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**Aristocracy and the Attic genos:
a mythological perspective**

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ARISTOCRACY AND THE ATTIC GENOS: A MYTHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

It has become fashionable in recent years to articulate the social dynamic of classical Athens in terms of relations between a "mass" and an "elite". This has attractions from some perspectives: there is no doubt that there was a fairly well-defined elite of wealth - broadly, the extremely rich Athenians who were liable to liturgies - and no doubt that many speeches of the Attic orators are susceptible to analysis in these terms. For the social historian, however, one of the many problems with this type of simplistic dualism is that it fails to do justice to the complexities of classical Athenian society; and if we are not careful we can find ourselves deploying terms such as "elite", "aristocratic", "wealthy", "upper class" without very clear definition, sometimes to the point where they are used as if they were interchangeable synonyms. The historical reality was hugely more complex and subtle.

In this paper I shall seek to illuminate one element or aspect of the institutional structure of this complex society, namely the formal Attic gene and the extent to which they can be described as "aristocratic" institutions. It is an important part of the picture because the gene played a crucial role in the organisation of Athenian religion and for contemporaries it was above all participation in that religion that defined membership of the polis. If religion was in some sense aristocratically structured, then so, from this perspective, was the classical Athenian polis. Whether the gene were "aristocratic" groups has been the subject of lively debate over the last generation or so, stimulated by the groundbreaking revisionist study of Felix Bourriot (Bourriot 1976), in which he

sought to undermine the old idea of the *genos* as aristocratic family. It is a debate to which I have contributed in a small way and in a broadly revisionist direction [see especially my book on phratries Lambert 1993 and short article on the *gene*, 1999b]. Today I hope to illuminate the issue from a perspective that has not previously been much explored - via an analysis of the socio-political status of the *gene* as it was projected in *genos* mythology: that is to say in stories about the *gene* - for the most part stories that they told about themselves - and in particular stories about their own past. And in doing so I also want to show how, despite the "aristocratic" implications of some of this mythology, it nevertheless also helps locate the *gene* comfortably in the context of the prevailing socio-political ideology of classical Athens.

For those not closely familiar with this topic I begin with some very brief background factual information (to save time I slide over some controversies).

- (a) I'm dealing with *genos* = formal group of Athenian citizens
- (b) the total number of them is unknown. 50 or so can currently be identified with confidence.
- (c) *gene* were descent groups, i.e. subgroups of the polis in which membership was inherited. Hereditary membership was the norm for Greek social groups - it applies to tribes, demes, phratries and to the polis itself and does not of itself imply any sort of aristocratic exclusivity;
- (d) *gene* were normally groups within phratries:

(e) because of the role of the phratries and gene in regulating rights of inheritance and citizenship, the gene feature in legal cases documented by the orators in which those rights are at issue;

(f) gene had the normal characteristics of an Attic descent group: group identity was expressed above all in common cultic activities, but also activities such as in ownership and administration of common property and in lending money to members;

(g) the key defining feature of a formal genos, however, was that it supplied priests and priestesses for polis cults: the Eteoboutadai the priest of Poseidon Erechtheus and the priestess of Athena Polias on the acropolis, the Salaminioi the priestess of Athena Skiras, the Eumolpidai the hierophant at Eleusis etc.. The priests and priestesses were appointed by lot from all genos members of the relevant gender, or in some cases from all members of a branch of a genos of the relevant gender, and held office for life (this anticipates conclusions of papers that will shortly be published by Josine Blok and myself);

(h) genos-members were formally distinct from the eupatridai.

However, there is some overlap between gennetai and eupatridai, conceptually and in terms of membership:

Some features give gene an "aristocratic" flavour, e.g.:

inherited membership and inherited eligibility for religious offices held for life;

all Athenians were conceived of as having belonged to a *genos* in the mythical past, but not all belonged to one in the 4th century;

while others point in a different direction, e.g.:

no evidence for inherited access to political power or office
 membership of eupatrid caste not equivalent to membership of a *genos*.

So far, then, the evidence seems to convey a rather ambiguous impression of the extent to which *gene* could be described as "aristocratic". Are there ways that we can bring the picture into sharper focus?

It would be helpful, of course, if there were texts which contained explicit statements of how *gene* conceived of themselves or were regarded by others in terms of their socio-political status, but unfortunately such texts simply don't exist. One superficially more attractive approach is via prosopography: analysis of known *genos* members and their families, but this does not get us very far as we tend to know of only a few individual members and by definition they are normally the more prominent, which may make *gene* seem more "upper class" than they actually were. We can, however, gain additional insight by examining the mythology surrounding the origins and early history of individual *gene*. This consists by and large of the stories told to enquiring Attidographers, Hellenistic antiquarians and travellers, in many cases probably by *genos* priests. They are mostly stories about the past of individual *gene* which explain features - typically *genos* names and *genos* rituals - as they existed in the late classical and hellenistic present. Few of the sources pre-date the late-5th and 4th centuries; some of the stories were no doubt in circulation in some form before that, but we should not hesitate to take *genos*

mythology as to an extent a product of the contemporary late classical/Hellenistic world, as representing the image of themselves that the *gennetai* wished to project in and to that world; and implicitly this mythology is quite eloquent as to the idea the gene had of their own status.

The first aspect of *genos* mythology that I wish to focus on concerns their time of origin. There was no idea that the gene were all created at the same time. Each was envisaged as having come into being in a different set of circumstances specific to the individual *genos*. But in every case the *genos*' origin is projected as either timeless or, more often, located in the extremely distant past - the heroic and mythical time. In no case is there any tradition linking the origin of a *genos* to an identifiable real-life historical context or to a time later than, say, the second half of the 7th century. We do not know whether, as a matter of fact, any gene were founded in the late 7th, 6th or early 5th centuries, but it is quite likely that some were.

Why is that? One might begin by asking "why should gene *not* have been created in the archaic and early classical period?". A possible answer might be because the institution responsible for creating gene had been abolished or no longer existed. In modern Western Europe aristocratic "gene" as we might call them are or were created by monarchs and it is the abolition of monarchies that put an end to new aristocratic creations in the Republican states which predominate in continental western Europe. There is no trace of any idea that the Athenian kings were exclusively responsible for new *genos* creations. Typically the creator of a *genos* is left rather vague. I take as an example the *genos* *Phytalidai*: *Phytalos*, the *genos* eponym (whose name connotes "planting") entertained *Demeter* at his house and was awarded a fig-plant

in return; the epigram on his tomb, recorded by Pausanias, commemorated the fact that, in consequence, his *genos* enjoyed ageless privileges (*ex hou dh timas Phytalou genos eschen aghrws*), by which a priesthood of Demeter seems to be meant. But who gave the *genos* these privileges is left vague. This is entirely typical of *genos* creation myths. The only exception that I've been able to trace concerns this same *genos*: at a later point in its mythical history it entertained and purified Theseus on his return from killing Sinis at the altar of Zeus Meilichios near the river Kephisos and in return the *genos* was entrusted with responsibility for a sacrifice to Theseus, funded by a tax on the families who had been obliged to send their children to the Minotaur. Here it is specified explicitly in Plutarch's *Life* that it was Theseus who awarded them the sacrifice; but it may be significant that it is not the creation of a *genos* that is at issue here, but the awarding of additional privileges to an existing *genos*; and in any case, as I say, the case seems unique. More often the body creating the *genos* seems implicitly to be the community as a whole, the polis. In the classical period that meant the Assembly; and there is no doubt that, in the classical period, the Assembly was free to create priesthods and to organise systems for their appointment, as it was free to organise all other aspects of institutional life of the polis, in whatever way it saw fit. In *IG I³ 35*, of the 440s or the 420s, we see it doing just that: this is the decree which created the priesthood of Athena Nike and specified that it was to be appointed from all Athenian women by lot. It could as easily have decided to create a new *genos* to supply this priesthood.

The Athena Nike decree suggests a rather different reason why *gene* ceased to be created. It was because the Assembly decided that new polis priesthods would no longer be awarded to a *genos* (whether newly

created or existing), but that all Athenian citizens of the relevant gender would be eligible. Three priesthoods of this type are well-documented, Athena Nike, Bendis and Asklepios, all of them founded in the second half of the 5th century. Before the Assembly made a decision to open new priesthoods to all Athenians, the creation of new gene was a realistic action for the polis to take.

Now Josine Blok has been making an attractive case that Pericles' citizenship law of 451/0 was a prerequisite for the city's decision to create "open" priesthoods. [Blok forthcoming (a)]. No such "open" priesthoods are known to have been created before the law; three are firmly attested in the generation after it. Moreover, the effect of the law was to require Athenian citizens to be of Athenian descent not only on the father's side but also on the mother's. A good case can be made that gene must always have attended to the quality of descent of members on the female side; and must have paid attention to daughters as well as sons in their admissions processes. For one thing gene supplied not only priests but priestesses. So not only sons but also daughters of genos members were potential candidates for a priesthood (and a daughter continued to be eligible for a priesthood in her father's genos even after marriage). It also seems that, in Athenian law, priesthoods, whether male or female, were treated analogously to other heritable goods: eligibility for the priesthood, i.e. genos membership, was apparently heritable in the female line in the case that there were no eligible candidates in the male line (i.e. no male genos members with eligible sons or daughters). This seems to be demonstrated by the succession of priestesses of Athena Polias in the classical and early Hellenistic periods. The importance, in general terms, to the Athenians of the blood line on the female side as well as the male in relation to eligibility for priesthoods is also apparent from the decree of

the 420s which granted Athenian citizenship en masse to the Plataians [Osborne Naturalization D1]. In this decree the enfranchised Plataians are not themselves to be eligible for priesthoods, but their descendants are to be eligible so long as they are descendants of an Athenian woman duly married according to the law.

One might add that this logic - the logic of inheritance of rights to property and priesthoods - is also partly what explains why phratries - which contained gene within them - paid close attention to the female line: the key communal ceremony marking marriage, the *gamelia*, took place in phratries and marked the acceptance by the husband's phratry (and implicitly by gene within the phratry) of a woman who was well qualified in relation to transmission of rights of membership, inheritance of property and (under Pericles' law) citizenship; and it is probably significant in this regard that our only documented instance of formal introduction of an unmarried girl to a formal subgroup of the polis took place in a phratry (Isae. 3) and may have been connected with the fact that she was an *epikleros*. In this attention to the female the phratry/genos system differed from the system of tribes and demes, which was essentially for the organisation of those aspects of public polis life which were in the masculine sphere.

In Blok's view then Pericles' law, by requiring citizens to be of citizen descent on the mother's side as well as the father's, in effect raised the whole citizen body to the level of purity of descent of a genos member. Pericles had in a way made a genos of the whole Athenian citizen body. Like so many aspects of Athenian democratic ideology, the process was not one of reducing the best to the level of the ordinary, but of raising the ordinary to the level of the best. Once the whole people was as good as a

genos it followed that you no longer needed gene with special qualities of descent to supply your new priests: any citizen could be a priest.

If this is right, the converse is that *before* Pericles' citizenship law, ordinary citizens would *not* have been regarded as qualified to take over polis priesthods: they would have to have been allocated to an existing genos, or one newly created for the purpose. Now the evidence for polis priesthood creations before Pericles' law is insufficient to demonstrate conclusively whether this was the case or not; but a case can be made - to put it no stronger - that the polis allocated priesthods to gene in the period between Solon and Pericles, in the gene Salaminioi (composed, if my theory is correct, of Athenians established on Salamis in the archaic period), the Bakchiadai (who had functions connected with the City Dionysia, a festival probably created in the second half of the 6th century, see Lambert 1998) and the Phytalidai (whose priestly functions in relation to cult of Theseus are unlikely to have pre-dated the 5th century development of that hero's mythology and may, as Humphreys has suggested, have been created in connection with the return of the bones of Theseus to Athens by Cimon in the 470s, Humphreys in Parker 1996 169-70).

What, then, was the ideology underlying the city's decision to open new priesthods to all Athenians? Did gene cease to be created because their ideology of inherited privilege had become inconsistent with the prevailing political ideology? This is the conventional view, and it is one subliminally influenced by inappropriate modern parallels. In modern Britain hereditary peerages are no longer created because they are "politically incorrect" - i.e. there is broadly a consensus across the political spectrum that hereditary privilege is inconsistent with a modern

democratic ideology. But the ideological realities of 5th century Athenian ideology in relation to citizenship and the priesthood were rather different. In fact, it seems that, far from the city diverging from an outmoded ideology of heritable rights and privileges, in Pericles' citizenship law it appropriated that ideology in spades. The gene were not institutions to be repudiated, but to be emulated.

This pattern of city-emulating-genos can also be observed in relation to another aspect of the ideology of citizenship in classical Athens: autochthony. By the late 5th century the idea that the Athenians were an indigenous population sprung from the Earth had become part of the ideology of Athenian citizenship. This too appears to have been an ideology taken over from the gene, who par excellence were the groups which could trace their ancestry straight back to the beginning: *genos ithagenon* as they are described in the ancient scholarly literature.

It was already known that this was a strong aspect of the mythology of some gene, the Eteoboutadai, for example, whose claim to ultimate descent from the Earth was advertised on a pinax set up in the Erechtheum in the late 4th century. I'll have some more to say later about the Eteoboutad myth. Now, however, this aspect of genos mythology has been highlighted in striking fashion by the publication in the last month of a new inscription which reveals the existence of an Attic genos named Euenoridai, with ritual functions on the acropolis connected with Aglauros and the vestments of Athena (Malouchou 2008, discussion at Lambert 2008). For this new genos supplies a key to understanding one aspect of a key text relating to the Athenian ideology of autochthony: the Atlantis myth in the *Kritias* of Plato. Atlantis in the *Kritias* is in some sense an ideal counterpart of Athens, a place with numerous Athenian

attributes. These include the names of its inhabitants which are like Athenian names. Plato signals the significance of this by having Kritias explain elaborately why: Solon, in whose papers the Atlantis myth was recorded, had found that the Egyptian priests from whom he learnt of the myth had translated the names into their own language. Solon in turn had translated them into Greek; and that's why the names sound familiar. The parallels between Athens and Atlantis extend to the myth of origins, for like Athens, the original heroic ancestors of the citizens of Atlantis were born from the earth; and most prominent of these autochthons, the man whose daughter married Poseidon and whose descendants became the princes of Atlantis, was named Euenor. In other words we can now see that what Plato has done here is very deliberately to select for the Ur-hero of his mythical Athens counterpart the eponym of a real-life Athenian *genos*. The myth of Athens' autochthonous origins was inextricably linked to the myths of origin of the Athenian gene. [This theme will be developed further by Josine Blok in a paper currently in preparation, Blok forthcoming (b)].

Here, I suggest, is the key to why is there no trace of historical *genos* foundations in *genos* myth. I suggest that it is precisely because it was crucial to the identity and the continuing relevance of the gene in the 4th century and beyond, that they were of immemorial antiquity: not in a way that essentially distinguished them from ordinary Athenians and the prevailing ideology of citizenship, but in a way that made them exemplars of the qualities of pure and ancient descent that were part of that ideology. You, o my fellow Athenian citizens, claim to be autochthonous, to trace your descent in the male and female line back to the heroes who sprung from the earth; but I am in a *genos*, I really am descended from those heroes, my *genos* goes back to immemorial

antiquity. You o member of the deme Boutadai claim descent from Boutes the brother of Erechtheus, but everyone knows that this isn't the case - many of you, for example, got into the deme illegitimately under the cover of Cleisthenes' reforms, his suppression of the use of patronymic and its replacement with the demotic: but we really are descendants of Boutes, and just to prove it we will put up a pinax in the Erechtheum which shows the transmission of the priesthood of Poseidon from generation to generation in our family, all the way back to the goddess Earth.

To summarise then: I suggest that the reason why there is no trace in genos mythology of genos foundations post-dating the heroic and mythical time is not that there were no historical genos foundations, but that a myth of ancient lineage and origins was essential to the identity of genos-members as "super-citizens".

This leads us onto the second aspect of genos myths that I want to think about today: what implications do they have for the social status of the gene within the community of the polis? Claims to ancient origins themselves generated social status in a world in which the prevailing ideology was that implied by Pericles' Citizenship law and the autochthony myth; but the situation is more complex than this. Was it an essential feature of genos identity that they were all actually descended from a common ancestor in the heroic and mythical time; and was that ancestor necessarily someone of high social status? The answer seems to be that there were differences in this respect from genos to genos; and I want to suggest that these differences are broadly in line with real-life differences in the socio-political status of different gene.

It is perhaps worth stressing that we are dealing with two variables here: both the strength of a genos' claim to descent from a common ancestor and the social status of that ancestor and/or of the supposed original members of the genos. Gene in fact vary in their position on the scale on both counts. Right at the top of both scales are the Eteoboutadai. They explicitly claimed descent from Boutes, the brother, or in some versions, son of Erechtheus, and towards the end of the 4th century (unfortunately the action can not be dated precisely) a priest of Poseidon Erechtheus, Habron son of the orator Lykourgos, set up a pinax displayed for all to see in the Erechtheum - on which the succession of the priests of Poseidon Erechtheus in the genos was traced back to Boutes and Erechtheus, Earth and Hephaistos. They wanted to project the idea that they really were descendants of Boutes in a very strong sense. They were Eteo-boutadai in contrast to the fake Boutadai of Cleisthenes' deme, but to an extent the name might also have been aimed at other gene, because no other genos displays quite this passion about the strength of their claim to be descended from their eponym.

It is not only the strength of this claim that is significant, it is also the identity of the eponym and the circumstances of his acquisition of the priesthood. For Boutes is not only brother, or on some versions son of Erechtheus, one of the founding fathers of Attica, in one version of the myth Boutes and Erechtheus/Erichthonios were sons of King Pandion who divided their royal heritage, Erichthonios taking the temporal power, Boutes the priesthoods of Athena and Poseidon Erichthonios: in other words this priesthood is conceptualised as an aspect of kingship. More than any other Attic genos the Eteoboutadai sought to project themselves as a royal priesthood.

Several aspects of this *genos* and its priesthoods are consonant with this myth: the priesthoods were recognised as the two major priesthoods of the acropolis, the city's physical and spiritual centre, and at critical moments the priestess of Athena spoke for Athens: confronting the Spartan king Cleomenes and ordering him out of the temple (Hdt. 5.72); encouraging the Athenians to follow Themistokles' interpretation of the wooden walls oracle and evacuate Athens by announcing that the sacred snake had failed to eat its honey cake (8.41). Aeschines' pride at being a member of the phratry which shared altars with the Eteoboutadai comes across to us as a rather pathetic snobbery, but it suggests that he expected the jury to share his respect for the great name; the lexicographers speak of the *genos* as highly illustrious (*lampron*); the prominent and intensely religiously engaged politician, Lykourgos, was a member; and there are some indications that it was exclusive in the sense that it consisted of an unusually small number of families - at least the two distinct branches of the *genos* which supplied the two main priesthoods seem to have been quite narrowly defined.

Other *gene*, however, did not - or could not - assert quite such a strong claim to descent from a common ancestor. In addition to the deme Semachidai there was also a *genos* of the same name, which claimed descent from Semachos, who, with his daughters, had entertained Dionysos, rather as Phytalos had entertained Demeter, and they were rewarded by a female priesthood of Dionysos, vested in Semachos' descendants. In the classical period there was also a deme Semachidai, but there is no sign that the *genos* took to calling itself Eteosemachidai. Kephisia was also a Cleisthenic deme; its demotic Kephisieus, plural Kephisieis; again there was also a *genos*, Kephisieis: again it had the same name as the deme, but they were not EteoKephisieis - and indeed

Eteokephisieis would have been an unlikely name on any account since, although named for the river, Kephisos, and although there was of course a river god Kephisos, Kephisia was a geographical expression and the Kephisieis were its inhabitants, not defined by any relation of descent to Kephisos or, so far as we know, anyone else. Several other *genos* names lack any connotation of descent from a common ancestor: Salaminioi, for example, named for a connection of some kind with the island of Salamis. It is our most fully documented *genos* in the epigraphical record, but there is no sign that this *genos* had a sense of a single common ancestor (for example, there is no cult of a figure who can plausibly be identified as such in their sacrificial calendar).

Gene differed significantly from one another not only in the strength of their claim to descent from a founder-ancestor, but also in their mythology about the social status of any such founder or ancestor. Some shared the Eteoboutad claim to royal ancestry.

Other royal eponyms include Lykos, thought of as eponym of the Lykomidai (allegedly Themistocles' *genos*), a son of Pandion who received Diakria as his portion on the division of Attica;

Eumolpos, eponym of the *genos* Eumolpidai which supplied the leading male officiant of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the hierophant: In myth Eumolpos was an Eleusinian chief who led the Eleusinians in battle against Athenians under Erechtheus.

Now all these *gene* had a very prominent cult role in the classical period and/or members who included leading political figures. Consistently with this they claimed descent from kings/leaders. None of them, however, went so far as to claim, as the Eteoboutadai seem to have done, that their priesthoods were an aspect of royalty itself.

Obscure gene might claim rather fainter royal links. The Krokonidai and the Koironidai were minor Eleusinian gene, their eponyms obscure figures given some mythological standing by identification as sons of Triptolemos, who, like Eumolpos, was one of the Eleusinian chiefs mentioned in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (153, 474). A sort of pseudo-royalty was also conferred by the fact that Krokon was alleged to have been founder of the so-called "kingdom of Krokon", which had no substance as a real kingdom, but was the name given to an area of Attica between Athens and Eleusis. Minor gene they may have been but that didn't prevent them from engaging in a legal dispute over claims to a priesthood for which Lykourgos and Dinarchos wrote opposing speeches which were famous in antiquity, though unfortunately now lost. Genos mythology played a crucial role in the dispute, each side attacking each other's eponymous founder, the Krokonidai alleging that Koiron was an illegitimate son of Triptolemos (Koiron), and the Koironidai alleging that Krokon was only related to Triptolemos by marriage. This shows an aspect of genos mythology that is quite important to grasp: it was not only about antiquarian stories which explained contemporary phenomena - the names of gene and their rituals - it also had a hard edge as the basis of claims to substantive privileges in the real world. This case also illustrates another way in which the in some sense "aristocratic" ideology of the gene sat quite easily within 4th century "democratic" ideology and practice. The claim of the Eteoboutadai to be descended from Erechtheus and Earth made them super-citizens in a society in which all citizens claimed or aspired to autochthony. Real-life 4th century Athenian courts were full of property disputes in which claims to inheritance were based on allegations that an opposing claimant was illegitimate or connected with the deceased in ways that were otherwise weak or dubious. A genos priesthood was, in a sense, an item of property like any other; the

difference in this case was that the claims and counter-claims to the property related not to the present or the recent past but to the heroic and mythical time: in a rather special sense the dispute involved the projection onto a mythical plane of the everyday legal concerns about property and inheritance that engaged ordinary Athenians.

The kingdom of Krokon may have been rather a pseudo-kingdom, but it was a kingdom nonetheless. There were a lot of gene that claimed descent from quite ordinary individuals, who had no claim to any sort of kingdom, but who had performed a service of some sort to mankind or to gods and heroes. Sometimes the myth is clearly aetiological of a real-life rite or cult-role. We have already met Semachos, whose daughters entertained Dionysos and Phytalos who entertained Demeter. The reality was patently that, in the historical period, the Semachidai and the Phytalidai had charge of rites of theoxenia for Dionysos and Demeter and the eponyms are projected into myth as the original hosts. But there is no suggestion that they were royalty or aristocrats - they are ordinary individuals who strike lucky by being visited by a god. And consistently with this, no historical Phytalid or Semachid of distinction is known (in fact no member of either of these gene is known by name). The members of such gene were not "aristocratic" and they didn't project royal or aristocratic origins for themselves. The Baridai or Embaridai seem to have held the quite important priesthood of Artemis Mounichia. The Attic saying "Embaros ei" meant "you are a clever fellow" and the original cleverness of Baros or Embaros was to have first agreed to sacrifice his daughter to Artemis to counter a plague on condition that "his genos" (i.e. a genos of which he was to be the ancestor) acquired the life priesthood of Artemis Mounichia and then, with the guarantee of the priesthood in his pocket, to have cunningly substituted a disguised goat for his

daughter. Again there is no suggestion that Embaros was anyone but an ordinary Athenian - albeit one envisaged as living in the heroic and mythical time - who in this way makes good in small way. I say in a small way, and that is perhaps a point worth stressing. The priesthood is certainly implied to be a desirable thing to have: it conferred priestly perquisites and no doubt a certain social standing, but there is no implication that it was a route to significant wealth and power or a passport to political office: it was not, in these senses, the modern equivalent of ennoblement. And again no actual historical member of this *genos* is identifiable.

Perhaps the clearest case of an obscure *genos* - as it were the opposite of the Eteoboutadai - is the Brytidai. This *genos* does have a patronymic-type name, but nothing at all is known about the eponym. The *genos* is known from [Dem.] 59, where the speaker argues that its refusal to accept the son of Phrastor of Aigilia by Neaira's daughter Phano shows that Neaira was not of Athenian citizen descent. Of the seven *genos* members named in the speech just one is known to be from a propertied family (*APF* 408), and Phrastor is described by the author of the speech as "a working man, who made a living by assiduous labour" (*andra ergathn kai akribws ton bion syneilegmenon*, 59.50): the image conveyed is that of a simpleton peasant, certainly not that of an aristocrat in any meaningful sense.

I want to finish with a brief look at two cases where the socio-political status of a *genos*, in myth or historical reality, is in some sense at issue.

The *genos* Kerykes, which supplied one of the three most important priests of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the *dadouch* (torchbearer) contained

two of the most patently aristocratic individuals who can be directly associated with any *genos*, the two men, grandfather and grandson, named Kallias son of Hipponikos: they fit all the criteria of "aristocrats": they were vastly wealthy and politically prominent; they are explicitly stated in our sources to be *eupatridai*; and for both of them their *dadouchy* is connected with their prominence and wealth. Indeed an anecdote recorded by Plutarch and designed to explain the elder Kallias' nickname, *Lakkoploutos*, seems to link the office of *dadouch* with wealth, if somewhat obliquely. At the battle of Marathon the elder Kallias made rather an effect on the Persians by turning up in full priestly regalia, so much so that, after the battle, some barbarian, "thinking him a king because of his long hair and headband, bowed to the ground before him, took him by the hand and showed him a heap of gold buried in a pit", whereupon Kallias promptly killed the man and took the gold. As Clinton notes (1972, p. 47) the anecdote probably originates from a scene in a comic play; but it seems that we may still take the point that this *dadouch* could easily be mistaken for royalty.

Such a *genos* ought, one feels, to have a distinguished common ancestor, someone like *Boutes* for the *Eteoboutadai*. But there is problem, as the *Kerykes* were not named not for an ancestor, but a function. And it seems that indeed the *genos* laid no claim to descent from any divine or heroic figure. We know this because of a long Athenian decree of 20/19 BC honouring the *dadouch* *Themistocles*. Among other things the inscription contains a list of previous *dadouchs*; it names 10 predecessors of *Themistocles*, back to ca. 200 BC and then "before all of these *Hermotimos* and *Hierokleides* who were *dadouchs* before the writing up of the *Kerykes* in the *grammateion*." The source of the list in the inscription is the register of the *Kerykes* and that register apparently

began to be kept only in the Hellenistic period. This Kerykes register has a superficial similarity to the pinax of Habron set up in the Erechtheum: but in fact they are rather different animals. Habron's pinax was put on display and the point it was intended to make about the divine and heroic descent of the Eteoboutadai is clear. The *grammateion* of the Kerykes was a private register of members, of a type well attested in Attic descent groups already in the classical period and it has no point to make at all about the quality of the Kerykes' ultimate ancestry. There is not even any attempt to link them with the famous Kalliases of the 5th century, let alone with heroic or divine ancestors. Moreover the same decree honouring Themistocles lists all the priesthoods of the Kerykes - and there was no priest or cult of a *genos* ancestor. And yet one has a sense that an "aristocratic" *genos* of this sort - by which I mean one that played a crucial role in a great cult and one which contained men like Kallias - needed, like the Eteoboutadai, some sort of divine and royal origin. By the late 5th century at the latest such a figure had been generated in the form of Keryx, a hero quite without independent cult or identity (and there is no sign that the Kerykes claimed him for a literal ancestor), but who is defined by his parents and by what those parents convey about the character and status of the group. For in a tradition which seems to go back to Euripides' *Erechtheus* Keryx is the product of a union between Hermes and one of the daughters of Kekrops. Hermes, who was Patroos for Eleusinians (as Apollo was for Athenians), represents the *genos'* Eleusinian identity; and the Kekropid descent in the female line connected the *genos* with Athenian citizen mythology by giving it an autochthonous archegete to rival Boutes and Erechtheus. Whether or not it was due originally to Euripides, the artificiality of the construct is patent and is confirmed by points of variability and contention. The Eleusinian *gene* were particularly prone to disputes among themselves

over their various privileges (e.g. the hierophant Archias was condemned in the 4th century for officiating at a sacrifice at the Haloa at which the priestess of Demeter should have officiated, [Dem.] 59.116 cf. also the Krokonidai and Koironodai, referred to above); and it is most likely in the context of a dispute of this sort that the tradition originated that Keryx was merely a son of Eumolpos, eponym of the genos which supplied the hierophant (FGH 10 Andron F 13; Paus. 1.38.3). There was also uncertainty about which Kekropid was mother of Keryx (did Euripides leave it unspecified?), with all three claimed as such in different later sources.

The quality which, above all, is potentially problematic - genetically incorrect, as it were - in an Attic genos, is foreign origins; and one of the most complex and multivalent myths relating to a genos is that of the tyrannicides, Harmodios and Aristogeiton, both members of the genos Gephyraioi. This genos, according to Herodotos (5.57-61) emigrated from Tanagra on the arrival of the Boeotians and settled in Attica, where they were admitted to the citizenship, on terms which excluded them from "numerous but insignificant" privileges (by which is probably meant the sort of privileges from which later groups enfranchised en masse were also excluded, including the archonship and Attic genos priesthoods). The Athenians in turn were excluded from the Gephyraian cult of Demeter Achaia in north-east Attica, an exception which incidentally proves the rule that genos cults were normally open to participation by all Athenians and which also demonstrates clearly the ideological link between common descent and participation in common rites.

Now the genos affiliation of the tyrannicides, although discussed at some length by Herodotos, is generally thought of as somewhat incidental to the tyrannicide myth. It is not even mentioned by Thucydides; and in

modern discussions too the emphasis generally lies elsewhere, e.g. on the importance of the tyrannicides in "democratising" an ideology of same-sex practices which might previously have been primarily an elite phenomenon. But we can, I think, trace the impact of their genos-affiliation and its foreign origins on aspects of the myth. We have seen above that, broadly speaking, there is a correlation between the socio-political status of a genos and its members and the status of its eponymous ancestor or originator as projected in myth. Now there are two points in the tyrannicide myth at which the status of the Gephyraioi may be relevant. Hipparchos, to get his own back at Harmodios for rejecting his advances, refuses to accept Harmodios' sister as a *kanephoros* in the Panathenaic procession on the ground that she is unworthy (*dia to mh axian einai* - Thuc. 6.56). This incident of course has a perfectly good logic in terms of the personal relations of the protagonists of the myth; but I wonder if there isn't a hint here that Hipparchos may have had a pretext for this exclusion because Harmodios' sister, as a Gephyraia, was excluded from performance of such a role in the major Athenian festival? This is precisely the sort of ritual exclusion that might have been among the "numerous, but insignificant" privileges from which their grant of Athenian citizenship excluded the Gephyraioi. If I am right this may act as a corrective to the statement, often glibly repeated in the modern literature on the Panathenaia, that the *kanephoroi* had to be "aristocratic". For this claim derives from statements about the need for them to be "worthy" in Philochoros (*FGH* 328 F 8, note the use of Thuc's *axios* terminology), which become transmuted into statements about the need for *eugeneia* in later scholars (Hesych., Scholia Ar. *Ach* 242 etc. see Jacoby ad loc), statements which most probably derive from the tyrannicide narrative. It may be that the *kanephoroi* did not have to be "aristocratic" at all, but simply that they did not have to belong to groups

of foreign origin for whom such prominent participation in this festival of Athenianness was inappropriate.

Second, Thucydides makes a point of specifying that Aristogeiton was a *mesos polites* (a "middling citizen"). Why he does so is not entirely clear from Thucydides' narrative; again it is possible that the effect was to make Aristogeiton "ordinary" enough to serve as a universal Athenian hero of democracy (and perhaps too of a democratised pattern of same-sex relations), but I am again inclined to think that Aristogeiton's status as Gephyraios is relevant here, for the Gephyraioi may have been a *genos*, but they were a *genos* who traced their origins not to an earth-born founder hero of Attic myth, but to a group of ordinary migrants, of no particularly elevated status.

To conclude this part of my paper: myths about *gene* and *genos* members implicitly or explicitly project messages about their status. At one extreme, a *genos* like the Eteoboutadai could claim descent from founding kings and heroes of Athens such that they could be viewed as something close to a royal priesthood. But there were also *gene* which claimed descent from ordinary Athenians of no very high status; *gene* whose eponym was wholly obscure; *gene* who didn't have a common founder-ancestor at all and even *gene* of foreign origins. And I have suggested that there was broadly a correlation between the quality of origins of a *genos* as projected in myth and the real-life status of the *genos*, that is to say the prominence of the cults for which it was responsible and the social status of its members.

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GENOS AND ARISTOCRACY: MYTH AND "REALITY"

Genos	Myth of Origins	"Reality"
Aigeirotomoi	Not known. Name means "Pine-cutters".	Real genos named for an occupation (cf. Kerykes)? Spoof genos derived from a comic play (cf. Pheorychoi, "Well-diggers")?
Amyndridai	Not known. Eponym alluded to in Plato, <i>Tim.</i> 21 a-c.	Supplied priest of Kekrops (Parker 1996, 285-6)
Bakchiadai	None known	Supplied officiants (including priest?) for cult of Zeus Eleuthereus at City Dionysia? (Lambert 1998)
Bouzygai	From Bouzyges, first to yoke oxen and use them for agriculture (Bekker, <i>Anecd.</i> 1.221, 8 etc.); a legislator (Lasos <i>PMG</i> 705, cf. Schol. Aeschin. 2.78 etc.).	Performed sacred ploughing each year below acropolis and uttered curses (Parker 1996, 286-7) Prominent members: Demonstratos, proponent of Sicilian expedition (Ar. <i>Lys.</i> 397, Eupolis <i>Demes</i> F 103, 113) Demainetos, general in Corinthian war (Aeschin. 2.78, cf. Davies 1971, 104-5).
Brytidai	Not known	Genos members give evidence that they had refused to admit Phrastor's son by Neira's daughter, Phano ([Dem.] 59.50-61) One of the 7 genos members who gave evidence was from a wealthy family (Davies 1971, 508), but Phrastor himself was "a working man, who scraped a living" ([Dem.] 59.50).
Charidai	Not known	Supplied priest of Kranaos (an Attic king, Paus. 1.31.3) (Hesych.)
Gephyraioi	Group expelled from Tanagra on arrival of Boeotians and	Granted Athenian citizenship, but excluded from "numerous

	emigrated to Attica (Hdt. 5.57-61. Other versions: Parker 1996, 288).	but insignificant privileges" (Hdt.) Cult (presumably priestess) of Demeter Achaia, from which other Athenians excluded (Hdt.) Famous members: Harmodios and Aristogeiton
Embaridai	(Em)baros obtained priesthood of Artemis for his descendants (i.e. genos descended from him) by offering to sacrifice daughter to stay a plague. Substituted a disguised goat (Paus. Attic. F 35 Erbse etc.)	Supplied priestess of Artemis Mounichia
Erysichthonidai	Erysichthon: for Plato a name with no deeds (<i>Kritias</i> 110a), but he later acquired some: son of Kekrops (Apollod. 3.14.2 Paus.1.2.6), traveller to Delos (Phanodemos FGH 325 F 2), led <i>theoria</i> to Delos (Paus. 1.31.2) etc. (see Kearns 1989, 162).	Supplied priest of Apollo on Delos. No members known before 1st cent. BC.
Eteoboutadai	Descended from Boutes and Erechtheus sons of king Pandion on whose death they divided the inheritance, Erichthonios receiving the kingship, Boutes the priesthoods of Athena and Poseidon Erichthonios. Apollod. 3.14.8-15.1. (Other genealogies: Kearns 1989 p. 153). Habron son of Lykourgos the orator set up pinax in the Erechtheum displaying succession of priests of Poseidon Erechtheus in the genos back to "Boutes and Erechtheus son of Earth and Hephaistos." [Plut.] <i>X Orat.</i> 843e.	Supplied priest of Poseidon Erechtheus and Athena Polias on acropolis. Priestess of Athena "speaks for Athens" at critical moments (e.g. invasion by Cleomenes, Hdt. 5.72, or the Persians, Hdt. 8.41) Aeschines (2.147) proud to be member of the phratry which shared altars with the Eteoboutadai. Most prominent genos member: Lykourgos the orator. Eligibility to priesthood apparently restricted to two different branches of genos, each quite narrowly defined. Name, "real Boutadai", suggests desire to claim superiority to deme Boutadai (and to other

		gene?)
Euenoridai	Euenor = autochthonous Ur-inhabitant of Atlantis whose daughter married Poseidon and whose descendants were princes of Atlantis (Plato <i>Krit.</i> 113c-d)	Genos with functions in relation to Aglauros and (Athena's?) vestments (Malouchou 2008; Lambert 2008 forthcoming).
Eumolpidai	Eumolpos = an Eleusinian chief (<i>H Hymn Dem.</i> 154, 476); led Eleusinians in battle against Athenians under Erechtheus (Eur. <i>Erechth.</i> , Thuc. 2.15.1, killed by Erechtheus, Apollod. 3.15.4)	Supplied hierophant, officiant of Eleusinian mysteries Many attested, only one apparently wealthy (Archias, [Dem.] 59.117), none politically prominent (Parker 1996, 296-7), "embodied tradition and orthodoxy" (Parker, e.g. "fierce and narrow piety" of speaker of [Lys.] 6 against Andocides; cf. opposition of Eumolpidai and Kerykes to recall of Alcibiades, Thuc. 8.53.2).
Hesychidai	None known. Hesychos, who received an offering before the sacrifice to the Semnai (Polemon ap. Schol. Soph. <i>OC</i> 489) seems to be a projection of the silence of the rite.	Officiated at cult and procession of Semnai (from which eupatridai excluded)
Kephisieis	None. Genos (Hesych.) named for a location (cf. deme Kephisia)	Nothing known
Kerykes	No claim to descend from Keryx or cult of Keryx attested. However, Keryx = son of Eumolpos (<i>FGH</i> 10 Andron F 13, Paus. 1.38.3, presumably according to Eumolpidai!); according to Kerykes = son of Hermes and one of the daughters of Kekrops in a tradition that starts with Eur. <i>Erechth.</i> F 65, 113-4 (Pandrosos, <i>FGH</i> 325 Androtion F 1; Aglauros, Paus. 1.38.3; Herse, Kaibel <i>Epigr. Graeca ex lapidibus collecta</i> Berlin 1878, 1046.32-4).	Supplied dadouch at Eleusinian Mysteries (Parker 1996, 300-302) Athenian decree of 20/19 BC honouring dadouch Themistocles names his 10 predecessors in dadouchy and "before all of these Hermotimos and Hierokleides who were dadouchs before the writing up of the Kerykes in the <i>grammateion</i> ." (Clinton 1972, 50-52) Prominent members: Kallias son Hipponikos and his like-named grandson, extremely wealthy and prominent figures in classical Athens (Davies 1971, 254 ff;

		Clinton 1972, 47-50). Wealth of elder Kallias, "Lakkoploutos", derived from heap of gold buried in a pit, pointed out to Kallias at battle of Marathon by a Persian who thought he was a king because he was dressed in his priestly regalia (Plut. <i>Aristid.</i> 5 and 25).
Koneidai	Koneides was <i>paidagogos</i> of Theseus (Hesych., Plut. <i>Thes.</i> 4)	Presumably supplied priest of Koneides who received a sacrifice on day before Theseia
Krokonidai and Koironidai	Krokon and Koiron sons of Triptolemos, one of Eleusinian chiefs mentioned in the Homeric <i>Hymn to Demeter</i> (153, 474). In legal dispute about a claim to a priesthood for which Lykourgos and Dinarchos wrote speeches Koiron was apparently alleged to be illegitimate, Krokon not son of T. but husband of his sister Saisara (Bekker <i>Anecd.</i> 1.273.7, Harp. s.v. Koironidai, Paus. 1.38.1-2 with Kearns 1989, 67-8 and Parker 1996, 302-3). Krokon founder of "kingdom of Krokon", area of Attica between Athens and Eleusis (Paus.).	Supplied functionaries at Eleusinian Mysteries (Parker 1996, 302-4) No well-known members
Lykomidai	Lykos = son of Pandion who received Diakria as his portion on the division of Attica (Sophocles <i>TGrF</i> 4.24; <i>ARV</i> ² 259.1; Paus. 4.20.6-8).	Mysteries at Attic deme Phlya (Phlyos = autochthon according to Musaeus, <i>Hymn to Demeter</i> ap. Paus. 4.1.5). Famous members: allegedly Themistocles (Plut. <i>Them.</i> 1.4); Lykomedes, trierarch who dedicated spoils from battle of Salamis in shrine of Apollo Daphnephoros at Phlya (Plut. <i>Them.</i> 15.3, cf. Davies 1971, 346-7).
Pheorychoi	"Genos at Athens or those who dig wells" (Hesych.)	Real genos named for an occupation (cf. Kerykes) or spoof genos mentioned in Philyllios, <i>Pheorychos?</i> (Cf. Aigeirotomoi)
Phytalidai	From Phytalos, who	Priestess of Demeter (?), who

	<p>entertained Demeter and was awarded fig-plant and his descendants (i.e. genos descended from him) apparently a priesthood of Demeter (Paus. 1.37.2, Hesych.)</p> <p>Later the genos purified Theseus at altar of Zeus Meilichios on his return from killing Sinis and was rewarded with sacrifice to Theseus financed by contributions from families who had sent children to Minos (Paus. 1.37.4, Plut. <i>Thes.</i> 12, 23.5, <i>Agora</i> 19 P26.479).</p>	<p>presumably performed rite of <i>theoxenia</i></p> <p>Sacrifice to Theseus, awarded to genos by Cimon of Lakiadai (where genos located), after bones of Theseus recovered from Skyros in 470s? (Humphreys ap. Parker 1996, 169).</p>
Pyrrhakidai	From Pyrrhakos, descendant of Erysichthon (Hesych.)	Attic genos linked with Delos (Parker 1996, 308)
Salaminioi	None. Genos named for location (island of Salamis).	<p>Well documented in epigraphical record (Lambert 1997 and 1999; Rhodes-Osborne 2003 no. 37; Parker 1996, 308-316). Not mentioned in literary record.</p> <p>Genos formed from Athenians who occupied Salamis in 6th century? (Lambert 1997, 1999; other theories: Rhodes-Osborne 2003 commentary to no. 37)</p> <p>Supplied priests of Eurysakes, Herakles at Porthmos, priestesses of Athena Skiras, Aglauros, Pandrosos and Kourotropos</p> <p>Well-known member: Hegesippos ("Krobylos"), vigorous anti-Macedonian agitator (ally of Demosthenes against Aeschines), and his brother Hegesandros</p>
Semachidai	Descended from Semachos, who, with his daughters, entertained Dionysos. Steph. Byz. s.v. Semachidai.	Supplied priestesses of Dionysos (who presumably performed rite of <i>theoxenia</i>)
Thaulonidai	Thaulon first to strike the ox at the Bouphonia ritual at Dipolieia (FGH 324 Androtion	Genos presumably supplied the <i>boutypos</i> (officiant at Dipolieia who struck the ox)

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