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Sara Forsdyke: Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy

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Introduction

PROBLEMS, METHODS, CONCEPTS

When we cannot get a proverb, or a joke, or a ritual, or a poem, we know we are on to something. By picking at the document where it is most opaque, we may be able to unravel an alien system of meaning. The thread might even lead into a strange and wonderful world view.

—Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre*

PERHAPS no ancient Greek practice is more opaque to us than the Athenian institution of ostracism. Scholars have repeatedly labeled it bizarre, intrinsically paradoxical, and exotic. If we follow Darnton's exhortation (1984: 5), however, our puzzlement is not a cause for dismay, but a signal of fertile territory for the acquisition of a new perspective on the ancient Greek past. In many ways, I hope that the study that follows validates Darnton's claim. By investigating ostracism, I have sought to open new perspectives not simply on one particular practice, but on broader attitudes and developments in Greek culture and society. In particular, I hope that by exploring the historical origins and cultural and ideological meanings of ostracism, I shed new light on such central topics as the rise of the polis, the origins of democracy, and the relation between historical events, cultural practices, and the ways that society represents itself to itself.

THE ARGUMENT

The main argument of this book is that there was a strong connection between exile and political power in archaic and classical Greece, and that this relation had a formative effect on the institutional and ideological development of the Greek city-states (πόλεις, poleis). Specifically, I argue that in the archaic period (c. 750–500), elites engaged in violent competition for power and frequently expelled one another from their poleis. I label this form of political conflict the “politics of exile,” and I suggest that it was particularly unstable, since exiled elites often called on foreign allies to help them return to their poleis and expel their opponents in turn. Many of the institutional developments of the archaic poleis can be viewed as attempts by elites to prevent violent conflict over power and the political instability that it

caused. By instituting formal public offices and establishing laws, for example, elites attempted to enforce the orderly rotation of political authority among themselves. These attempts at elite self-regulation, however, were ultimately unsuccessful in preventing violent intra-elite conflict, although they played an important role in strengthening the civic structures of the early Greek poleis (chapters 1 and 2).

It was at Athens during the sixth century that a more permanent solution was found to the problem of exile (chapter 3). As a consequence of particularly frequent episodes of expulsion during the late seventh and sixth centuries, first Solon and then Pisistratus attempted to stabilize their polis by encouraging non-elites to play a role in the allocation of political power. By prompting non-elites to intervene in conflict between elites and to place their support behind a particular elite group, these leaders aimed to prevent the frequent changes of power that resulted from violent conflict solely between narrow groups of elites. I argue that Pisistratus was particularly successful in activating non-elite support on his side through his skillful use of the civic institutions, rituals, and cultural symbols of the Athenian community. Furthermore, Pisistratus departed strongly from earlier practices when he allowed his political opponents to remain in Athens and enjoy a measure of prestige during his tyranny.

Despite the gains made by Pisistratus in tempering violent intra-elite conflict, the problem of exile reemerged with particular intensity in Athens between the death of Pisistratus's son Hipparchus in 514 and the democratic revolution in 508/7. I argue that the revolution by which the democracy was established was a direct outcome of a particularly violent episode of intra-elite politics of exile. In brief, during the revolution of 508/7, the Athenian masses intervened decisively in the struggle between rival elite groups. By placing its support on the side of one elite group and driving the other into exile, the demos (people: δῆμος) asserted its control over decisions of exile. Furthermore, since political power and the power to expel one's opponents were one and the same in archaic Greece, the action of the demos in taking over decisions of exile was equivalent to its assumption of political power. The politician Cleisthenes essentially recognized this equivalency when, following the demos's action, he proposed the reforms by which the democracy was established. Among Cleisthenes' reforms was the institution of ostracism (chapter 3).

In sum, I argue that both democracy and the institution of ostracism were responses to the destabilizing effects of intra-elite politics of exile. Yet the institution of ostracism was not simply a democratic form of an elite practice (chapter 4). Through the institution of ostracism, the Athenians reenacted in symbolic terms their decisive intervention in violent intra-elite conflict during the democratic revolution and thus reminded elites of their fundamental power in the polis. Even more important, through ostracism, the Athenians found a mechanism for distinguishing—in both practice and ideology—democratic rule from the forms of elite rule that had preceded it. In contrast to

intra-elite politics of exile, ostracism was a particularly limited and lawful form of exile. Whereas elites in the archaic period had violently expelled one another en masse, the democratic institution of ostracism allowed for the expulsion of a single individual per year for a limited period of time. The limited nature of democratic ostracism was important in at least two ways. First, by expelling only a single individual for a fixed period of time, the Athenians avoided the destabilizing effects of the mass expulsions of the archaic period. Second, the moderate use of the power of expulsion, as represented by the institution of ostracism, was a potent symbol of the moderation, justice, and legitimacy of democratic rule in contrast to the forms of rule that had preceded it (tyranny, oligarchy). This ideology carried over into the Athenians' imperial practices and ideologies, since exile, moderation, and justice are linked together in the justification of Athens' relations with other Greek states (chapter 5).

The relation between exile, ostracism, and justice is key to understanding the role of exile in the mythical and historical imagination of the ancient Greeks (chapter 6). Although exile certainly played a prominent role in Greek mythical and historical traditions before the democracy, the forms in which many of these traditions are preserved reveal the influence of the role of exile in the legitimation of democratic rule. I argue that the Athenian democracy appropriated and transformed earlier traditions of exile in order to reinforce a distinction between the just and unjust use of political power. While the Athenian democracy prided itself on its benevolent reception of exiles from other poleis (for example, in Athenian versions of the myth of the Heraclidae), the democracy characterized non-democratic regimes, such as tyranny and oligarchy, in part through the topos of mass expulsions. The delegitimization of non-democratic forms of rule through the theme of exile is particularly evident in traditions concerning archaic Greek tyrants (for example, Periander of Corinth) and in fourth-century representations of the oligarchic revolutions of 411 and 403. Analysis of these traditions shows that the historical experience of exile under these regimes was adapted and expanded to serve as a key criterion of unjust rule. Furthermore, examination of the criticisms of democratic rule made, for example, by Thucydides and Aristotle reveals the importance of the theme of exile in the debate about the best form of government in late fifth- and fourth-century Athens.

METHODS AND APPROACHES

In addition to this specific argument about the role of exile in the political development and historical imagination of the ancient Greeks, I hope that this book makes a contribution to the debate about ways of doing history. In particular, the first chapter—which at first may seem ancillary to the central argument made in later ones—is presented in the conviction that the social,

political, and cultural development of Greece in the later archaic and classical periods (c. 500–323) can be fully understood only against the background of earlier developments. In chapter 1 I argue that intra-elite competition was an important factor in the earliest phases of the development of the polis. This argument then provides the background for my claim in subsequent chapters that intra-elite competition in the form of violent politics of exile played a fundamental role in the institutional and ideological development of the later archaic and classical polis.

Chapter 2 then analyzes the role of exile in the political development of four geographically dispersed poleis. By considering the communities of Greece in their full regional diversity, both common patterns and significant divergences can be identified. In this chapter, I argue that four poleis—Mytilene, Megara, Samos, and Corinth—demonstrate that the politics of exile was a common feature of the archaic polis. The various ways in which these poleis responded to the problem of exile, moreover, provide the context for understanding the unique role of exile in Athenian political development, as I argue in subsequent chapters.

Methodologically, chapters 1 and 2 attempt to integrate material evidence into the more conventional text-based study of Greek history. In order to make sense of the relatively mute archaeological data, furthermore, I make critical use of anthropological theories of social evolution and state formation. Although anthropological theories should not be used as templates into which the material evidence for early Greece is forced, they can nevertheless provide suggestive patterns of development against which the relatively scanty evidence can be analyzed. In these chapters, I demonstrate that although many of the larger communities of early Greece underwent similar processes of increasing social and economic stratification and formalization of state structures roughly between 1150 and 750, by the late eighth century the polis was only a very weak form of “state” in the anthropological sense. Specifically, I show that as late as the last half of the sixth century, features of non-state societies—in particular, personal and rapidly changing alliances between elites (“factions,” in anthropological terms)—were the dominant political force in the polis, and were the structural basis for the particular form of politics that developed.

Even more important than the consideration of Greek historical development in its full chronological depth and geographical diversity, however, this study aims to strike a balance between diachronic, event-oriented historiography and synchronic inquiries into questions of identity, ideology, and social history. I argue that it is only by considering the dynamic relation between historical events and the ways in which a society represents these events to itself through its practices and ideologies that we can hope to gain insight into ancient Greek experience and understanding of the world. The conviction not only that events shape practices and ideologies but that practices and ideologies impact events is a product of recent trends in a variety of academic

fields and is ultimately informed by theoretical work in sociology, political theory, and anthropology.¹ In particular, the work of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Anthony Giddens has resulted in new emphasis on how practices and ideologies both reflect the political order of society as constituted through its historical development and can themselves actively transform the structures of society.² In the work of these theorists, in other words, there is a reflexive relation between political or institutional history and social or ideological history (*histoire des mentalités*). In particular, social practices and ideologies themselves are given new and active roles in the explanation of historical change.

This study reflects the new orientation in historical scholarship in several ways. First of all, I argue that exile was important in Greek political history not simply as a historical event that determined Greek institutional development. Rather, I show that through a dynamic process both exile events and their later representation in the historical imagination of the ancient Greeks impacted the practices, ideologies, and further historical development of Greek society. To be more specific, I contend that the historical event of exile, and even more important, the conceptual and ideological categories that resulted from group reflection on the experience of exile, had a significant role in the creation of the group identities, group behaviors, and hence group responses to later historical conditions. For example, I argue that the institution of ostracism was both a response at the level of practice to prior historical events (archaic politics of exile; the democratic revolution) and a symbol that served at the level of ideology to define Athenian group identity and shape later Athenian group behavior. Through the institution of ostracism, not only did the Athenians define themselves in relation to the past history of exile by linking political power with control over decisions of exile, but they also marked themselves off from that prior history in both ideology and practice by using the power of expulsion with moderation. Indeed, democratic restraint in the use of exile as a political tool, I suggest, was motivated as much by the need to demarcate ideologically democratic rule from non-democratic forms of rule as by the practical need to avoid the destabilizing consequences of more extreme uses of the power of expulsion. Similarly, I argue in chapter 5 that Athenian restraint in the use of exile as a penalty against non-Athenians was as important in the justification of Athenian imperial power as it was in its practical effects of quelling civil war between democrats and oligarchs in the cities of the Athenian alliance.

In this way, exile events of the historical past and their representation in the collective practices and ideologies of the Athenians not only responded to

¹ For a useful summary of the impact of these theorists on historical practice, see Burke 1992. For their impact on contemporary political sociology, see Nash 2000.

² Foucault 1965, 1980, 1990; Bourdieu 1980/1990; Giddens 1984.

one another but helped to transform Athenian political identities and practices under the democracy. In sum, by examining a specific cultural practice (exile/ostracism) in its full historical and ideological depth, one not only can see how events, practices, and ideologies interact to form the patterns of history, but can also gain new perspectives on some central developments in Greek history: in particular the origins, practices, and ideologies of democracy in classical Athens.

EXILE, BOUNDARIES, AND GROUP IDENTITY

One might still ask, Why exile? Why choose to investigate exile if it is simply one example of the many ways in which historical events, social practices, and ideologies interacted to reproduce and transform Greek society? To answer this question we can turn to recent work in a number of academic fields on group identity and interaction through the formation of boundaries, both conceptual and physical. Sociologists, political theorists, historians, and anthropologists have recognized that societies tend to create conceptual boundaries through their myths and norms.³ These myths and norms work by defining in positive terms who “we” are, but frequently by also defining “what we are not.” Archaeologists, in turn, have borrowed the idea of the importance of conceptual boundaries and applied it to the physical features of a community’s landscape. In particular, the role of “culturally specific symbols in border areas” has been found to be especially fruitful in understanding how groups define themselves and negotiate conflicts with one another.⁴

It is the contention of this study that historical events themselves, and the conceptual or ideological categories that result from group reflection on historical experience, are a form of boundary and play a significant role in the creation and negotiation of group identities. I argue that exile events and their representation are a particularly powerful form of boundary, since the act of expulsion constitutes a concrete expression of group identity through the physical removal of what the community “is not.” For example, the earliest known Athenian law, the anti-tyranny law dating to the seventh century, enjoined all Athenians to expel the tyrant from the community. This law not only began to shape the political identity of the Athenian community by demanding the exclusion of a particular type of political actor, but also combined this

³The work of Foucault (e.g., 1965, 1990) has been very influential on the study of identity politics. For historical studies of national identity formation, see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, B. Anderson 1991. For ancient Greece, see Boegehold and Scafiro 1994; J. Hall 1997, 2002; G. Anderson 2003. For the importance of boundaries to the formation of communities, see A. Cohen 1985.

⁴Hodder 1982, 56–57, 84–85. In Greek archaeology, see de Polignac 1984/1995, Spencer 1995b.

conceptual definition of what the Athenians “were not” with an actual act of physical separation, thus vividly enacting the creation of community through the exclusion of an “other.” In a similar sense, the expulsions perpetrated by the oligarchs at the end of the fifth century not only defined in concrete terms the exclusivity of their politics by physically removing the majority of the population from the center of political power, but also, following the restoration of the democracy, served as a powerful negative example in the collective identity of the democracy in the fourth century.

DEFINING EXILE

It is important to be clear at the outset about what forms of expulsion constitute the substance of this book’s analysis, since exile has many forms in both ancient and modern societies.⁵ Exile in the broadest terms can denote any separation from a community to which an individual or group formerly belonged. Exile in the strictest sense involves a physical separation from the place where one previously lived. In the modern era, however, we know of many cases of what is called “internal exile,” in which an individual or group is removed from the immediate surroundings but not expelled from the country altogether.⁶ Similar cases are known in the ancient world, such as the exile of Pisistratus after his first attempt to become tyrant, when he was probably driven out of the city center but continued to reside near Brauron in Athenian territory.⁷ In the civil war at Corcyra in 427, moreover, oligarchs established themselves outside the city center and waged war on the democrats in the polis from there.⁸ In Athens during the oligarchic revolution of 403, likewise, the oligarchs banished the mass of the citizenry from the city center but not from Athenian territory as a whole.⁹

Thus physical separation from the geographical territory controlled by the political community does not seem to be of primary importance in defining exile. We may further ask whether any physical separation at all is necessary in defining it. Can one be in exile within one’s own community? Many

⁵ See Tabori 1972 for an attempt to survey exile from the earliest written records to the modern era. Tabori notes, moreover, that exile is “not a human invention” but occurs in the animal kingdom (39–40). The most comprehensive study of exile in ancient Greece is Seibert 1979. Earlier studies include Lécirvain 1919, Balogh 1943, Telschow 1952, Fischer 1963, Heisserer 1971, Karavites 1971. For more specialized studies of different types of exile (political, judicial, religious) in ancient Greece, see n. 12 below. For exile in the Roman world, see most recently Claassen 1999, Kelly 1999, S. Cohen 2002. For the theme of exile in Greek literature, see Seibert 1979, Sultan 1999, Tzanetou, *Staging* (forthcoming).

⁶ The banishment of Soviet dissidents to Siberia is a notable example.

⁷ Hdt. 1.60, with arguments below in chapter 3.

⁸ Thuc. 3.85.3.

⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.1, Lys. 25.22, with the arguments below in chapter 4.

literary critics recognize the category “inner exile” as a way of describing the alienation of a writer or artist from his native community.¹⁰ Although this category may seem to yield too loose a definition of exile, in that it can apply to everybody in some sense, it is nonetheless useful in allowing us to connect those who are physically separated from their country with those who, even while present, suffer a sort of internal exile due to their loss of certain abstract attributes of community membership. This condition may entail loss of belief in communal norms or loss of political rights of community membership. While I will be concerned primarily with cases in which there is some degree of physical separation of the exile from his native community, I will include certain other cases in which there is a loss of political membership in the community without physical separation from it.¹¹

This brings us to another set of distinctions that may be relevant in defining exile, namely whether it is always a political phenomenon or whether it may be divided into categories according to its ostensible causes (e.g., political exile, religious exile, judicial exile, economic exile).¹² For Greece, we shall immediately see that the lines between politics, religion, law, and economy are blurred and that exile is always, both in its causes and in its effects, a political phenomenon. Arguably this claim holds for the modern world as well and is fundamental to the nature of exile. Indeed, I shall argue that decisions about who is included or excluded from a community are always bound up with political power and that, in some sense, political power is the power to determine who shall and who shall not be a member of a community. In Greece in the archaic period, for example, elites gained political power by expelling their rivals from their poleis. Moreover, I argue that the Athenian demos gained power in part through assuming the power of expulsion. Finally, at the end of the fifth century, Athenian oligarchs maintained power by banishing (as well as killing) their democratic opponents.

Even when expulsions in Greece were not overtly political, political motives may be inferred.¹³ The expulsion of the Alcmeonidae on the grounds of religious pollution was probably motivated by the desire of their political rivals, the Cylonians, to remove them from political power.¹⁴ The exile of Alcibiades,

¹⁰ See, e.g., Tabori 1972, 31–32; Tucker 1991, xiii–xiv.

¹¹ For example, the “internal exile” of the Athenian demos during the oligarchic revolution of 411, discussed in chapter 4 below. As Gehrke (1985, 214) has noted, there is an equivalency between exile and disenfranchisement because of the relation between landholding and citizenship in the ancient world.

¹² A number of specialized studies analyze specific categories of exile. For political exile in the context of civil war, see Gehrke 1985. For religious exile, see R. Parker 1983. For judicial exile, see Usteri 1903; Busolt 1920, 230–38; Kahrstedt 1934, 88–128; Grasmück 1978. For ostracism, see Brenne 2001, Siewert 2002.

¹³ See the comment of Grasmück 1978, 19n.32: “Oft sind auch Straftat und politische Absicht nicht voneinander zu trennen, z.B. im Falle der Verbannungen der Alkmeoniden.”

¹⁴ See below, chapter 3.

although ostensibly a result of his involvement in religious transgressions, was evidently precipitated by the desire of his political opponents for his removal.¹⁵ In fact, the use of religious and other grounds for political expulsions was so well recognized in the fifth century that the Athenians, in their attempts to regulate the political affairs of their allied cities, specified that all crimes resulting in sentences of exile were to be allowed appeal to Athens.¹⁶ Even where political motives may not be inferred for judicial sentences of exile, such sentences were political insofar as it was the political authority of the state that decided which acts were to result in the removal of a person from the community.

Another important criterion for my definition of exile is whether this was a result of compulsion or could be freely chosen. A basic distinction may be drawn between those who are forced into exile by decree of the political authority of the state, by judicial sentence of banishment, or by fear of persecution or prosecution, and those who choose to emigrate in order to seek economic or other opportunities. In defining exile, I shall limit myself to those who were compelled by force or fear to leave their homelands, since these cases seem most bound up in the political development of the polis. For example, I shall not include the foundation of new settlements (colonization) unless these were the result of political conflict between rival groups within the community.¹⁷ Similarly, I shall not include cases of displacement or deportation due to external aggression unless the external forces were called in by the political authorities of the state (or their opponents) in a situation of internal conflict.¹⁸

A final distinction to be drawn in defining exile is whether it is imposed on an individual or on a group. While this distinction may seem to be rather one of degree than of essence, we shall see that it was fundamental to the Athenians' understanding of the legality and legitimacy of an expulsion. Banishment of citizens en masse was considered typical of the arbitrary behavior of tyrants and oligarchs in the attempt to maintain power in a polis. The banishment of individuals by judicial sentence, on the other hand, was considered characteristic of democratic regimes that followed lawful judicial procedure to maintain order and justice in society.¹⁹

Finally, something should be said of the vocabulary of exile in the ancient sources, a topic bearing directly on the forms of exile experienced in the ancient world. The most basic words relating to exile—*φυγή*, *φεύγειν*,

¹⁵ See below, chapters 4 and 6.

¹⁶ See below, chapter 5.

¹⁷ For example, Cypselus, tyrant of Corinth, is alleged to have sent out his enemies on colonizing expeditions in order that he might rule the rest more easily (Nic. Dam. *FGH* 90 F 57). See chapters 2 and 6 below, where I argue that the conceptualization of colonization as a tyrannical tool for eliminating political opposition is a product of later ideologies.

¹⁸ As in the case of the seven hundred families expelled by Sparta at the request of the Athenian Isagoras, *Hdt.* 5.72.1 (below, chapter 4). See also the expulsions perpetrated by oligarchs and democrats in the civil wars of the fifth century discussed below in chapter 5.

¹⁹ See below, chapters 4 and 6.

φυγάς—mean “flight” or “banishment,” “to flee” or “to go into exile” (leave one’s homeland), and “fugitive” or “exile,” respectively. It is important to note a fundamental ambiguity in these words between “flight,” which can be voluntary, although it is usually accompanied by the threat of force, and “exile” as a result of a decree or sentence of banishment.²⁰ Accordingly, we are sometimes uncertain whether the use of these words involves an actual sentence of exile or instead flight out of fear of future prosecution or violence. The case of the historian Thucydides is a famous example, as we cannot be certain whether he was sentenced to exile or fled out of fear of prosecution for his failure to save Amphipolis.²¹ Sometimes the context makes clear which is meant, as for example in the expression “to sentence to exile” (φυγῆ ζημιούσῳν)²² or the use of the verb φεύγειν in Draco’s homicide law.²³ As we shall see, however, the difference between flight out of fear of persecution or prosecution and an actual decree of banishment is usually not important, since formal sentence would typically follow flight (since flight was taken to be an indication of guilt), and often the two occurred simultaneously.

A special category of judicial exile was denoted by a different term, ἀτιμία, which in the archaic period meant literally “loss of honor,” and resulted in loss of protection from the community.²⁴ A person sentenced to ἀτιμία could be killed by any member of the community, and the killer was not required to provide compensation. (The killer was εὐαγής, “guiltless,” and the victim died νηπιουεῖ, “without compensation.”) The result of such a sentence was that the person subject to ἀτιμία was compelled to flee the country in order to avoid being killed. Thus a sentence of ἀτιμία was effectively a sentence of exile. Often the family of the person subject to ἀτιμία was included in the sentence.²⁵

Over time the meaning of ἀτιμία changed, coming to designate loss of certain political rights rather than a sentence of physical exile. By the end of the fifth century, a citizen sentenced to ἀτιμία lost the right to attend the assembly, enter temples or the agora, hold office, or be a member of the council or a juror.²⁶ Ἀτιμία in the stronger sense “outlawry” continued to exist as a penalty for certain serious crimes such as establishing a tyranny or overthrowing the democracy, but

²⁰ Cf. Seibert 1979, 2–3; Gehrke 1985, 216–17; LSJ s.vv. φεύγειν, φυγάς, φυγή.

²¹ Thuc. 5.26.5; cf. Kahrstedt 1934, 99. See also below, chapter 4, on Themistocles’ exile.

²² Cf. Thuc. 4.65.3.

²³ IG 1³ 104.

²⁴ Standard discussions of the term ἀτιμία include: Harrison 1971, 169–76; Hansen 1976, 54–98; MacDowell 1978, 73–75. See Vleminck 1981 for a good summary of the older debate and a sensible argument regarding the development of the meaning of ἀτιμία.

²⁵ Ἀτιμία appears in archaic laws as a penalty for three offenses: for changing Draco’s homicide law (Dem. 23.62); for attempting to establish a tyranny or aiding in the establishment of a tyrant (*Ath. Pol.* 16.10); for remaining neutral in civil strife (*Ath. Pol.* 8.5). In addition, ἀτιμία was evidently the penalty for intentional homicide, as is shown by Solon’s amnesty law (Plut. *Sol.* 19.4), where those who are subject to ἀτιμία for murder are not covered by the amnesty.

²⁶ Andoc. 1.73–79.

different terms, such as the phrase “Let him die with impunity” (νηπουνεί τεθνάτω), were used to designate this penalty.²⁷

The discussion of ἀτιμία brings up an important ambiguity in the penalties for various crimes in Athenian law, if not in Greek law in general. Ἀτιμία essentially involved a sentence of outlawry. If the person sentenced to ἀτιμία was discovered in Athenian territory, then he could be killed with impunity. If he fled from Athenian territory, however, he could continue to live in exile unharmed. Similarly, a person sentenced to death could flee the country and avoid being killed. Thus there was an equivalency between sentences of death and sentences of exile. This is evident in such cases of treason as those of Hipparchus and Themistocles, who fled from sentences of death and lived out the rest of their lives in exile.²⁸ The case of Socrates, who was sentenced to death but had the opportunity to flee before the penalty was exacted, is another famous example.²⁹ Thus it is not surprising that the penalty for intentional homicide is variously designated as death, ἀτιμία, or ἀειφυγία,³⁰ “exile for life.”³¹

Other words commonly used to designate the act of fleeing or being driven from the polis into exile are compounds of χωρέω, διδράσκω, ἔρχομαι, and βαίνω, and διώκω, ἐξελαύνω, ἐκβάλλω, ἐκπίπτω, and φυγαδεύω. The former group usually designates flight, and the latter forceful expulsion, but again the terms can be used interchangeably for the same event and therefore can refer to both phenomena.³² When an expulsion is made on religious grounds, special vocabulary may be used, such as ἀγηλατέω, “drive out the pollution.”³³ In tragedy, where exiles are often central characters and exile a central theme, the words ἀπόπολις or ἄπολις (without a polis) are used to designate the state of being an exile, in addition to the more usual φυγάς.³⁴ The parallel word used in prose is ἄπολις.³⁵

FURTHER DEFINITIONS: ELITE VERSUS NON-ELITE

Although the term “elite” can be used in contemporary sociology to designate anyone who enjoys a privileged status of whatever kind, in this book I use the

²⁷ Andoc. 1.96–97 (the decree of Demophantus, passed in 410/09).

²⁸ See below, chapter 4.

²⁹ Pl. *Cri.* 44b–c, *Ap.* 36b; D.L. 2.40–42; and below, chapter 6.

³⁰ See, for example, the sentence imposed on the Alcmeonidae for their killing of the suppliants during the suppression of Cylon’s coup (*Ath. Pol.* 1) and Demosthenes’ summary of penalties for intentional homicide (*Dem.* 21.43).

³¹ *Dem.* 21.43 lists side by side death, exile for life, and confiscation of property as the penalties for intentional homicide. See also Solon’s amnesty law (*Plut. Sol.* 19.4) in n. 25 above.

³² Gehrke 1985, 216.

³³ *Hdt.* 5.72, *Soph. OT* 402, *Thuc.* 1.126.

³⁴ *Aesch. Ag.* 1410; *Soph. OT* 1000, *OC* 208, *Tr.* 647.

³⁵ *Hdt.* 7.104.4, 8.61.1. Also used in tragedy: e.g., *Soph. OC* 1357, *Phil.* 1018.

term more narrowly to designate those who possess some form of political privilege.³⁶ In ancient Greece, political privilege was based on the claim to some combination of wealth, good birth, divine favor, and excellence (*ἀρετή*) in some socially recognized attainment, whether prowess in battle, political skill, or some other cultural practice.³⁷ In archaic Greece, elite privilege entailed a monopoly on public officeholding, and hence I sometimes designate this group the “ruling elite.” In classical Greece, the elites continued to monopolize political leadership, though political power no longer rested in their hands.³⁸ By definition, all those who were not among the elite were non-elite.

By focusing on the two categories elite and non-elite, I do not mean to deny the importance of the middle—that is, the large group of individuals who held a modicum of the markers of status. This group is often equated with the hoplites, the mass of citizens who had a moderate amount of property and participated in military and civic affairs (e.g., the assembly, civic cult).³⁹ Certainly the bulk of citizens must have fallen into this category. Far from eliding this group, I view it as the most important and dynamic element of the non-elites. That is to say, though I include the poor among the non-elite, I imagine that it was often the middling citizens who were the most active among the non-elite in the developments that I discuss in this book.⁴⁰

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the boundaries between elite and non-elite were fluid.⁴¹ In the archaic period, changes in wealth, in particular, could lead to entry into elite status (Solon’s property classes) or demotion from it.⁴² Similar changes in the group constituted by the term “elite” took place in the classical period, as is clear from the comic outcry against a new group of political leaders whose wealth was based not on land but on manufacturing.⁴³

IDEOLOGY, SYMBOLS, AND ORAL TRADITION

Throughout this book, I refer to the collective beliefs of various political groups (poleis as a whole, democrats, oligarchs) as their “ideology.” Since this

³⁶ For the generality of the term in modern sociology, compare recent studies of the “media-elite” (Goldberg 2003) or even the “criminal elite” (on white-collar crime: Coleman 1994). For discussion of the term “elite” in ancient history, see Ober 1989a, 11–17, 192–205, 248–59.

³⁷ My definition, therefore, combines features of the Marxist concept of class and the Weberian concept of status.

³⁸ See Ober 1989a for a now classic analysis of how the Athenian democracy managed to avoid the so-called iron law of oligarchy despite its continued dependence on elite leadership.

³⁹ On the middling hoplites, see Spahn 1977; Hanson 1995; I. Morris 1987, 1996; Raaflaub 1997b, 1999.

⁴⁰ See especially my discussion of the democratic revolution below in chapter 3.

⁴¹ Cf. Connor 1994 on the fluidity of social boundaries (particularly between citizen and non-citizen).

⁴² See, for example, Solon fr. 15 West; Theognis 57–58, 315–18 West.

⁴³ Rosenbloom 2002; and chapter 4 below.

term is both anachronistic and notoriously vague, a brief explanation of my usage is necessary.⁴⁴ In short, I use “ideology” to refer to the set of beliefs used by a particular group to explain and justify their worldview. A key feature of any ideology is the use of shared symbols having both a cognitive and an emotive element.⁴⁵ A well-known example of a shared symbol of the Athenian political community is the concept of tyranny.⁴⁶ Intellectually, the Athenians understood tyranny as a particular political system that stood in opposition to the principles of the democracy. In addition, the figure of the tyrant represented all sorts of transgressions of normative social and political values and therefore evoked powerful emotions of fear, anger, and disgust.⁴⁷ Together the intellectual and emotional elements of the figure of the tyrant served as a powerful collective symbol that helped integrate the democratic political community and articulate the basis of its shared political views.⁴⁸ In the course of this book, I demonstrate that the concept of exile was an animating symbol in both democratic and oligarchic ideology, and that attention to the use of this symbol in these competing ideological systems sheds light on the political debates of fifth- and fourth-century Athens.

I frequently use the term “oral traditions” or simply “traditions” to refer to oral or written accounts of an aspect of the collective beliefs or ideologies of competing groups in ancient Greece. These traditions are therefore the particular forms (stories, myths, accounts of the past) through which the shared symbols were invoked and the collective beliefs articulated by particular groups in ancient Greece.

EXILE AND PERIODIZATION IN GREEK HISTORY

Finally, a word should be said about the ending point of this study. In terms of historical narrative, the study ends circa 399, with Socrates’ refusal to go into exile in the aftermath of the oligarchic revolutions. In terms of its analysis of the ideology of exile, however, the study extends down to the last third of the fourth century, when Aristotle wrote his treatise the *Politics*. Yet it might well be pointed out that neither did the phenomenon of exile disappear with Socrates’ refusal of exile in 399, nor did the ideological debate

⁴⁴ For the origins of the term “ideology” in the aftermath of the French Revolution, see McLellan 1995, 5–6.

⁴⁵ On the use of symbols to articulate group identity, see A. Cohen 1985 15–21. On symbols, culture, and ideology see Geertz 1973, 14–17, 87–141, 193–233.

⁴⁶ See Raaflaub 2003a for recent discussion.

⁴⁷ Wohl 2002, however, argues that the tyrant was also an object of desire.

⁴⁸ As A. Cohen 1985 shows, symbols do not necessarily have shared meaning for all members of a community. While the majority of the Athenians seemed to have understood tyranny as the antithesis of democracy, for a small subset of elite critics of the democracy, tyranny was in certain respects the symbolic equivalent of radical democracy: see Ober 2003, and below, chapter 6.

about exile end with Aristotle's treatise. Indeed, fourth-century Greece was so replete with exiles that in 324 Alexander the Great issued a decree for the restoration of all exiles as a means of stabilizing the Greek poleis under his control.⁴⁹ Furthermore, many later writers, most notably Plutarch, took exile as their subject and debated its pros and cons.⁵⁰ The choice to end this study with the trial of Socrates and the treatise of Aristotle, therefore, is a product of my specific interest in ancient democratic history and theory, as well as my partially subjective judgment about what constitutes a meaningful unit of analysis in Greek history.⁵¹

Nevertheless, I hope that my choice is not wholly without justification, and I offer two forms of defense for my ending point (or points). First, despite the continuing history of exile in the fourth century, I suggest that the oligarchic revolutions of the late fifth century and, in particular, democratic restraint in the use of exile following the restoration of the democracy were the most important turning points in the Athenians' own understanding of the meaning of exile. As I show in chapter 6, the Athenians of the fourth century constantly turned to the exile events of the late fifth century, as well as earlier traditions of exile (for example, in myth and in their memories of archaic tyranny and the democratic revolution of 508/7), in order to think through the problem of the best form of rule. Second, despite the plethora of post-Aristotelian treatises concerning exile, these later works engage less with the functions of exile in the debate about the political organization of Greek poleis than with the impact of the experience of exile on the physical and psychological well-being of individuals. In sum, for the purpose of understanding the role of exile in the political development and historical imagination of the ancient Greeks, the late fifth and the late fourth century form the most suitable ending points.

⁴⁹ Tod 201; cf. Rhodes and Osborne 2003, 85.

⁵⁰ Plut. *On Exile* (*Mor.* 599a–607f).

⁵¹ On the problem of periodization in ancient history and the inevitable selections and subjectivities that it involves, see Golden and Toohey 1997.