration" of a "social universe once integrated by blood, affinal, and close personal ties" (229), Theognis appeals to time as the only sure measure of character and rues instances of misplaced judgment (*Theog.* 963–970). "A *hetairos* is not good," Theognis insists, "if he speaks smoothly with his tongue but thinks otherwise in his mind (*phronis*)" (*Theog.* 93–100). Theognis advocates for his own trustworthiness as well-founded, for he had been sufficiently tested (*paratribein*) and could thus be counted on to be steadfast (*Theog.* 415–418, 1104a–1106). As we can see, in reflecting on the erosion of elite friendships, Theognis anticipates the solidaristic features feared by the tyrant in *Politics* 5.11, such as the commonality in mind and persistence in trust that inheres in solidaristic groups.

If the symposium served as a space of elite comity, it also represented a "form of political organization" hostile to the "emergent city-state [and] designed to perpetuate aristocratic control of the state against the *dēmos*" (Murray 2018, 18–23). Insofar as these preoccupations with trust, time, and familiarity emerged in tandem with the eclipse of aristocracy and the emerging dominance of the *dēmos*, they also speak to a structural problem central to *Politics* 5.11: how political actors avoiding domination require a "social site … of comparative safety" within which to foster a "dissident subculture" (Scott 1990, 114). While it might appear strange to liken victims of tyrannical oppression to aristocratic reactionaries, Mirko Cavenaro (2017) homes in on why Aristotle might reach for the club as an exemplary safe haven for anti-tyrannists. Within classical Athens, "a society in which the [non-elite] masses had considerable control over the formal institutions of the state, it was elite culture rather than popular culture that tended to articulate itself in unofficial, 'unauthorized' forms" (63). As Adeimantus quips in Plato's *Republic,* institutions like the club allow people to "escape detection" in private (365d), even as they pay lip service to the egalitarian ideology of the empowered *dēmos* in public (Ober 1989). This capacity to maneuver outside of the eyes of state power is of central importance in *Politics* 5.11, where Aristotle notes how the tyrant spreads informants and attempts to make his subjects remain "in evidence and pass their time out of doors," such that they "escape notice least of all" (*Pol.* 1313b5–10).

Building on the solidarism of earlier symposia, the political clubs of Athens allowed citizens to conspire behind closed doors, to circumvent the domination of the *dēmos*, and to bend the system to self-serving ends. Among other things, clubs used bribery, intimidation, and jury packing in their efforts to back or oppose policies and other elites (Calhoun 1913, 58–65). Sometimes members of clubs would preemptively pursue countersuits against fellow citizens planning a future prosecution. In a number of instances where prominent club members were brought to court, their comrades would provide testimony (likely often perjuriously) or appear as advocates (64–89). Referring to the dynamic interplay of extralegal associations and the day-to-day workings of the Athenian public sphere, Alex Gottesman (2014, 9–11) describes Athenian clubs as an example of "politics in the street." In this way the "social" or "expressive" activities of these private clubs were inextricable from their explicitly "political" or "instrumental" pursuits (Calhoun 1913, 26; Gottesman 2014, 49; Jones 1999, 227). Insofar as members of clubs participated in institutions like the courts, their efficacy depended on a foundation of trust developed over time, behind doors, and without the authorization of the state. Such habits of trust, including the ability to hold steady under pressure and to refuse to denounce one's fellows, are precisely the ones Aristotle identifies as significant threats to tyranny in *Politics* 5.11.

As noted, scholars often locate the origin of clubs in a "reactionary" response to the eclipse of the archaic aristocracy (Jones 1999, 294), when they organized for "definite political purposes" among those "element[s] which the new political order did not satisfy" (see Calhoun 1913, 10). As "ideological safe havens," clubs provided spaces within which elites could foster their antipathy toward the prevailing political order as well as the trust necessary to put that hostility into action (Jones 1999, 295). During the lead-up to the oligarchic revolution of 411 BCE, for example, the clubs promoted hostility to the popular constitution and served as a refuge for those who understood themselves to be "repudiated by democratic politics" (Connor 1971, 197). The clubs thus provided opportunities for spirited ideological opposition. In this way, too, they fostered habits of mind which Aristotle marks as feared by the tyrant. As loci of trust, conviction, and oppositional revolutionary efficacy, the clubs thus provide resources for conceptualizing the characteristics of solidarity needed to depose a tyrant.

Clubs also housed decisively tyrannical proclivities. As recounted by Thucydides and Xenophon, respectively, the oligarchic comrades of 411 and 404/3 BCE turned to repression as an answer to the democratic attachments of the *dēmos*. For Thucydides, the repression of the Four Hundred stemmed from their knowledge that it would be "no easy matter" to rule citizens accustomed to freedom and lacking experience in subjection (*History* 8.68.4). Describing overtures made by Athenian oligarchs to the Spartan King Agis, Thucydides makes explicit his trepidation that Athenian citizens "would not so quickly surrender their ancient liberties," and would thus need to be "cowed into

submission," regardless of their ruling oligarchs' efforts to broker a truce (*War* 8.71.1). In Xenophon's account of the Thirty, he recounts the defense of their reign of terror by Kritias, the hubristic ringleader, who maintained that "since the people have been nurtured in freedom for the longest time," there's no avoiding the fact that "a large number of citizens are and will remain hostile" to an oligarchy (*Hellenika* 2.3.24). Without "bring[ing] the state under the tyranny of a few men," Kritias assumed that an oligarchy would be impossible for Athenians to bear (*Hell.* 2.3.48).

Aristotle was well aware of the tyrannical history of oligarchic coups in Athens. In an unmistakable foreshadowing of the tyrant's use of "deceit (*apatē*) and force (*bia*)" against those not wishing (*mē boulomenon*) to be so ruled (*Pol.* 1313a10–15), discussed in *Politics* 5.10, Aristotle describes in *Politics* 5.4 how the oligarchic revolution of the Four Hundred relied on force (*bia*) and deceit (*apatē*) in imposing its rule over unwilling persons (*Pol.* 1304b8–20). Strikingly, the political context that Aristotle claims motivates the tyrant's repression itself echoes Thucydides's and Xenophon's treatments of the Four Hundred and Thirty. According to Aristotle, the tyrant's turn to repression is motivated by his knowledge that, under democratic conditions where no one person merits (*axioma*) a singular claim to power, force alone can secure his rule (*Pol.* 1313a8–10). Thucydides and Xenophon highlight precisely this consideration. Force emerges for these authors as a tyrannical response to countervailing desires for a more just political order, namely, one that reflects citizens' beliefs regarding the proper distribution of power.

Even, then, as comrades might draw lessons from the solidaristic practices that granted oligarchs their dissident potential, anti-tyrannists would do well to avoid such a tyrannical reliance on repression, predicated, as it was, on the ideological hostility of the Athenian *dēmos* to oligarchic rule. It is not for nothing that Aristotle identifies tyrannies and oligarchies as among the most "short lived" of regimes (*Pol.* 1315b10–15). The sense of precarity underpinning the tyrant's rule and motivating his repression is on full display in the conduct of the Four Hundred and the Thirty. To avoid tyrannical violence, revolutionaries need to court, and perhaps expand, the desires of others instead of vitiating them.

Aristotle suggests in *Politics* 5.4 that such avoidance is possible. Instead of pursuing revolution tyrannically, over those who are unwilling, Aristotle indicates that revolutionaries can sometimes rely on persuasion, so that they rule over or alongside willing persons. Aristotle does not elaborate on what revolutionary persuasion entails, but he is clear that if revolutionaries are to secure the conditions of voluntary rule they must "both persuade at the beginning and maintain the persuasion later on" (*Pol.* 1304b10–20). Thus, revolutionaries, if they are to avoid tyranny, need sustained time not only to bolster their in-group relations but also to establish requisite trust with non-solidary citizens. If persuasive speech would play a role in such efforts, so, too, would the qualities of character displayed by comrades during their protracted anti-tyrannical struggle. As Aristotle

makes clear, echoing Theognis, central to garnering the trust of others is to show yourself to be trustworthy (*Rhet.* 1377b20–30). This is evidenced in your actions as well as your words (*Rhet.* 1366a1–20). It is to the actions among comrades to which I turn next, drawing on remarks Aristotle makes regarding *hetairoi* across his writings on friendship.

THE POLITICS OF COMRADESHIP

Aristotle discusses the form of friendship (*philia*) characteristic of *hetairoi* at several points in *Nicomachean Ethics* 8–9 and *Eudemian Ethics* 7. As we will see in the following, the features Aristotle associates with comradely friendships echo the aforementioned characteristics of sympotic comrades, such as their interpersonal egalitarianism, trust, and frankness. Aristotle also associates comradeship with equity, a central object of the tyrant's fear in *Politics* 5.11. As scholars rightfully note, comradeship for Aristotle appears to imply a degree of civic cohesion that Aristotle elsewhere identifies as far from "appropriate to all" (Lockwood 2003, 14). "The intimacy of comrades," argues Bernard Yack (1993, 119), "simply cannot be extended to a large number of individuals." Taken *in situ*, these passages seem of little political relevance: they evince bonds few citizens can share and appear largely cleansed of the "conflicts of desire" that ordinarily characterize political life (Allen 2004, 124). However, as I will show, when interpreted with a view to the demands of anti-tyrannical struggle these passages offer guidance for elaborating the comrades' in-group relations—how they might practice equality, trust, and frankness as a feature of anti-tyrannical solidarity—as well as how equity might inform comrades' efforts to court the desires of other, non-solidary, members of the *polis*.[11]

Equality, Accountability, Frankness

In *EE* 7, Aristotle likens the friendship of comrades to friendships between brothers and those among democratic citizens. Aristotle's focus in these passages is on the interpersonal relations of comrades, and how their shared expectations and habits regulate their conduct. Comrades are akin to democrats, says Aristotle, insofar as both "use the same standard of measurement" in determining the nature of their equality (*EE* 1241b35–40). The equality characteristic of democratic citizens

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[11] While not a form of friendship explicitly discussed by Aristotle, anti-tyrannical comradeship, as reconstructed in the following section, resets the terms that usually organize scholars' discussion of Aristotelian friendship. According to Yack (1993, 119), "comrades"—which he treats as equivalent to Aristotle's broader and apparently *a*political category of character friends—"come together because their intimacy allows them to see something distinctive and precious in each other," whereas more modestly acquainted political friends "come together because they can help each other achieve their goals." Comrades resisting tyranny require political intimacy precisely *because* their political goals demand it, without, perhaps, the affectional bonds distinctive to character friendship. Also see Frank (2005, chap. 5).

refers to how democracies distribute political power on an undifferentiated basis, to all freemen (*Pol.* 1318a5–10). In order to theorize the comradely character of equality—which Aristotle does not specify—I posit that, for anti-tyrannists, their egalitarianism might hinge on both the shared sense of merit that drives their revolutionary pursuits, as well as how their mutual obligations and practices of solidarity sustain it.

The brotherly characteristics Aristotle ascribes to comrades speak to such revolutionary potential. Noting in *EE* 7 that "the egalitarian relationship of brothers to one another is the most like comradeship," Aristotle quotes from a poetic fragment attributed to Sophocles:

> For I was never shown by him to be illegitimate
> But Zeus, my ruler, has been declared to be common father
> To us both.

"This is a claim," Aristotle explains, "made by those who are seeking equality (*zēteein isos*)" (*EE* 1242a36–40). As we saw above, Aristotle uses this formulation in identifying the pursuit of equality as a cause of revolution (*Pol.* 1301b29). Citing a common parentage in Zeus, Sophocles' character rejects their purported illegitimacy and asserts a common parentage, thus setting the stage for the pursuit of an equal share of political power.

Insofar as it is by pursuing our desires that we further develop them (*NE* 1119b5–15), we might imagine that comrades, in pursuing equality, will further develop those desires that first motivated their dissent. This possibility is consistent with an insight that underwrites Aristotle's discussion of domestic relations in *EE* 7, where he notes that "it is in the household that we first see the causes (*archai*) and founts (*pēgai*) of friendship, constitutions, and justice" (*EE* 1242b1–2). With *archē* and *pēgē*, cause and fount, respectively, Aristotle suggests that domestic contexts might serve as the "fount" from which broader expectations and habits of just treatment initially flow. Aristotle makes explicit the habituative effects of comradeship in *NE* 8.12, when he observes that comrades are akin to brothers insofar as their similar ages and co-habituation (*sunēthein*) render them alike in character (*homoēthēs*) and similarly educated (*paideuein homoiōs*) (*NE* 1161b30–1162a5, 1162a10–14). This dynamic was a familiar one to Athenians, for whom institutions like the demes served as a "gentle introduction" into political life (Jones 1999, 46; Whitehead 1986, 324), within which they "practiced being a citizen" (Cartledge 2016, 27). The association of comradeship might serve similarly as a school of dissident egalitarianism, one housed within a *polis* otherwise denied such outlets by the tyrant.

Through what practices, then, might comrades cultivate and pursue equality? Commenting in *NE* 8.12 on the effect of comrades' education, Aristotle observes that their "testing (*dokimasia*) over time" is the most steadfast (*NE* 1162a14–17). As Aristotle observes earlier, in *NE* 8.4, testing (*dokimazein*) "over a long time" secures friends against slander such that, when greeted by slander, friends will insist on its inaccuracy, claiming,

"'I trust him,' or, 'he would never commit injustice'" (*NE* 1157a20–25). Grounded in their shared egalitarianism, but not necessarily in shared affection, comrades, too, should be able to resist the denunciation (*katagoreuein*) promoted by the tyrant's slander as described in *Politics* 5.11.

With *dokimasia*, Aristotle refers to a form of "testing" or "examination" carrying distinctive significance for his fourth-century Athenian audience. To undergo *dokimasia* in Athens was to be subject to questioning and interrogation before occupying positions of political power. Since democratic citizenship was predicated on the equality of all, the focus of examination was more on character than capacity for rule. In fact, as Mogens Herman Hansen (1991) points out, extant speeches from these examinations all focus on potential "oligarchic sympathies and complicity with the oligarchic regime of 404/3," an unpunishable offense, but one that was surely disqualifying for candidates for public office (218–220).[12] Of considerable importance for examination, then, was the accountability of citizens for maintaining the distribution of power that defined their democratic regime.

The sense of purpose required in anti-tyrannical struggle thus suggests special significance for examination and accountability among comrades. If comrades come together in virtue of their political convictions, they need to ensure that they can trust one another not to falter in their joint pursuit. For comrades, of course, such testing would not take place in front of a jury. The trust of comrades would instead be forged and verified through their sustained time spent working with and relying on each other. Such is the sense of "testing" we saw Theognis invoke above, with *paratribein*. As Aristotle notes in his discussion of *hetairoi* in *EE* 7, comrades are distinct in their ability to entrust or turn to (*epitrepein*) one another in virtue of their familiarity with one another's character (*EE* 1242b36–7). *Politics* 5.11 is explicit that the tyrant seeks to vitiate precisely those forms of trust that allow his subjects to entrust (*epitrepein*) one another. Comradeship thus provides both a refuge from repression and a site within which to cultivate mutual accountability.

Aristotle's account of comrades' brotherly relations also provides resources for challenging the tyrant's suppression of frank speech. As Aristotle notes in *NE* 9.2, "comrades, like brothers, owe each other frank speech (*parrhēsia*) and the sharing of all things in common" (*NE* 1165a29–30). We have seen that frankness at symposia was a feature of elite comity. Aristotle's observation that comrades' frankness is akin to their "sharing of all things in common"—when interpreted with a view to the demands of anti-tyrannical comradeship—emphasizes a different set of expectations. Comrades challenging tyranny need to trust one another to put in the necessary work and to make good on their commitments. They need to be able to criticize one another when they falter. Such criticism

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[12] For further discussion see Euben (1997, 94–96) and Kierstead (2017).

was a hallmark of frankness in democratic Athens and a symbol of the openness of democratic regimes in contrast to the "watched character of daily life" characteristic of tyrannies (Monoson 2000, 54). For comrades under tyrannical conditions, frankness might serve as an interstitial practice by which to bolster and secure one another's political commitments. This practice of *parrhēsia* departs sharply from Michel Foucault's (2010, 54) perhaps more familiar focus on the capacity of courageous individuals to "throw the truth" in the face of tyrannical actors. Comrades may find it necessary to rebuke the tyrant to his face, but this dynamic does not appear to be Aristotle's concern in *Politics* 5.11. More important, it appears, is the ability of anti-tyrannists to foster a political climate in their association within which frankness and honesty are the norm.[13] Collectivity—not individual boldness—anchors anti-tyrannical *parrhēsia*.

Equity and Outreach

To treat comradeship as a space of habituation is also to raise the question of whether comrades' solidary pursuits might cultivate some manner of virtue. Considering the tyrant's aim to cultivate small-souledness in particular, we might wonder if greatness of soul (*megalopsuchia*) could be of service for anti-tyrannists. It is notable, on this point, that Foucault (2001, 67) identifies Aristotle's great-souled man (*megalopsuchos*) as a paradigmatic frank speaker, whose preference for "truth over opinion" is of a piece with his sense of political self-regard. It is for similar reasons that Arlene Saxonhouse (2015, 200) posits the virtue of great-souledness as most dangerous to the tyrant. In addition to their frankness, great-souled people are alert to their merit (*axia*) and able to hold ground against fear and intimidation (*NE* 1124b20–1125a1). Such characteristics are vital to anti-tyrannists under the conditions of repression described in *Politics* 5.11. As Aristotle also makes clear, however, those with great souls are alienated from other members of their community, as they are "ironic" toward the many, and are often held to be "haughty" (*NE* 1124b30–33, 1124a20). Great-souledness thus appears to obstruct, rather than foster, the broader relations of trust necessary to resist tyranny.

On Aristotle's telling, it is equity that emerges as the most important anti-tyrannical quality of character. As discussed above, in *Politics* 5.11 Aristotle notes that equitable people refuse, by claiming not to merit (*mē axioun*), the tyrant's mastery and refuse, too, to engage in flattery (*Pol.* 1314a1–5), which inclines them to frankness. Equity thus grants anti-tyrannists the ability to retain trust with those who are in their solidary circles *as well as with those who are not*. Tellingly, in *NE* 8.12 Aristotle associates equitable forms of character with the like-education (*paideuein homoiōs*) shared by comrades (*NE* 1162a10–15). Picking up on this feature of equity in *NE* 9.6, Aristotle notes that equitable people

experience like-mindedness (*homonoia*) such that "the objects of their wishing (*boulēmata*) remain constant and do not ebb and flow like a violent strait" (*NE* 1167b5–10). Whatever pressures the tyrant might exert in order to unsettle his subjects' desires for justice, comradeship provides a shield through solidarity.

Importantly, while remaining "on the same page," equitable people are not recalcitrant toward others. For, Aristotle explains, "to be like-minded is not to have the same thing in mind … but to have it in mind in the same way—for example, when both the *dēmos* and the equitable have it in mind for the best persons to rule —since in this way what they aim at comes to pass for everyone" (*NE* 1167a33–b3). Equitable conduct thus speaks to features of "political solidarity" that encompass not only the fortification of in-group solidarity, but also the ability to make inroads with non-solidary political actors (see Scholz 2008, 92–109).[14]

It is precisely this ability to adjudicate between what is owed to intimates and strangers that is a hallmark of those Aristotle calls "equitable friend[s]," whom he describes as associating "differently among people of worth (*axioma*) than among people at random… . assigning to each what is fitting and … guided by the consequences at stake" (*NE* 1126b20–1127a8). More broadly, equitable political actors, like legislators, aim for the "common advantage" by authoring laws that stymie intrapolis conflict (*NE* 1137b10–20, 1129b 15–20).[15] Equitable people also exhibit habits of forbearance, and are disinclined to act viciously, such as overreaching in their demands, provoking internecine conflict, and forcing others to do otherwise than they wish (*mē boulomenon*) (*NE* 1167b10–16). Insofar as they are "not exacting to a fault about justice," equitable people often "take less for [themselves] even though [they] have the law" on their side (*NE* 1137b32–1138a2).

These characteristics of equity speak to a central task of anti-tyrannical comradeship: how to retain one's animating political commitments, such as one's beliefs in political merit, while avoiding an exclusionary political project that risks engendering further conflict. Forms of political outreach—informed by equitable commitments to avoiding overreach, minimizing factional conflict, and promoting the common advantage —thus emerge as decisively important. We might imagine that comrades could grasp the importance of such efforts in the course of their anti-tyrannical struggle, as they consider the consequences of expanding

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[13] Landauer (2019, 136) identifies this possibility in a discussion of autocratic modes of *parrhēsia*.

[14] Kolers (2016, chap. 6) also offers an interpretation of the relationship between Aristotelian equity and solidarity, with several significant differences from my own. Kolers enlists Aristotle as a resource for a Kantian theory of moral solidarity that emphasizes the duty of those *joining* solidary groups to show deference to those who are disproportionately marginalized. My interpretation, which is more akin to Scholz's (2008) work on political solidarity, foregrounds the consequentialist orientation of dissident actors *calling* for others' support under conditions of repression.

[15] Schillinger (2018) provides a persuasive treatment of Aristotle's account of equity that emphasizes its orientation toward the common advantage, drawing on the cited passages.

their vision of just distribution in order to accrue support.

For an account of the content of comrades' outreach efforts, I turn to *NE* 8.12, where Aristotle identifies the constitution of timocracy—or "polity" (*politeia*)—as both a model of comradeship and another site of comradely equity.[16] He describes citizens of polities as akin to comrades insofar as both "wish to be equals and equitable—to rule in turn, therefore, and on an equal basis" (*NE* 1161a28–30). Aristotle also notes that polities share a "defining feature" with democracies insofar as both regimes promote the rule of the majority (*plēthos*)—not the few (*NE* 1160b17–22).[17] We saw above how comrades are equal amongst themselves: this they achieve through their egalitarian trust and frankness. What resources does the majoritarianism of polities provide for giving content to the outreach efforts of comrades?

Aristotle's account of polities in the *Politics* offers insight on this point. There he praises polities for their ability to avoid not only intrapolis conflict—a hallmark of equitable political actors—but also the danger of tyranny such conflict harbors. Whereas tyrannies emerge from regimes unbridled in their class hostility (*Pol.* 1296a3–8, 1310b10–30), polities "tip the scales" in how they design institutions in order to avoid factional conflict and to allow citizens of different classes to experience the regime as their own (*Pol.* 1295b39–1296a5, 1294b14–20). Such for Aristotle constitutes an act of "mixing justly" (*dikaiōs mignunai*), and a decisive vote in favor of institutional reforms that allow for the integration of potentially opposed parts of political community (*Pol.* 1297a35–40). The means of "political mixing" may include, for example, allowing citizens to audit or elect public officials, while otherwise retaining oligarchic or aristocratic standards of merit for ruling offices (see Lockwood 2006, 211). As Aristotle notes when discussing the Spartan constitution—an example of a polity-like mixed regime—even common messes can give citizens a way to share in the constitution (*Pol.* 1272a14–22). At the same time as Aristotle advocates for the mixing of democratic and oligarchic institutions, he also notes the greater longevity enjoyed by democracies in particular, since their citizens "have a greater part in the prerogatives" of office (*Pol.* 1296a10–17). Considering comrades' need to broaden their political coalition, we might imagine that they would find democratic reforms especially useful.

These examples give us a sense of the potential content of anti-tyrannical outreach on the parts of comrades. Like citizens within polities, comrades may well insist on distributing power based on their beliefs in political merit. Not everything, perhaps, will be up for debate. At the same time, comrades could also propose institutional and social reforms that make good on other members' sense of political merit and/or material need in ways that are compatible with their underlying sense of justice. Such efforts speak to the anti-tyrannical promise of equity, specifically, the ability to resist the destructive effects of overreach by sometimes taking less, or, giving more. As we know, equitable friends may comport themselves differently towards those they deem of worth but ultimately their sense of "fitting" treatment remains bound to a consequentialist commitment to the common advantage: a goal of constitutions that encompasses desiderative considerations, such that the laws and institutions of a *polis* allow a diverse citizenry to wish (*boulesthai*) for the constitution to continue on the same basis (*Pol.* 1270b20–23).

It is for this reason that much of comrades' goals must be understood as context-dependent and also why polities—which provide a helpful model for outreach—need not necessarily stand in for comrades' desired post-revolutionary regime. For, as understood by Aristotle, wish (*boulēsis*) refers to a desire for something that appears good (*agathos*) to someone in virtue of their unique habits and character (*Rhet.* 1369a1–10, *NE* 1113a20–23).[18] The politically relevant habits within a community may well bear the imprint of any number of factors, such as the long-standing effects of economic inequality or their prior constitutional history (*Pol.* 1295b10–25, 1337a14–20). In the case of the oligarchies of the Four Hundred and the Thirty, their turn to repression assumed as its backdrop Athenians citizens' entrenched commitments to their democratic constitution. For them, force served as a reactionary answer to countervailing desires for justice. For anti-tyrannical comrades, the desires of others might serve instead as a resource both for the stability of their future regime and as a source of popular revolutionary support.

The account of anti-tyrannical comradeship excavated thus far has been largely reconstructive. However, as I show next, Aristotle would have had historical grounds for being attentive to the importance of these in- and out-group dynamics of comradeship. Against the backdrop of this account, we can discern in the *Ath. Pol.* how the absence and presence of comradeship underwrote the respective failures of the tyrannicides and the successes of the Athenian revolution.

TYRANNICIDE AND REVOLUTION

In the early years of the tyrant Hippias's rule, his younger brother, Thessalus, slighted Harmodius, a

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[16] Aristotle's favored term for this regime in *NE* is "timocracy." I use the more familiar "polity" for reasons of clarity and in order to stress this discussion's consistency with related discussions in the *Politics*.

[17] Polities and democracies are majoritarian in different ways, however. While, as noted, democracies grant citizenship to all freemen, polities empower those who meet a minimal level of property requirements (*NE* 1160a30–36), such that they can afford Hoplite arms (*Pol.* 1279a37–b5). It is nevertheless striking that Aristotle identifies comradeship as approximating democratic characteristics. This is in decisive contrast with prevailing views of timocracy, which otherwise identified it as closer to—if not some variety of—oligarchy. See Simonton (2017, 37) and Plato's *Republic* (547d).

[18] See Moss (2012, chaps. 2 and 6) for discussions of the relationship between habituation and desire in Aristotle's account of *boulēsis*.

young member of the Athenian elite. So infuriated were Harmodius and his lover, Aristogeiton, that they, with "many participants," plotted to assassinate his ruling brother. As we saw at the start of this article, their attempt went poorly. After the would-be tyrannicides spotted one of their fellow conspirators "meeting Hippias in a friendly manner," they assumed that their plot had been revealed. Frightened, Aristogeiton and Harmodius ran down from the Acropolis "without waiting for others" and assassinated not Hippias but Hipparchus, another brother of Thessalus. Hippias's guards killed Harmodius and took Aristogeiton prisoner, where, "after being tortured for a long time," he denounced (*katēgorein*) the other participants. In contrast to "democratic" accounts that Aristogeiton tricked Hippias by denouncing the tyrant's allies, Aristotle reports that Aristogeiton may have betrayed his own (*Ath. Pol.* 18.1–6).

Teegarden (2014, 32–45) and Simonton (2017, 230) argue that these "paradigmatic tyrant killers" exemplify the dissident efficacy of the "bold individual" who, "on his own initiative, 'goes first'" and thus sparks the "metaknowledge" needed to produce a revolutionary bandwagon. Their focus on "common knowledge" foregrounds the rational and environmental conditions facilitating collective action: how material and/or honorific rewards incentivize revolutionary "first movers" to act, as well as how the public "epistemic context" provided by occasions like festivals makes it possible that someone less brave "sees the act, knows that all of the others have seen it as well, and can therefore join in the attack with the knowledge that others will in all likelihood support him." Aware of the reputational incentives associated with anti-tyrannical action, Aristotle, in the *Rhetoric*, identifies Aristogeiton and Harmodius as examples of how deeds exaggerated through public honors might provide lessons in character for others (*Rhet.* 1368a10–20).

As we know, Harmodius and Aristogeiton's show of daring misfired. One explanation for this is that the success or failure of any revolutionary strike will always be deeply contingent (Simonton 2017, 246). However brave the first movers, they cannot control the reception of their act by others. At the same time, Aristotle's description of the event points toward a more specific issue, namely, that the failure of the tyrannicides was a failure of comradeship. This reading becomes legible if we compare his account with that of Thucydides.

According to Thucydides, the attempt failed in large part due to a "sudden panic" brought on by Hippias's conversation with one of the unnamed participants (*War* 6.59.1–2). Aristotle does not explicitly name a cause, but he supplements the story told by Thucydides by including Aristogeiton's likely denunciation of his co-conspirators. Although there can be no guarantee against the pressures of physical or psychological torture, Aristotle, in emphasizing Aristogeiton's denouncement (*katēgorein*), seems to be identifying a breach in the solidaristic trust characteristic of comradeship. Another difference between the accounts of Aristotle and Thucydides speaks to precisely this issue. Whereas Thucydides reports that there were not many

conspirators (*War* 6.56.2–3), Aristotle says the opposite, that there were "many participants." Sara Monoson (2000) argues that Aristotle's revision might reflect his understanding that "opposition to the tyranny was brewing" among the broader public in advance of the festival (49). It is also possible that Aristotle marks the high number of would-be assassins to underscore a deficit of trust within a large and unfamiliar group. Perhaps the lovers moved first because they assumed from the outset that their fellow conspirators would be unable to hold their tongues.

Additionally, while Thucydides and Aristotle similarly identify the origin of the plot in Thessalus's insult of Harmodius, only Thucydides highlights the lovers' more ambitious plot to ensure "the downfall of the tyranny" (*War* 6.54.3–4) and their assumption that witnesses would endeavor to regain their own liberty after the initial strike (*War* 6.56.3). Aristotle, by contrast, stresses the "private origination of the deed" (Monoson 2000, 49), noting in the *Politics* that the assassins acted against not a form of rule (*archē*) but a person or body (*soma*) (*Pol.* 1311a30–35). Silent on the attention of the assassins to the desires of others for freedom, Aristotle emphasizes instead their personal focus. By highlighting the lovers' inability to "[wait] for others," Aristotle casts a critical light on the revolutionary potential of first movers who act without collective support.

After concluding his account of the tyrannicides, Aristotle describes the increasingly repressive turn taken by Hippias, which sets the stage for his eventual overthrow by Sparta and the circumstances of the democratic revolution of 508/7 BCE. Identifying a state of conflict between the Spartan-appointed Isagoras, "a friend of the tyrants," and Cleisthenes, "of the Alcmaeonid family," Aristotle reports that Cleisthenes, "being lesser in respect to the political clubs (*hetaireiai*)," fared badly in the conflict until he "enlisted the *dēmos* on his side [by] offering to hand over the constitution (*politeia*) to the majority (*plēthos*)." Cleisthenes's ensuing upswell in support gave him the advantage over Isagoras, who, now fearing for his hold on power, turned for assistance to the Spartan king Cleomones, exiled an estimated 700 families—including Cleisthenes—and moved to disband the council and solidify his control by establishing a 300-person oligarchy. The council resisted, however, and, in the wake of their resistance the multitude mobilized, forcing Isagoras and his supporters to flee to the Acropolis for safety, where they were assailed by the *dēmos* for several days before being forced to surrender. The *dēmos* then returned Cleisthenes to Athens, where he ushered in a wave of democratizing reforms (*Ath. Pol.* 20.1–3).

Drawing on Ober (1996; 2007), Simonton (2017, 157) treats the *dēmos*' siege of the acropolis as an example of the epistemic benefits provided by daring acts of public defiance and thus as of a piece with the "blueprint" of anti-tyrannical action first provided by Harmodius and Aristogeiton. While also drawing on Kuran's account of revolutionary bandwagons, Ober (1996) grants more attention to the non-epistemic factors that have also

been the focus of this article, associating Herodotus's description of the *dēmos*—that they were "of one mind (*phronein*)"—with the spirited and long-cultivated form of conviction discussed above, regarding *phronēma* in *Politics* 5.11 (*Histories* 5.72.2; 44), and attributing the mobilization of the *dēmos* to a complex "aetiology of desire" indebted to prior cultural reforms (51; 2007, 86).

Revealingly, despite insisting that Isagoras and Cleisthenes likely lacked recourse to "ideologically motivated *hetaireiai*" identified by Aristotle and Herodotus, Ober (1996, 38) repeatedly appeals to the bonds characteristic of comradeship in describing the relationship between Cleisthenes and the Athenian *dēmos*, maintaining that "Athenian *hetairoi* were expected to help one another, and to seek to harm their common enemies" (51). Ober speculates that Cleisthenes recognized that comradeship "was a two-way street" in making good on his prior offer of democratic citizenship. Acting "as a good *hetairos*, well deserving of the *pistis* (good faith) placed in him ([*Ath. Pol.*] 21.1) by his new mass *hetaireia*," Cleisthenes, Ober maintains, "came up with a constitutional order that both framed and built upon the revolution that had started without him" (51–52).

Ober joins other scholars of the Athenian revolution in focusing on the sequence of events outlined above, which draw variously from the *Ath. Pol.* and Herodotus's earlier discussion in the *Histories* (see Anderson 2003, 76–83; Cartledge 2016, 61–90; Forsdyke 2005, 133–143; and Simonton 2017, 20–25). While Ober (2007, 85) is right to characterize Aristotle's treatment as "largely (though not entirely) derivative" of Herodotus, from the perspective of the account of comradeship developed in this article, Aristotle adds details that are of great, if underexamined, significance. Most importantly, in the course of describing Hippias's repression and Cleisthenes's return to Athens following the siege, Aristotle interpolates two sympotic drinking songs (*skolia*) associated with the Alcmaeonids.[19] While Ober discerns in the revolution a comradely bond between Cleisthenes and the *dēmos*, his focus on recovering the agency of the latter remains bound to a mass-elite binary, which occludes the agency of comradely association represented by Cleisthenes's family. If we recall the origins of comradeship in archaic symposia, as attested to in the poetry of Theognis discussed earlier, we can take Aristotle's interpolations as assigning to comradeship a more significant role in the revolution than is generally thought.

Commenting on Hippias's expulsion of rivals following the assassination of Hipparchus, Aristotle identifies the Alcmaeonids as "chief among [the exiles]," who met with repeated failures in their efforts to return home (*Ath. Pol.* 19.3). Aristotle identifies as especially disastrous their expulsion from the fort of Lypsidrium

and quotes from a drinking song that makes explicit the bonds of comradeship running through their defeats:

> Alas, Lipsydrium, betrayer of comrades (*prōdōsetairon*)
> What men you lost,
> Good warriors and well-born,
> Who showed then what stock they came of. (*Ath. Pol.* 19.3)

"After they had failed in everything else," Aristotle (again) emphasizes, the Alcmaeonids were finally able to enlist the support of Sparta, who helped expel Hippias with "support from the Athenians" (*Ath. Pol.* 19.4–5).

In the *Histories*, Herodotus reports that the Alcmaeonids has long been haters of tyranny, (*misoturranoi*) (*Hist.* 6.121.1), and suggests that this ideological motivation underwrote their protracted struggle for power (*dunamis*) since the rule of Peisistratus (*Hist.* 5.66.2). The *Ath. Pol.* aligns with this view but grants even greater significance to the revolutionary persistence of the Alcmaeonids. Consider Aristotle's closing remarks on the overthrow of Isagoras, and the embedded drinking song:

> Thus the people obtained control of affairs (*ta pragmata*) and Cleisthenes became leader and champion of the people. The Alcmaeonids bore the greatest responsibility (*aitiotatoi*) for the expulsion of the tyrants, and had persisted in opposition to them for most of the time. Even earlier, Cedon of the Alcmaeonids had attacked the tyrants, and so too he was celebrated in drinking-songs (*skolia*):
>
> Pour to Cedon also, steward, and forget him not,
> If wine is to be poured to valiant men.
>
> For these causes (*aitiai*) the people placed their trust (*pisteiuein*) in Cleisthenes. (*Ath. Pol.* 20.4–21.1)

Ober (1996, 51–52) locates the source of the *dēmos*' post-revolutionary trust in Cleisthenes's promises to grant them citizenship. As the above passage suggests, however, Aristotle does not so much emphasize Cleisthenes's own persuasive abilities as he does those of Cleisthenes's family, whose long anti-tyrannical struggle apparently convinced the majority of Athenians both of their trustworthiness and of the credibility of their anti-tyrannical commitments. With his invocation of the Alcmaeonids' encomium to the oft-forgotten Cedon, Aristotle underscores a register of political engagement whose duration and persistence is absent from, if not obscured by, preoccupations with tyrannicidal first movers.

Our preceding discussion of equity and outreach also casts fresh light on the institutional reforms pursued by Cleisthenes. As Aristotle notes in the *Politics*, the question of who should participate in the constitution—that is, the question of political justice—it at its most urgent "after a revolution," such as when Cleisthenes enfranchised "many foreigners and alien slaves" (*Pol.* 1275b33–1276a5). Not only did Cleisthenes and his family show themselves to be responsive to emergent democratic desires—indeed on Aristotle's telling, they radically expanded them—but they also pursued reforms that allowed relations of trust to develop across the broader community, thus ensuring political

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[19] To my knowledge, only Rhodes (Aristotle 1984, 20) notes the novelty of these interpolations, though he does not provide an explanation for their significance to the *Ath. Pol.*'s author. Rhodes maintains that "there are not many signs of political theory in this history" (18) and insists against Aristotle's authorship (13). I hope to provide reasons to think otherwise, on both points.

stability. Aristotle illuminates how Cleisthenes achieved this goal; namely, by destroying and reorganizing the Athenian tribal system by mixing together (*anamisgein*) otherwise disparate parts of the *polis* (*Pol.* 1319b20–30). In this way Cleisthenes diffused dominant "social castes" that were likely hostile to the nascent democracy and facilitated a "regrouping of [the Athenian] population" (Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet 1996, 64). Aristotle's language of "mixing" here extends the logic of just mixing (*mignunai dikaiōs*) described above with reference to polities. The substantive upshot also remains the same: how certain institutional reforms might mitigate the potential for faction by joining together those who are otherwise separate and potentially opposed.[20]

It is unlikely that the *Ath. Pol.* reflects an historically accurate view of the revolution. It is almost certain that Aristotle and Herodotus relayed exaggerated, if not false, details in emphasizing the anti-tyrannicism of the Alcmaeonids. Scholars have long debated to what extent the Alcmaeonids and their supporters sought to bolster their anti-tyrannical bona fides, in contrast with more popular oral traditions focused on the Harmodius and Aristogeiton (Azoulay 2017, 27–30; Forsdyke 2005, 108, 121–123, 134; Jacoby 1949, 149–226; Lavelle 1993, 87–125; Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet 1996, chap. 3; Thomas 1989, 144–154, 238–282). During Aristotle's time, it was Harmodius's song that was sung.

We are now in a good position to offer some additional reasons for why Aristotle may have sided with reports favoring the Alcmaeonids. The solidarity expressed in their drinking songs, the duration of their resistance, and their hatred of tyranny all embody aspects of comradeship that Aristotle identifies as threatening to tyranny in *Politics* 5.11. The affinities between these discussions across Aristotle's *Ath. Pol.* and *Politics* as well as with Herodotus's *Histories* are striking. Embedded in descriptions of political repression and struggle, passages in all three texts refer in parallel fashion to dissident forms of thought (*phronēma/phronein*) (*Pol.* 1313b1–2; *Hist.* 5.72.2), trust (*pistis/pisteiuein*) (*Pol.* 1313b2–3, 1314a17–20; *Ath. Pol.* 21.1), political affairs (*pragmata*) (*Pol.* 1314a23; *Ath. Pol.* 20.4), power and powerlessness (*dunamis/adunamia*) (Pol. 1314a23–25, 1314a29; *Hist.* 5.66.2), and political clubs (*hetaireiai*) (*Pol.* 1313b1; *Ath. Pol.* 20.1).

The *Ath. Pol.*'s inclusion of the Alcmaeonid drinking songs also offers substantial allusions to the politics of comradeship. We know from Aristotle's references to *hetairoi* in his ethical writings that he was likely aware of comrades' solidary characteristics, and *Politics* 5.11 speaks to their anti-tyrannical potential. These include the abilities of comrades to rely on (*epitrepein*) each other (*Pol.* 1313b5–7; *EE* 1242b36–8), to refuse to flatter and to speak frankly (*parrhēsia*) (*Pol.* 1314a1–5; *NE* 1165a29–33), and to refuse the temptation of denunciation (*katagoreuein*) (*Pol.* 1314a15–25; *NE* 1157a20–25, 1162a14–17). Unnamed but implicit in the tyrant's repression is his fear of revolutionaries' pursuit of equality (*zēteein isos*) (*Pol.* 1301b25–30), a hallmark of comrades in Aristotle's thought (*EE* 1242a36–40) and of political actors who challenge domination and seek justice. Granting that revolutions "never just spontaneously 'happen,'" Simonton (2017) is surely right to stress that "[c]ollective action must begin somewhere, and this is with the choices of specific people" brave enough to serve as collective action's "immediate cause" (246). Aristotle suggests that, in the absence of the mediating cause of comradeship, such immediate causes will often prove insufficient.

CONCLUSION

Reflecting on "incipient" tyranny in the contemporary United States and the prospect of more catastrophic forms of "political" and "ecological tyranny" in the future, George Kateb (2019) has recently warned citizens against clinging to forms of "ideology, patriotism, [and] partisanship" that might contribute to the "erosion and then destruction of [the United States'] democratic institutions" (608–610, 617, 629). Living under the tyrannical oligarchies of 411 and 404/3, Athenians knew well the dangers posed by what Robert Putnam (2000, 350–362) calls the "dark side of social capital." Riven as our own moment is by fears of democratic backsliding, we also have sound reasons to be wary of ideological extremism.[21] So too did Aristotle.

If these dangers remain a permanent hazard for the politics of comradeship, the circumstances that make comradeship a necessity remain intractable as well. I have argued that Aristotle offers insight into what Marc Stears (2010) calls the burden of "non-ideal circumstances," which requires discerning "the potential difference between the virtues required for struggle and the virtues required for the operation of a peaceful, stable, and just political order" (217–218). Aristotle helps to uncover how virtues associated with day-to-day civic life, like equity, frank speech, and accountability, might be repurposed by those who cannot rely on the authority of judges or the responsiveness of institutions. Comrades rely on one another—those whom they know and trust and with whom they pursue their just share—and grow their ranks.

Aristotle offers an account of solidaristic political action that remains, in its scale and tempo, a quotidian

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[20] In the latter passage Aristotle notes that Cleisthenes's democratizing reforms are akin to the conduct of nigh-tyrannical forms of democracy. We might also imagine that his breaking-up of aristocratic tribes could register as a tyrannical practice of de-association, as described in *Politics* 5.11. However, Aristotle is clear in *Ath. Pol.* and *Politics* that Athens did not become an "extreme democracy" until after the death of Pericles (see Strauss 1991). As I read Aristotle, Cleisthenes's efforts may appear tyrant-like, but they served conciliatory as opposed to repressive purposes. An important implication, unexplored here, is how Aristotle's discussion of Cleisthenes in the *Politics* suggests a more complicated relationship between revolutionary force and persuasion than the one that frames my account of anti-tyrannical comradeship. Thanks to Bryan Garsten for raising this point.

[21] See Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) and Lieberman et al. (2019).

experience among movement actors, who often begin with "the solidarity of a small and provisional network of activists" before ultimately either "disappear[ing] or scal[ing] upward" (Tarrow 2011, 120, 122). When faced with a tyrant using repression to structure the broader context of action and habituation within the *polis*, comradeship provides a space that evades the gaze of the tyrant and within which comrades can foster habits that militate against his efforts to cultivate small souls. Since nothing less is at stake under tyranny than the vitiation of desire, the task of comrades is to hold each other to their commitments and to speak frankly to one another on those commitments' behalf. Instead of (or in addition to) defending existing institutions and norms, comrades gather around a shared political vision that calls for the reclamation and redistribution of power. Comrades not only enact their equality, they cultivate it.

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