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The case of Cimon: the evolution of the meaning of philolaconism in Athens*

Introduction

After a strong earthquake struck Laconia in the late 460s, the Spartans invoked the help of their allies against the revolting helots; according to tradition, Cimon persuaded his fellow Athenians to respond, but their expedition was eventually repelled by the same suspicious Spartans at mount Ithome (Th. I 102; Plu. *Cim.* 17, 3). Having been accused of philolaconism and incest with his own sister Elpinice, Cimon was ostracized shortly after, ca. 461.¹ This paper tries to clarify the reasons behind Cimon's ostracism and the contemporary meaning of his bonds with Sparta, how tradition reworked these themes, and why they are closely connected to a sexual scandal.

According to Plutarch Cimon was, «since the beginning», a philolacon (*Cim.* 16, 1 ἀπ' ἀρχῆς φιλολάκων), who used to deal mildly (πράως) with the allies and in a proper way (κεχαρισμένως) with Sparta: thanks to this entente the Athenians enjoyed *eunoia* among the Spartans (16, 2).² Such a relationship was

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¹ Plu. *Cim.* 15, 3, on which see L. Piccirilli, *Commento. Vita di Cimone*, in C. Carena - M. Manfredini - L. Piccirilli (a cura di), *Plutarco. Le vite di Cimone e di Lucullo*, Scrittori greci e latini, Milano 2001, 251; more sources on Cimon's ostracism are discussed below. I cannot treat here the datation of these events, nor the problem of *neoterismos* at Ithome: see J.R. Cole, *Cimon's dismissal, Ephialtes' revolution and the Peloponnesian wars*, «GRBS» XV (1974), 369-385; A. Roveri, *Note sulla spedizione ateniese contro Taso*, «RSA» X (1980), 27-45; P. Autino, *I terremoti della Grecia classica*, «Mem. Ist. Lomb.» XXXVIII (1987), 355-446; M. Sordi, *Temistocle e il papiro di Teramene*, «RIL» CXXVII (1993), 93-101, part. 99-101; E. Badian, *From Plataea to Potidaea. Studies in the history and historiography of the Pentecontaetia*, Baltimore-London 1993, 90 ff., with early (unconvincing) datation; Piccirilli, *Commento*, cit., 260-262.

² For *eunoia* in Plutarch, a “technical” term recurring in the definition of friendship, see E.N. O'Neil, *Plutarch on friendship*, in J.T. Fitzgerald (Ed.), *Greco-Roman perspectives on friendship*, Resources for Biblical study 34, Atlanta 1997, 105-122, 113-114. For Cimon's *praotes* (see *Cim.* 3, 1), S. Fuscagni, *Cimone. Introduzione*, in S. Fuscagni - B. Mugelli - B. Scardigli (a cura di), *Plutarco. Cimone. Lucullo*,



apparently long standing – and this may be what Plutarch implies with such a “beginning” – as young Cimon «was made great by the Lacedaemonians» as a rival to Themistocles (16, 2 ηὐξήθη δ’ ὑπὸ τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων). This may derive from Plutarch’s colorful inference resting on Cimon’s proverbial philolaconism, as it is extremely difficult to think how the Spartans could actually influence domestic Athenian politics. Besides armed threat, the only means they could possibly employ was their network of *philoï*: a promotion of Cimon’s consensus among Athenian noble families, by request of their pro-Cimonian Spartan kinsmen. This is to some extent possible, and may actually give a hint on how we should interpret contemporary politics.

1. Foreign *philoï*. “Lacanian style” and *philolaconism* as a virtue

Cimon presented moral juxtaposition to the Spartans as a virtue. When accused of having been corrupted by Alexander of Macedon in the late 460s, after the fall of Thasos (Plu. *Cim.* 14, 4) and not much before the Ithome expedition, he publicly recalled being *proxenos*³ and *mimoumenos* of the Spartans as a guarantee of his own integrity, honesty, and indifference towards personal wealth. The charge was (quietly?) set aside, and Cimon acquitted (15, 1).⁴ Despite seemingly heavily rhetorical, the passage may to some extent reflect Cimon’s own words: the episode suggests that personal closeness with Sparta was not commonly perceived as questionable or dangerous. *Proxenia* was based on a widespread legal and socially acceptable custom, mostly connected with delegation duties, belonging to the same set of aristocratic values to which *philia* belongs:⁵ Pericles’ notorious *xenia* with a Spartan king raised no concern at all until the war began (Th. II 13, 1).

Classici greci e latini, Milano 1989, 35-155, 44-45, 54-56. E. Federico, *Syngeneia, dike, hegemonie ap’isou. L’impero etico di Ione di Chio*, in L. Breglia - M. Lupi (a cura di), *Da Elea a Samo. Filosofi e politici di fronte all’impero ateniese*, Atti del Convegno di studi (Santa Maria Capua Vetere, 4-5 giugno 2003), Napoli 2005, 183-224, 215, n. 115, assumes that the definition of Cimon’s foreign politics comes from Ion of Chios.

³ On Cimon’s Spartan proxeny see D.J. Mosley, *Cimon and the Spartan proxeny*, «Athenaeum» n.s. XLIX (1971), 431-432; Piccirilli, *Commento*, cit., 251. For the title of *proxenos* of the Spartans see G. Nenci, *Commento*, in G. Nenci (a cura di), *Erodoto. Le Storie*, libro VI, Scrittori greci e latini, Milano 2007, 224-225 (with bibliography). For the Spartan nomination of their own *proxenoi* see D.J. Mosley, *Spartan kings and proxeny*, «Athenaeum» n.s. XLIX (1971), 433-435; L. Porciani, *La prossenia spartana nota a Erodoto*, 6, 57, 2, «ASNP» ser. 3, XXI 1 (1991), 125-136, with a persuasive reading of the meaning of the title in Sparta. For the title in Athens see catalogue in M.B. Walbank, *Athenian proxenies of the fifth century B.C.*, Toronto-Sarasota 1978.

⁴ Not surprisingly: we may hardly believe that the Athenians, after almost three years of siege at Thasos (Th. I 100, 2 - 101, 3), could claim any serious intention to start a war with Macedon committing those very same, weary, troops. The charge, if real, looks like an attempt by Cimon’s political rivals to exploit his decline after the war with Thasos. For Elpinice’s role in this matter see § 3.

⁵ For aristocratic *philia* as a shared value among peers, see the definitions of Plutarch (O’Neil, *Plutarch on friendship*, cit., 106 ff.), Aristotle (D. Guastini, *Philia e amicizia. Il concetto classico di philia e le sue trasformazioni*, Studi e ricerche. Filosofia, Roma 2008, part. 29 ff.), Hesychius (e.g. ε 49,



More openly presented references to Spartan customs are recorded for Cimon. The not entirely conflicting descriptions of his temperament provided by Stesimbrotus of Thasos and Ion of Chios are in fact built on the same Peloponnesian – and specifically Laconian – traits: calmness, sense of measure, sincerity, refined appearance and sympotic, i.e. aristocratic, skills. All of this may be summed up as a socially acceptable, although somewhat eccentric and possibly disturbing, personal “Laconian style”.⁶

51, 52; Π 3607, 3608). The *xenos* is a stranger bond through personal ties to a citizen belonging to the same social class; one could be at the same time a (private) *xenos* for a partner individual and a (public) *proxenos* for a partner community, as was the case for Xenias of Elis (Paus. III 8, 4). For the evolution of *xenia* from private virtue to public institution through *proxenia* and its relationship with *philia* see G. Daverio Rocchi, *Città-stato e stati federali della Grecia classica. Lineamenti di storia delle istituzioni politiche*, I manuali, Milano 1993, 179-189; M. Intrieri, *Philoï kai xenioi. Sui rapporti fra tiranni e basileis in Erodoto*, in M. Caccamo Caltabiano - C. Raccuia - E. Santagati (a cura di), *Tyrannis, Basileia, Imperium. Forme, prassi e simboli del potere politico nel mondo greco e romano*, Atti delle Giornate seminariali in onore di S. Nerina Consolo Langher (Messina, 17-19 dicembre 2007), *Pelorias* 18, Messina 2010, 123-142, part. 126 ff. For the ordinary aristocratic definition of *xenia* and its evolution into *philia* among *poleis* see also G. Herman, *Ritualised friendship and the Greek city*, Cambridge 1987, 130 ff.; G. Panessa, *La ‘philia’ nelle relazioni interstatali del mondo greco*, in G. Nenci - G. Thür (Hgg.), *Symposion 1988*, *Vorträge zur griechischen und hellenistischen Rechtsgeschichte* (Siena-Pisa, 6-8 giugno 1988), *Akten der Gesellschaft für griechische und hellenistische Rechtsgeschichte* 7, Köln-Wien, 261-266; G. Panessa, *La philia nelle relazioni tra Greci e indigeni*, in S. Alessandrì (a cura di), *Ἱστορίη. Studi offerti dagli allievi a Giuseppe Nenci in occasione del suo settantesimo compleanno*, Galatina 1994, 359-370; D. Konstan, *Friendship and the state*, «Hyperboreus» I (1994-1995), 1-16; G. Panessa (a cura di), *Philiai. L'amicizia nelle relazioni interstatali dei Greci*, I, *Dalle origini alla fine della guerra del Peloponneso*, *Relazioni interstatali nel mondo antico* 8, Pisa 1999, xv ff.; D. Baltzly - N. Eliopoulos, *The classical ideals of friendship*, in B. Caine (Ed.), *Friendship. A history*, *Critical histories of subjectivity and culture*, London-Oakville 2009, 1-64. For the means of communication among “international aristocracy” see N.R.E. Fisher, *Drink, hybris and the promotion of harmony in Sparta*, in A. Powell (Ed.), *Classical Sparta: techniques behind her success*, London 1989, 26-50, part. 34-43.

⁶ Stesimbrotus *FGrHistCont* 1002 (*FGrHist* 107) F 4 (on which see below, § 3), and Ion *FGrHist* 392 F 15. For Cimon’s “Laconian style” see Ion F 12 and Piccirilli, *Commento*, cit., 219; L. Piccirilli, *I testi biografici come testimonianza della storia della mentalità*, in W.W. Ehlers (Éd.), *La biographie antique*, *Proceedings of the Conference (Vandœuvres-Genève, 25-29 agosto 1997)*, *Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique* 44, Vandœuvres-Genève 1998, 147-188, 147-150, rather underlining Ion’s “Ionic” traits of Cimon’s personality and behaviour. The symposium at Laomedon’s house and Cimon’s sympotic skills are in Ion F 106, on which see A. Banfi, *Il governo della città. Pericle nel pensiero antico*, Istituto italiano per gli Studi storici 50, Bologna 2003, 66-67; A. Iannucci, *La parola e l’azione. I frammenti simposiali di Crizia*, *Capitano Nemo* 2, Bologna 2002, 128-130, for Ion’s praise of Sparta; see A. Aloni - A. Iannucci, *L’elegia greca e l’epigramma dalle origini al V secolo. Con un’appendice sulla ‘nuova’ elegia di Archiloco*, Firenze 2007, 147, 197-198; *contra* A. Katsaros, *Staging empire and other in Ion’s Sympotica*, in V. Jennings - A. Katsaros (Eds.), *The world of Ion of Chios*, *Mnemosyne Supplementum* 228, Leiden-Boston 2007, 217-240, 222-225, rather seeing a Ionic celebration. Personal bonds within lyric sympotic contexts belong to the same set of values of *philia* (D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical world*, *Key themes in ancient history*, Cambridge 1997, 44-47), and Cimon’s musical education was a strong trademark of his aristocratic, political and moral virtues: L. Mosconi, *‘Musica & buon governo’: paideia aristocratica e propaganda politica nell’Atene di V sec. a.C.*, «RCCM» L (2008), 11-70, part. 11-43. M. Petruzzella, *Le elargizioni di Cimone nell’Atene del V secolo a.C.*, «RFIC» CXXXVII (2009), 41-55, 51-55, arguably finds a philolaconian trait in Cimon’s provision of clothes to the poor. For Cimon’s laconism as a set of positive traits see some elements in P.G. Cardo, *“Laconismo” como virtud en la Atenas del s. V. a.C.: a propósito de la Vida de Cimon de Plutarco*, «Myrtia» XXII (2007), 69-81.



Furthermore, in respect of Cimon's *proxenia*, one of his sons was named Lacedaimonios (Plu. *Cim.* 16, 1).⁷ His third son's name, Thessalos, was maybe inspired by Cimon's personal kinship with Menon of Pharsalos, and by possible familiar bonds with Thessaly,⁸ although this does not necessarily imply a *proxenia* as the *schol.* Aristid. *Or.* XLVI D. *hyp. Cim.* J. (III 515 Dindorf) records, possibly following Ephorus.⁹ This is also the only source citing Cimon's proxeny with Elis, from which he would have named Lacedaimonios' twin Eleios, almost certainly the corruption of Oulios.¹⁰ Three more otherwise unrecorded sons are recalled by the scholiast: Miltiades, Cimon and Peisianax. Apparently the scholiast could hardly accept that Cimon had chosen three xenophile names, breaking the widespread aristocratic tradition, strictly followed by the Philaids-Cimonians, of choosing names of illustrious ancestors, being both Miltiades and Cimon very popular among the previous generations of the family.¹¹

⁷ For Cimon's sons see P. Bicknell, *Studies in Athenian politics and genealogy*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 19, Wiesbaden 1972, 89-95; L. Piccirilli, *Tessalo e la presunta prossenia tessalica di Cimone*, «CCC» XIII (1992), 107-113. On the tradition which makes Callias son of Cimon see below.

⁸ As suggested by A.E. Raubitschek, *Menon, son of Menekleides*, «Hesperia» XXIV (1955), 286-289; on Menon, who assisted Cimon in taking Eion ca. 476, see D. XIII, 23; XXIII, 199; Pl. *Men.* 70a; Hsch. s.v. Μενωνίδα; the namesake in Th. II 22, 3 is maybe a descendant. *Contra* Raubitschek's thesis is B.M. Lavelle, *Kimon's Thessalian proxeny*, «LCM» X (1985), 12-13, thinking that the name Thessalos would instead come from the will to celebrate Doriaeus' companion (Hdt. V 46, 1); see also Piccirilli, *Tessalo*, cit., arguing that, instead, Thessalos would have been inspired by the "good" Peisistratid namesake, actually Hegesistratos (Th. I 20, 1, VI 55, 1; Arist. *Ath.* 17, 4; D.S. X 17, 1). Both Lavelle's and Piccirilli's arguments are weak and seem to overestimate Cimon's, and the Athenians' in general, will of celebrating characters of the previous decades: naming a son Thessalos would be a rather odd way to pay respects to a Spartan or to an Athenian, and there are no hints that Cimon or his family would have been particularly tied to the Spartan or to the Peisistratid Thessalos. Besides, it is not obvious at all that Hegesistratos was recalled as a kind man at Cimon's time, the rest of the tradition being totally hostile to him (Arist. *Ath.* 18, 2, and see R. Vattuone, *Momenti di storia ateniese nei libri IX e X della Bibliotheca di Diodoro Siculo*, in D. Ambaglio (a cura di), *Ενγγραφή. Epitomati ed epitomatori: il crocevia di Diodoro Siculo*, Atti del Convegno, Pavia, 21-22 aprile 2004, Como 2005, 71-82, 75-76). Raubitschek's idea still holds, and the value of a Thessalian ally for Cimon had been already shown at Scyros (Plu. *Cim.* 8, 3-7; on the international scenario, anyway, see E. Luppino Manes, *I Tessali e Delfi nell'impresa di Cimone a Sciro*, «RIL» CX (1976), 131-141). Moreover, during the 480s Tisander of Isagoras, probably a Philaid, had been bound to Thessaly through *xenia* (E. Culasso Gastaldi, *I Filaidi tra Milzjade e Cimone. Per una lettura del decennio 490-480 a.C.*, «Athenaeum» LXXXIV, 1996, 493-526, 494-506), a possible record in Cimon's family. F. Jacoby, *Some remarks on Ion of Chios*, «CQ» XLI (1947), 1-17, 16, literally guesses that Cimon's friend Laomedon (Plu. *Cim.* 9, 1) was Thessalian. Thessalian wealth is treated in Critias fr. 8 D-K, on which see below.

⁹ See Bicknell, *Studies*, cit., part. 90-91, 95. E.D. Francis, *Image and idea in fifth-century Greece. Art and literature after the Persian wars*, London 1990, 56-57, thinks that Cimon may have enjoyed proxeny with Thessaly, but canceled it before the ostracism; W.R. Connor, *Two notes on Cimon*, «TAPhA» XCVIII (1967), 67-75, instead sees in Thessalos the reconciliation between Athens and Thessaly during Cimon's last years of life. Both versions are hard to prove and rather unnecessary.

¹⁰ See O. Masson, *Le culte Ionien d'Apollon Oulios, d'après des données onomastiques nouvelles*, «JS» (1988), 173-183; Piccirilli, *Commento*, cit., 255-256.

¹¹ For the *stemma* see e.g. C. Carena - M. Manfredini - L. Piccirilli (a cura di), *Plutarco. Le vite di Cimone e di Lucullo*, Scrittori greci e latini, Milano 2001, lxiv, tav. I. It was actually not uncommon



To Cimon's international friends, as a side note, we may add the *barbaros* Rhoesaces (Plu. *Cim.* 10, 8), the *mantis* Astiphilos of Poseidonia (18, 3),¹² and possibly aristocratic families from Chios.¹³

Thus, so far we have a reflection of Cimon's Spartan sympathies – which represent probably the largest, but not the only, part of his international contacts – into his *proxenia* duties, moral code, temperament and appearance, son's name: whether they are all true or not, these elements reflect a set of purely personal, cultural, choices, apart for the *proxenia* which is also a public office exerted in the interest of one's own city. This is apparently what made him a philolacon to the eyes of later sources. What else? For what concerns international politics before Ithome, things seem rather different. Cimon relieved Byzantium and the *hegemonia* over the Greeks, taking both from the hands of Spartan regent Pausanias:¹⁴ the Hetoimaridas episode in Diodorus (XI 50) is believable as far as it implies that a large part of the Spartans was rather upset by such course of events.¹⁵ Cimon led campaigns on the Aegean sea, for almost 15 years, exclusively in favour of Athens, and in order to do this a peaceful relationship with Sparta was necessary. The role designed for Sparta in Cimon's foreign politics seems that of a quiet, subordinate partner, built on the theme of the shared yoke (Ion *FGrHist* 392 F 14 *ap.* Plu. *Cim.* 16, 10), the common burden of defending Greece, but *not* on the shared gain, in terms of both resources and fame. Is it possible to label Cimon's policy as

to choose names according to one's foreign connections: Themistocles, too, maybe made a similar choice in naming his daughters Italia and Sybaris (Plu. *Them.* 32, 2).

¹² Both hard to date. Contact with the wealthy deserter Ποισάκης, maybe a Persian attested on the Persepolis tablets (M. Mayrhofer, *Onomastica persepolitana. Das altiranische Namengut der Persepolis-Täfelchen*, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse 266, Wien 1973, 226-227, # 1428, 1446; J.M. Balcer, *A prosopographical study of the ancient Persians royal and noble c. 550-540 B.C.*, Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter 1993, 259, # 292; 169, # 217) is perhaps to be placed after the battle at the Eurymedon and the crisis following Xerxes' death.

¹³ See Piccirilli, *I testi biografici*, cit., 153-154; E. Federico, Origo Chii. *Note a Ione*, fr. 98 *Leurini*, «IncidAntico» II (2004), 179-214, part. 186-196; Federico, *Syngeneia*, cit.

¹⁴ Depending on the source, the acquisition of the leadership is a merit of Aristides only (Arist. *Ath.* 23, 4-5; D.S. XI 44, 6, 46, 5; Nep. *Arist.* 2, 2-3), or of both Aristides and Cimon (with more emphasis on the protagonist of the biography: see Plu. *Cim.* 6, 2-6; *Arist.* 23, 5); likewise, the same sources present the Athenian role as active or not in demolishing Pausanias' credibility. Cooperation between Athens and Sparta is not recorded at this time, although it may have taken place later (see M. Sordi, *Atene e Sparta dalle guerre persiane al 462/1 a.C.*, «Aevum» L, 1976, 25-41, 33-34). On Cimon's Aegean strategy in regards to Sparta see also E. Lévy, *Sparta. Storia politica e sociale fino alla conquista romana*, (transl. of *Sparte. Histoire politique et sociale jusqu'à la conquête romaine*, Paris 2003), *Il Vello d'oro* 23, Lecce 2010, 188.

¹⁵ About the discussion in Sparta on regaining the lost hegemony see R. Meiggs, *The Athenian empire*, Oxford 1972, 40-41; Sordi, *Atene e Sparta*, cit., 26-32; E. Luppino Manes, *Egemonia di terra ed egemonia di mare. Tracce del dibattito nella storiografia tra V e IV sec. a.C.*, *Collana del Dip. di Scienze dell'antichità* 4, Alessandria 2000, ch. 2, part. 66 ff.; R. Vattuone, *Hetoimaridas: note di politica interna a Sparta in età classica*, in C. Bearzot - F. Landucci (a cura di), *'Partiti' e fazioni nell'esperienza politica greca*, *Contributi di Storia antica* 6, Milano 2008, 131-152. Although somewhat anachronistic, the passage cannot be seriously doubted and, presenting Spartan resentment about the Athenians' new pan-Hellenic leadership and economic advantages, is much more believable than the quiet tale told by Th. I 95, 7.



philospartan? We should first try to understand what “philospartan policy” actually meant.

2. *Attempts to subvert the patrios politeia? The “classical” meaning of philolaconism*

Although it may imply imitation of Spartan customs, that is, a (blameful) cultural tendency possibly modeled on negative connotations of verbs derived from toponyms,¹⁶ (*philo*)*lakonizein* in late V century Athens is specifically a dangerous political idea.¹⁷ The latter meaning (the same for *lakonismos*, etc.) is first found in Xenophon, on various facts regarding the last years of the Peloponnesian war or the Corinthian war (*HG* I 1, 32; IV 4, 2 and 15; VII 4, 34), and in Isocrates (e.g. XIV 30; XV 318). Philolaconism is often associated to a subversive political agenda, aimed at changing the *patrios politeia* towards oligarchy or at betraying one’s own country to the advantage of Sparta: in this sense, Critias’ laconism, promoting the excellence of Spartan *politeia* (X. *HG* II 3, 34) is archetypical.¹⁸ This theme emerged as rather delicate after 411, when the *patrios politeia* had become vulnerable to oligarchic attacks.¹⁹ This is the settled, “classical” meaning of being a philolacon: being a friend of the Spartans implies, more or less openly, to be an enemy of the Athenians. Is it actually possible to find a similar attitude in Cimon?

¹⁶ Compare the case of medism: J. Holladay, *Medism in Athens 508-480 B.C.*, «G&R» XXV (1978), 174-191 (176 for relevant observations on Cimonian politics); D.F. Graf, *Medism: the origin and significance of the term*, «JHS» CIV (1984), 15-30 (15-16 for late V century comparisons); a possibly Aristophanean case of this widespread custom in M. Kajava, *Cities and courtesans*, «Arctos» XLI (2007), 21-29, part. 21-23.

¹⁷ For the double-sided meaning of *lakonizein*, see *LSJ*, s.v. Plutarch employs the verb in both senses: e.g. *Ages.* 23, 2; *Alc.* 23, 3; *Lyc.* 20, 6; *Lys.* 28, 6; see also D. Whitehead, *Sparta and the Thirty tyrants*, «AncSoc» 13-14 (1982-1983), 105-130, 117-119.

¹⁸ Whitehead, *Sparta*, cit., part. 111 ff. On Critias’ sympotic works with such values see Iannucci, *La parola e l’azione*, cit., part. 155-157. Apparently Critias blamed Cimon (fr. 52 D.-K. *ap. Plu. Cim.* 16, 9) for his choice to help the Spartans, eventually allowing democracy to rise (thus Battezzatore’s comment *ad loc.*), but he may, instead, be praising his respect for aristocratic customs, coherently with the tone of fr. 8 D.-K: see G. Vanotti, *Rileggendo Crizia*, «MGR» XXI (1997), 61-92, 74-75; U. Bultrighini, *Maledetta democrazia. Studi su Crizia*, Collana del Dip. Scienze dell’antichità 2, Alessandria 1999, ch. 2, part. 123 ff. What use Critias could make of such praise in legitimizing his own oligarchic programme is hard to say (Fuscagni, *Cimone*, cit., 69-71; but see also Battezzatore’s notes *ad loc.*). A substantial difference in Cimon’s and Critias’ conception of laconism, seen as the cause of Critias’ resentment, is noted, although in a different shape, in C. Ferretto, *La città dissipatrice. Studi sull’exkursus del libro decimo dei Philippika di Teopompo*, Università. Series storica 2, Genova 1984, 37-38; see also D. Musti, *Storia greca. Linee di sviluppo dall’età micenea all’età romana*, Biblioteca storica Laterza, Roma-Bari 2006, 471-472. As far as Critias may have approved Cimon’s political choices, Plato surely did not (*Gorg.* 519a), thus appreciation within the Socratic circle (on which see also below) is anything but obvious.

¹⁹ Cf. the terminology employed by Th. VIII 75-6, part. 76, 6; on this passage and on the contemporary emergence and use of the theme of *patrios politeia* see S. Hornblower, *A commentary on Thucydides*, III, Books 5.25-8.109, Oxford 2008, 980-981.



So far (see § 1) we have underlined purely cultural implications of Cimon's laconism. Coming to "facts", Demosthenes claims that Cimon was accused of having modified the *patrios politeia* by his personal efforts (?) (XXIII 205 τὴν πατριὸν μετεκίνησε πολιτείαν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ). While never mentioning philolaconism, Demosthenes then states that Cimon was fined 50 talents, an otherwise unrecorded episode which echoes the fine imposed to Miltiades after his failure at Paros (Hdt. VI 134-6).²⁰ This doublet is reflected in a critical textual corruption: different manuscripts read either *patrios politeia* or *Parios politeia*.²¹ Anyway we look at it, the passage is hardly believable and coherent, although several studies have tried to bring sense to it, claiming that Demosthenes would imprecisely refer to Cimon's opposition to Ephialtes' coup during the Ithome expedition (Arist. *Ath.* 23; Plu. *Cim.* 15, 2; *Per.* 9, 4).²² I fail to see how Cimon could have tried to subvert the constitution when, obviously, it was Ephialtes' faction which had just operated such a subversion. Cimon did, if anything, try to defend what at that time *was* the *patrios politeia*, as other authors, besides, correctly point out (D.S. XI 77, 6; cf. Plu. *Cim.* 15, 2 for Cimon's opponents attacking τὰ πάτρια νόμιμα).²³ If Cimon ever actually earned the title of subversive for doing this, he obviously owed it to Ephialtes and Pericles, who thus tried to mask their own attack to the *patrios politeia*. Even if we make the effort to assume that Demosthenes' passage actually means anything, we cannot give it any historical sense, as it either follows biased propaganda or, more probably, is plainly confused.

At the time of the battle of Tanagra, when Cimon had already been ostracized, Thucydides (I 107, 4) briefly recalls, but does not name, Athenians guilty of having secretly invoked the Spartans (ἄνδρες τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἐπήγον αὐτοὺς [*scil.* the Spartans] κρύφα), aiming to stop the democracy and the building of the long walls (ἐλπίσαντες δὴμόν τε καταπαύσειν καὶ τὰ μακρὰ τεῖχη οἰκοδομούμενα). Plutarch (*Cim.* 17, 4-8) has a rather different version of the same story: Cimon himself would have shown up on the battlefield, clearly as the leader of such men,

²⁰ Sources often tend to mix up informations between Cimon and Miltiades: notorious examples are Nepos' *Life of Miltiades*, Aeschin. II 172 and [And.] III 3-4; on the latter see E. M. Harris, *The authenticity of Andokides' De pace. A subversive essay*, in P. Flensted-Jensen - T. Heine Nielsen - L. Rubinstein (Eds.), *Polis & politics. Studies in ancient Greek history. Presented to Mogens Herman Hansen on his sixtieth birthday* (August 20, 2000), Copenhagen 2000, 479-505, part. 480-482.

²¹ See R. Thomas, *Oral tradition & written record in classical Athens*, Cambridge studies in oral and literate culture 18, Cambridge 1989, 204. Brief comment in J.H. Vince (Ed.), *Demosthenes. Against Meidias, Androtion, Aristocrates, Timocrates, Aristogeiton*, Loeb Classical library, Cambridge-London 1935, 356-357, n. 1, prone to attribute the Miltiades-Cimon confusion to an Alexandrian, which would just confirm that the passage makes no sense since a long time.

²² C. Petrocelli, *Un nuovo dato per la biografia cimoniana*, «QS» XI (1980), 383-392; rejection and further proposals in L. Piccirilli, *Demostene e il processo di Cimone*, «CCC» V (1984), 23-32. See also L. Piccirilli, *Ebbe Cimone un figlio di nome Callia?*, «CCC» IV (1983), 7-14, part. 10-14, for further confusion in the tradition regarding this 50 talents fine, apparently merging (below, § 3) with the sexual scandal, thus confirming its fabrication.

²³ On the tradition see Piccirilli, *Commento*, cit., 251. Despite the Areopagus strengthening during, or slightly after, the Persian wars (Arist. *Ath.* 25; 41, 2; *Pol.* V 1304a), these laws were still perceived as *ta patria nomina*.



and his ἐχθροί persuaded the *boule* that it was his intention to disrupt the phalanx and lead the Spartans to Athens (17, 5 ὡς συνταράξει τὴν φάλαγγα βουλομένου καὶ τῆ πόλει Λακεδαιμονίους ἐπαγαγεῖν). Cimon's *betairoi*²⁴ (*Cim.* 17, 4), all accused of *lakonizēin* (17, 6 τὴν τοῦ λακωνίζειν αἰτίαν ἔσχον), instead fought and died valiantly on the Athenian side, eventually arousing remorse in their fellow citizens. Plutarch elsewhere (*Per.* 10.1-2) repeats the story, providing a name for Cimon's political enemies, not surprisingly Pericles supported by his own *philo*i against those of Cimon. What we read in these passages is a sort of ritualized political struggle transposed on the battlefield: the two protagonists, among their respective supporters, face each other through opposite "arguments", a dramatic, rhetorical scene built with perfect timing, which could hardly have taken place at Tanagra, and which, again, seems a product of later tradition. The use of the verb ἐπάγω is pretty much the only similarity between Thucydides' and Plutarch's versions, as despite the fact that betrayal is the common theme, the very aims of the traitors in each story are rather different. Either Thucydides did not wish to mention Cimon among these men, or, in his sources, he was not implied at all, but was added later while reworking the story. This episode seems even more suspect as it may be an imitation of late VI century history, when Athenian constitutional changes were tied to Spartan occupation of the acropolis which took place thanks to Athenian "quisling", or even of late V and IV century facts, when oligarchic regimes were introduced in connection with recent or imminent military disaster. In other words, in order to accuse Cimon of being intentioned to sell his *polis* to the Spartans, the story had to be grounded on a military context in which he could be staged as the traitor. Thanks to the "good ending" of Plutarch's story, his version is eventually an apology to Cimon's intentions, but still it does present his philolaconism as openly related to what his fellow citizens perceived as subversion and betrayal.

For those who believe the episode as Plutarch describes it, it may be noted that, not much later, while signing peace, the Spartans bore no resentment against Cimon for not having sided with them, being still well disposed (*Per.* 10, 4); nor did he blame them for having killed all his *betairoi* in a legitimate battle. As *xenia* had not saved the Peisistratids from being attacked by the Spartans (*Hdt.* VI 63, 1; cf. *Arist. Ath.* 19, 4), Cimon's links would not imply any form of immunity from a formal conflict, nor any expectations from Sparta to betray his country in the name of his *proxenia* or cultural bonds.²⁵

²⁴ See Konstan, *Friendship*, cit., 66, for this episode and for the Homeric meaning (below, § 4) of the word.

²⁵ See Piccirilli, *Commento*, cit., 262-263, for hints about the later fabrication of the Tanagra episode. Some notes on the political meaning of *proxenia* at the time in E. Luppino Manes, *La laicizzazione della prossenia. Il caso di Alcibiade*, in M. Sordi (a cura di), *Religione e politica nel mondo antico*, Contributi dell'Istituto di Storia antica 7, Milano 1981, 73-79. The fabrication of the Tanagra episode could rest on a subtle intent: after Cimon's return from ostracism, his old *betaireia* was probably largely lost due to persecution, discredit, change of allegation. But it was much convenient for Cimon's anti-Spartan opponents to have a story claiming that the loss of all of his



Once we regard Demosthenes's passage and the Tanagra story as biased evidence, we must admit that the only episodes which imply a (subversive) definite political component in Cimon's philolaconism, before the Ithome expedition, seem either very confused or heavily fabricated, possibly in order to conform to what the authors considered the obvious meaning of having relations with Sparta after the late V century.

3. *Philolaconism and sexual disorder. The evolution of the meaning of "being a philolacon" and the tradition behind the Cimonian scandals*

A purely lexical link between Cimon and Critias' guilts has probably been forged by a tradition surviving in Plutarch, according to whom, after Ithome, Cimon was ostracized with the charge of being φιλολάκων καὶ μισόδημος (*Per.* 9, 5), a choice of words which seems plainly modeled on Critias' laconism and title of μισοδημότατος (*X. HG* II 3, 47). This latter term becomes popular in the last years of the V century, often in regards to the Socratic circle.²⁶ Plutarch provides such informations in order to show the strenght of Pericles' influence over the Athenians, but in his *Cimon* (see below) he does not mention the political accusation of "hater of the people". Most extant sources have been written after these facts, and thus after the concept of philolaconism acquired its "classical" meaning (see above, § 2). This example suggests even further that later sources view Cimon's relationship with Sparta through biased definitions: we should rather ask what "being a philolacon" and similar qualifications actually meant – assuming they did mean anything specific – *at the time of Cimon*, which may be an entirely different matter.

A few sources bear indirect witness of alleged (*philo*)*lakonizein* in pre-classical times: Plato refers to it as an exclusively philosophical value and claims that the Seven Sages were all admirers of Spartan *paideia* (*Prt.* 342e-343a τὸ λακωνίζειν πολὺ μᾶλλον ἔστιν φιλοσοφεῖν ἢ φιλογυμναστεῖν κτλ.). Plutarch (*Mor.* 221d-e) reports a saying attributed to Spartan king Theopompus, referring to a *philolakon xenos*,

supporters had been due to his old Spartan friends, who thus left him politically helpless, actually revealing themselves as the worst possible friends one could have.

²⁶ The word is regularly associated with: sympathy for monarchy, Spartan personalities and customs (*Ar. V.* 473-7); tyranny and wealth (*Pl. Lg.* VIII 566c); oligarchy (e.g. *Lys.* XXVI 21; *Plu. Alc.* 21, 1). Along with hostility towards democracy, it is found among the accusations against Socrates according to *Lib. Decl.* I 53: «He is – he says – one who hates the people, and he persuades those following him to laugh of democracy» (μισόδημος, φησίν, ἐστὶ καὶ τοὺς συνόντας πείθει τῆς δημοκρατίας καταγελάειν). Μισοδημία and sympathy for oligarchy is recalled in the trial for ostracism among Andocides, Nicias and Alcibiades before 415 ([*And.*] IV 8; IV 16 for Alcibiades as μισοδημος), in relation to the Hermes scandal (*Plu. Alc.* 21, 1); then in relation to the Thirty tyrants (again *Lys.* XXVI 21). In general, on the Socratic circle political ideology see F. Ollier, *Le mirage spartiate. Étude sur l'idéalisation de Sparte dans l'antiquité Grecque de l'origine jusqu'aux cyniques*, Paris 1933, part. 168 ff.; L. Rossetti, *Il momento conviviale dell'eteria socratica e il suo significato pedagogico*, «AncSoc» 7 (1976), 29-77; M. Montuori, *Socrates. An approach*, Philosophica 2, Amsterdam 1988, e.g. 19-24.



apparently with political implications. Yet such episodes are obviously not reliable on the use of these terms in archaic times, and rather conform to the same process seen above of interpreting the past through later political events.

Plutarch states that Cimon was charged of *lakonismos* and incest with his sister, Elpinice (*Cim.* 15, 3 τὰ πρὸς τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἀνανευόμενοι καὶ λακωνισμὸν ἐπικαλοῦντες). Plutarch seems to assume that these two charges explain why Cimon was ostracized, but believes only to the former, as the latter is elsewhere defined as a trivial excuse (*Cim.* 17, 3), while, besides, being a rather different second charge compared to that in *Per.* 9, 5: Plutarch may well be implicitly providing different points of view on the matter, depending on the protagonist of the biography. Cimon's passion for women was probably a widespread theme at his own time,²⁷ and an *ostrakon* shows specifically that gossip concerning Cimon and Elpinice is at least as old as his ostracism.²⁸ Sexual-related accusations were relatively common on *ostraka*,²⁹ whereas literary tradition does not normally recall any in connection with ostracism. According to Philochorus (*FGrHist* 328 F 30), who either ignored or rejected the tradition on Cimon, Hyperbolos was the only one ever ostracized for immoral customs (διὰ μοχθηρίαν). Anyway, Cimon's ostracism seems a notable exception in literature, and one must wonder why sexuality is so widely linked to political exile in his case. Several other sources connect his ostracism to incest and, occasionally, rate this as more relevant than philolaconism: for [And.] IV 33 incest is the only charge, διὰ παρανομία; the same in the *Suda* (A 3563, K 1621, O 717). Didymus p. 324 fr. 5 Schmidt openly states that Cimon did not laconize; apparently he also wrote that, *instead*, Cimon loved his sister, and blamed comedy, Eupolis' *Poleis* in particular, for this διαβολή.³⁰

Didymus points us to the right direction: comedy provides the earliest recorded use of *lakonizein*, in quite a specific meaning. One of Eupolis' characters (Alcibiades?) states: μισῶ λακωνίζειν, ταγηνίζειν δὲ κἂν πριαίμην (fr. 385 K.-A.), apparently referring to feasting. Eupolis also clearly made fun both of Cimon's

²⁷ Plu. *Cim.* 4, 9-10, also recalling a joking elegy written by Melanthius (T 8 Gentili-Prato), a contemporary of Cimon (*Cim.* 4, 1), thus an early source on his sexuality.

²⁸ Κίμων | Μιλτιάδῃ | Ἐλπινίκῃ | λαβῶν | ἴτω (Kerameikos O 6874; P. Siewert (Hg.), *Ostrakismos-Testimonien I*, Historia Einzelschriften 155, Stuttgart 2002, T 1/67). On the tradition of Cimon's ostracism see Piccirilli, *Commento*, cit., 260-261.

²⁹ Examples of common accusations on *ostraka*: adultery, arrogance and luxury for Megacles, ostracized 487/6 (G.M.E. Williams, *The Kerameikos ostraka*, «ZPE» XXXI, 1978, 103-113, 103-104); sexual disorders for Themistocles (S. Brenne, *Ostraka and the process of ostrakophobia*, in W.D.E. Coulson et al. (Eds.), *The archaeology of Athens and Attica under the democracy*, Proceedings of an International conference celebrating 2500 years since the birth of democracy in Greece, Athens, December 4-6, 1992, Oxbow monographs 37, Oxford 1994, 13-24, 14). For the variety of charges actually linked to ostracism see P. Siewert, *Accuse contro i «candidati» all' ostracismo per la loro condotta politica e morale*, in M. Sordi (a cura di), *L'immagine dell'uomo politico: vita pubblica e morale nell' antichità*, Contributi dell' Istituto di Storia antica 17, Milano 1991, 3-14.

³⁰ Ap. *schol.* Aristid. *Or.* XLVI *hyp.* *Cim.* (III 515 Dindorf): Δίδυμος δὲ φησιν οὐχ ὅτι [Κίμων] ἐλακωνίζεν, ἀλλ' ὅτι Ἐλπινίκη τῇ ἀδελφῇ συνῆν. αἴτιοι δὲ τῆς διαβολῆς οἱ κωμικοὶ, καὶ μάλιστα Εὐπόλις ἐν Πόλεσι. The latter part of this passage is not included as Didymus' fragment in the Schmidt edition, apparently rating it as an inference of the scholiast. Incest, to the Greek mind, causes pollution (think to Sophocles' *Oedypus tyrannos*), thus it may be a specifically religious and social crime.



passion for Sparta and for Elpinice while referring to the Ithome expedition (fr. 221 K.-A.).³¹ It is also worth citing Cratinus, who in the *Archilochoi* refers to Cimon's *aristeia* and his being φιλοξενώτατος, «most hospitable» (fr. 1 K.-A.), two specific terms which probably allude to or mock his aristocratic ethics.³² Aristophanes, finally, employs *lakonizēin* with reference to pederasty (fr. 358 K.-A.). In the *Lysistrata* (1137-44) he also recalls the time when the Spartan Pericleidas, as a suppliant (1141-2 ἰκέτης καθέζετο ἐπὶ τοῖσι βωμοῖς), begged for help against the Messenians after the earthquake:³³ such *biketeia* may give a hint on a possible interpretation of the context, which I propose below (§ 4). None of the other above occurrences in comedy seems to imply a specific political meaning of *lakonizēin*, but rather a sexual, or anyway social, form of blaming. Apparently Didymus, thinking to the “classical” meaning of laconizing discussed above and failing to see any political crime in Cimon's actions, fails to understand how laconizing may be linked to a sexual scandal and attacks the comics: he, as the rest of the late tradition, does not realize that, probably, to the early comics – and to earlier Athenian tradition – laconizing *did* exactly mean weird sexuality before political crimes.

In relation to comedy we must consider Stesimbrotus of Thasos, whose *On Themistocles, Thucydides and Pericles* included remarks about Cimon and Elpinice.³⁴

³¹ Thus the hint about Cimon sleeping in Sparta. On the fragment see I.C. Storey, *Eupolis. Poet of old comedy*, Oxford 2003, 223.

³² G. Guidorizzi, *Mito e commedia: il caso di Cratino*, in E. Medda - M.S. Mirto - M.P. Pattoni (a cura di), *Κωμωιδιοτραγωιδία. Intersezioni del tragico e del comico nel teatro del V secolo a.C.*, Atti delle Giornate di studio (Pisa, 24-25 giugno 2005), Seminari e convegni 6, Pisa 2006, 119-135, 129-130, while thinking to Cratinus's fr. 1 as a praise of Cimon, notes that in the *Archilochoi* Archilochus' poetry wins over “dated” Homeric virtues: what, then, of Cimon's aristocratic and traditional values (see below, § 4)? In general on Cratinus' political comedy see now E. Bakola, *Cratinus and the art of comedy*, Oxford 2010, ch. 4.

³³ It is doubtful whether this Pericleidas (maybe the same whose son had been named Athenaeus: Th. IV 119, 2) should be, in turn, associated to Pericles' family. It seems odd that the Spartans would send a man tied to Cimon's rival, unless as an attempt to obtain a more widespread favor. On Aristophanes' account see Bertelli, *L'utopia sulla scena*, cit., part. 242 ff.; L. Bertelli, *La memoria storica di Aristofane*, in D. Ambaglio - C. Bearzot - R. Vattuone (a cura di), *Storiografia locale e storiografia universale. Forme di acquisizione del sapere storico nella cultura antica*, Atti del Congresso (Bologna, 16-18 dicembre 1999), Como 2001, 41-99, 64-67. Aristophanes' joke of words on Sparta in the *Birds* (813-815) reflects understandable Athenian hate, but does not tell us much else.

³⁴ As secondary characters, judging from the title, which however is recorded by Athenaeus only (*FGrHistCont* 1002 (= *FGrHist* 107) T 2) and may derive from a brief summary of the contents; thus its authenticity is rather dubious, as sometimes has been deemed that of the whole work: see D. Coletti, *Il valore storico dei frammenti di Stesimbrotus*, «AFLPer» XII (1974-1975), 63-125, 70-80, defending Stesimbrotus' fragments as authentic, and postulating their use by Thucydides (more studies in E.M. Carawan, *Thucydides and Stesimbrotus on the exile of Themistocles*, «Historia» XXXVIII, 1989, 144-161, 144 ff., 159-60; Piccirilli, *I testi biografici*, cit., 150-151). Maybe the choice of the theme conforms to the tendency to group together (four, usually) politicians, which finds, in turn, an example in Eupolis' *Demes*, dated ca. 417-11 (see Storey, *Eupolis*, cit., 112-113, and part. 131 ff. on the choice of fours); the theme recurs in Plato's *Gorgias* (eventually connected to Theopompus: see Ferretto, *La città dissipatrice*, cit., part. 36 ff.) and later in Aelius Aristides' *On the four*. I intentionally avoid to link Stesimbrotus' work to any kind of literary genre,



From the 5 extant fragments – all quoted by Plutarch – related to Cimon, we learn of his otherwise unrecorded prosecution of Epikrates of Acharnai (F 3);³⁵ of his lack of education and “Laconian” temper, as well as, maybe, his difficult and much discussed life with Elpinice after the death of Miltiades (F 4); of his prosecution and acquittal after Thasos, in which Elpinice persuaded Pericles to act mildly (F 5);³⁶ of his alleged Kleitorian wife and children (F 6);³⁷ of his saying which negatively compared the Athenians to the Spartans (F 7).

It seems that in Stesimbrotus’ view Elpinice was almost as much a co-protagonist as her brother, just as in the incest accusation, which hit Cimon only but involved both of them, as seen above. Furthermore, a part of the tradition implies that it all began with Elpinice as well: through her marriage with Callias did Cimon obtain the money to pay for his father’s fine (Plu. *Cim.* 4, 8), thus, *de facto*, being able to start his own career. Moreover, she is closely linked to his Laconian lifestyle (4, 5-8); she had an affair with Polygnotos, who worked for Cimon and his friends (4, 6); ἔνιοι claimed that Pericles canceled Cimon’s ostracism only thanks to her mediation (*Per.* 10, 5), and after Cimon’s death she continued to have a form of polemical intimacy with Pericles (*Per.* 28, 6-7). The recurrence of Elpinice’s questionable role across Cimon’s career and life seems a sort of literary *topos*. Given the tone of Stesimbrotus’ fragments, and his importance as a source for Plutarch, it is tempting, although rather speculative, to suspect that at least some of these passages come from him.³⁸ The same kind of

a probably anachronistic attempt: on this see R. G. Andria, *La biografia al secondo grado: opere biografiche nelle Vite parallele di Plutarco*, in I. Gallo (a cura di), *La biblioteca di Plutarco*, Atti del IX Convegno plutarco (Pavia, 13-15 giugno 2002), *Collectanea* 23, Napoli 2004, 379-390, 382-387; G. Vanotti, *A proposito di Stesimbrotos di Taso in Suda [A 2681 Adler]*, in G. Vanotti (a cura di), *Il lessico Suda e i frammenti degli storici greci*, Atti dell’Incontro internazionale di studi (Vercelli, 6-7 novembre 2008), *Themata* 6, Tivoli 2010, 129-162.

³⁵ For the popular tradition behind this fr., opposed to Thucydides’ narrative, see Carawan, *Thucydides and Stesimbrotus*, cit., 153-158.

³⁶ Stesimbrotus may be the source for the previous part, or for the whole, of Plu. *Cim.* 14: see G. Vanotti, *Plutarco “lettore” di Stesimbrotos di Taso (nota a FGrHist 107/1002 F 5 = Plutarco, Cimone XIV)*, in F. Gazzano - G. Ottone - L.S. Amantini (a cura di), *Ex fragmentis per fragmenta historiarum tradere*, Atti della seconda Giornata di studio sulla Storiografia greca frammentaria (Genova, 8 ottobre 2009), *Themata* 9, Tivoli 2011, 61-87, part. 73 ff.

³⁷ L. Piccirilli, ΓΥΝΗ ΚΛΕΙΤΟΡΙΑ, ΚΑΙΤΟΡΙΑ, ΑΛΙΘΙΡΙΑ. *Moglie di Cimone?*, «RFIC» CX (1982), 41-55; R.D. Crome, *The mysterious woman of Kleitor: some corrections to a manuscript once in Plutarch’s possession*, «AJPh» CXII (1991), 87-101, 87-99, tries to solve the matter through textual corrections. See also Coletti, *Il valore storico*, cit., 104-105 and 118-119, thinking to a pro-Cimonian tone of this fragment.

³⁸ See *FGrHistCont*, IVa, fasc. I, 58-59, for Stesimbrotus as a possible source of at least Plu. *Cim.* 4, 4-8; Fuscagni, *Cimone*, cit., 60-69, for Stesimbrotus as a source for Plutarch’s *Cimone*, part. on Cimon’s philolaconism; see L. Piccirilli, *Introduzione*, in C. Carena - M. Manfredini - L. Piccirilli (a cura di), *Plutarco. Le vite di Cimone e di Lucullo*, Scrittori greci e latini, Milano 2001, x-xiv. Plutarch obviously does not regularly state when he is following Stesimbrotus: see *Cim.* 14, 5 and *Per.* 10, 6, carrying the same informations, ascribed to Stesimbrotus (F 5) in the former passage only. I am not assuming that Plutarch read Stesimbrotus’ original work: indirect tradition may be involved (on Plutarch’s use of sources see now F. Muccioli, *La storia attraverso gli esempi. Protagonisti e interpretazioni del mondo greco in Plutarco*, *Diádema* 1, Milano-Udine 2012, 21-27, with bibliography). In relation to this, see Crome, *The mysterious woman*, cit., for proposals of textual errors in Plutarch’s manuscript



scandalistic tradition was also composed, as seen, by comedy, and a number of following authors which by the time of Tz. *H.* I 22, 585-596 had become a *πλήθος ἄπειρον*, among which were οἱ κωμικοὶ καὶ ῥήτορες, Διόδωρος καὶ ἄλλοι, eventually giving birth to increasingly scandalous details, as commonly happened with major Athenian politicians.³⁹ Actually Plutarch (*Per.* 13, 15-6), quoting Stesimbrotus (F 10) and οἱ κωμικοὶ (*Com. Adesp.* F 702 K.A.), and Athenaeus, quoting Stesimbrotus, confirm their common scandalistic *modus operandi* aimed against Pericles: this is the same kind of synergy which hit Cimon.⁴⁰ Athenaeus also quotes Antisthenes⁴¹ (*FGrHistCont* 1004 F 7a *ap.* Ath. XIII 589e) who, maybe working on Stesimbrotus' version, apparently merged Cimon's and Pericles' perversions through Elpinice herself, by stating that Pericles recalled Cimon from ostracism in exchange for intercourse with her.

Among all of these sources, the most ancient are the Old comics and Stesimbrotus: they must be probably regarded as the founders of such scandalistic tradition. Whether it was Stesimbrotus influenced by the earlier comedies, or vice-versa, is hard to determine: the former transmission seems more probable, also as it seems unprovable that Stesimbrotus may have lived in Athens in Cimon's last

of Stesimbrotus, although he seem to imply that Plutarch did read a copy of the original work. The Cimonian case seems a notable exception to Plutarch's general lack of interest in sexual anecdotes (see T. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives. Exploring virtue and vice*, Oxford 1999, 94-97), suggesting its strong political and characterizing value.

³⁹ The scandalistic stories almost obliterated the opposite tradition rating Cimon and Elpinice's relation as legitimate (*Plu. Cim.* 4, 8; *Nep. Cim.* 1, 2; an out-of-time apologetic attempt?). Despite his interest in morality and licentious behaviour, nothing proves that Theopompus' hostile tradition on Athenian demagogues is based on Stesimbrotus and/or on Old comedy (W.R. Connor, *Theopompus and fifth-century Athens*, Publications of the Center for Hellenic studies, Washington 1968, 12-14, 102-105, 112-115; see also Piccirilli, *I testi biografici*, cit., 152-153). It is even more dangerous to assume that Plutarch read Stesimbrotus through Theopompus, as the latter is never mentioned in the *Cimon*. On later tradition on Cimon and Elpinice's sexuality see *FGrHistCont* 1002, IVa, fasc. I, 64-65; see also C. Stöcker, *Der 10. Aischines-Brief. Eine Kimon-Novelle*, «Mnemosyne» XXXIII (1980), 307-312; note that already in the IV century there was a tradition according to which the descendants of Cimon, Pericles, and Socrates, were all fools (*Arist. Rb.* 1390b 30-1, II 15, 3). Somewhat similar to Cimon's case is the notorious double tradition on Themistocles (see e.g. L. Piccirilli, *Introduzione*, in C. Carena - M. Manfredini - L. Piccirilli (a cura di), *Plutarco. Le vite di Temistocle e di Camillo*, Scrittori greci e latini, Milano 1983, ix-xxiv).

⁴⁰ Also note that part of the tradition, including Tzetzes, makes Cimon the father of Callias, who would have paid Cimon's fine (on which see also above, § 2) in exchange for being allowed to marry Elpinice, i.e. his aunt, who in turn had incestuous intercourse with Cimon himself (on this see Piccirilli, *Ebbe Cimone*, cit.): this looks like a sort of reverse doublet of the notorious gossip about Pericles having intercourse with his son's wife, which comes from Stesimbrotus as well (*FGrHistCont* 1002 FF 10a, 10b, 11).

⁴¹ Focusing mainly on Alcibiades, but also mentioning Pericles and Cimon, Antisthenes favoured sexual scandals (see FF 1, 3a, 5a-b, 6, 7a; *FGrHistCont*, IVa, fasc. I, 92-108, for chronology, comment, works). His description of Alcibiades as, among the rest, tall, uneducated, and bold (F 1 and F 3 μέγας, ἀπαιδευτος, τολμήρος), somewhat resembles that of Cimon as μέγας (*Ion* F 12 *ap.* *Plu. Cim.* 5, 3), lacking Greek education (Stesimbrotus F 4 *ap.* *Cim.* 4, 5), and promoting (Themistocles') τόλμημα (*Plut. Cim.* 5, 2): a hint to a literary archetype of the philolaconian charismatic aristocrat?



years.⁴² On the other hand, a very young Eupolis may well have seen Cimon's time, but he most probably started his career in the early 420s, which is also the *terminus post* for Stesimbrotus' work.⁴³ Thus, Eupolis and Stesimbrotus probably wrote roughly in the same years, and their common interest in criticizing major Athenian politicians through personal scandals seems clear, although not necessarily utterly hostile.⁴⁴ Both must have strongly relied on oral accounts, excellent material for parody, possibly resting on a long-standing gossip about Cimon and Elpinice's weird sexual behaviour and, in general, on Cimon's notoriously intemperate sexual life.⁴⁵ Such tradition somewhat aimed to strip Cimon of many of his merits, while openly or subtly ascribing them either to his wicked (ab)use of his sister's physical and social "gifts", or to her own disturbing initiative, while presenting him as a dissolute new *koalemos*, as his allegedly drunkard grandfather (Plu. *Cim.* 4, 4, again ascribed to Stesimbrotus by *FGrHistCont* 1002 F 4).

It is not unlikely at all that early sexual jokes on laconism, and on Cimon and Elpinice – if ever these were two separate components – eventually strengthened each other and converged, through what became the Stesimbrotus and Old comedy definition of laconism and of Cimonian politics and ethics. Maybe a reflection of what coming in touch with Sparta meant during the early

⁴² *FGrHistCont* 1002 T 1: despite stating that Stesimbrotus lived at the time of Cimon and Pericles, this fragment does *not* state that he lived in Athens. T 2 (F 10a), instead, seems to imply this for Pericles' time only. The "late" chronology proposed for Stesimbrotus' stay in Athens, long after Cimon's death (from ca. 440) by F. Schachermeyr, *Stesimbrotos und seine Schrift über die Staatsmänner*, Wien 1965, e.g. 13 ff., may be right, but any speculation is difficult to prove (see objections in Carawan, *Thucydides and Stesimbrotus*, cit., still thinking to later years); a rather earlier chronology is assumed in *FGrHistCont*, IVa, fasc. I, 50-51.

⁴³ A datation based on F 11 (on the death of the son of Pericles). On Eupolis' career see Storey, *Eupolis*, cit., 54-56.

⁴⁴ For views on Stesimbrotus' work see Schachermeyr, *Stesimbrotos*, cit. (Stesimbrotus as a scandalmonger, but not totally hostile to his targets); Coletti, *Il valore storico*, cit., 70-71 (conjecturing a possible non-unitary composition and edition) and 84-88, 113-125 (modern views and prejudices, although Coletti seems way too apologetic); Carawan, *Thucydides and Stesimbrotus*, cit., 146 ff. (discussing other studies, although I fail to see the "epic" tone he postulates in Stesimbrotus' work); Piccirilli, *I testi biografici*, cit., 150 ff. (seeing a very biased and hostile account). Vanotti, *Plutarco "lettore"*, cit., 86-87, rightfully thinks that Stesimbrotus' view on Cimon may have been relatively temperate. See also Fuscagni, *Cimone*, cit., 59-66; Banfi, *Il governo*, cit., 50-64; Andria, *La biografia*, cit., 383-386 (correctly stretching the biographical tone of the work); C. Pelling, *Ion's Epidemiai and Plutarch's Ion*, in V. Jennings - A. Katsaros (Eds.), *The world of Ion of Chios*, Mnemosyne Supplementum 288, Leiden-Boston 2007, 75-109, 91 ff. On the Old comics see M. Telò (a cura di), *Eupolidis Demi*, Biblioteca Nazionale. Serie dei Classici greci e latini. Testi con commento filologico n.s. 14, Firenze 2007, 105-106, 365, whom skepticism I share in regards to the widespread assumption that they were generally anti-Periclean, pro-Cimonian nostalgics: I suspect their political thought, and especially working ethics, might have been far more complex than this.

⁴⁵ See *FGrHistCont*, IVa, fasc. I, 50 ff. (67-68 for possible dependancy of F 6 from comedy); Piccirilli, *Ebbe Cimone*, cit., 10 (Eupolis possibly being the founder of this tradition). On Stesimbrotus largely drawing on popular gossip see L. Bertelli, *Commedia e memoria storica: Cratino ed Eupoli*, «Quad. Dip. Fil. A. Rostagni» IV (2005), 49-89, 77-78. For contemporary jokes on Cimon's sexuality see also on Melanthius above.



steps of this process is in Herodotus: Isagoras, possibly a Philaid himself as Cimon,⁴⁶ had invoked against Cleisthenes the aid of his own *xe(i)nos* king Cleomenes (Hdt. V 70, 1). Herodotus then alludes to the “sharing” of Isagoras’ wife with Cleomenes, and seems to maliciously imply that this was somehow part of their *xenia*, thus, as for Cimon, a link with Sparta was connected to ignominious sexual mores.

4. *Philolaconism through Homeric archetypes*

Once we consider later sources biased – intentionally or not – in their approach, the most methodologically sound way to investigate the meaning of being a philolacon at the time of Cimon is probably that of looking to sources predating him. What makes up Cimon’s philolaconism may actually be broken up into a set of purely aristocratic values, mainly *philia* and (*pro*)*xenia*, according to which, in the case of the Ithome expedition, he responded to the Spartan formal supplication (think to Aristophanes’ parody above, § 3). This leads us to consider the cultural archetypes on which such values were based, and allows me to propose the following interpretation.

Not many years before young Cimon’s education, the Homeric poems had been settled through the Peisistratid editions. These works promote a set of cultural paradigms to which “archaic” aristocratic *paideia* conformed for many generations:⁴⁷ the ritual words exchanged between Glaukos and Diomedes (*Il.* VI 215-31); the treatment of *xeinoi* and the military help provided on the basis of friendship (*philotes*) of which Nestor and Athena discuss in the *Odyssey* (III 345-65); the arrival and supplication of Odysseus to the Phaeacians (*Od.* VI 119 ss.),⁴⁸ and

⁴⁶ P. Bicknell, *Athenian politics and genealogy; some pendants*, «Historia» XXIII (1974), 146-163, 153-154, who thinks that Isagoras took refuge in Sparta after fleeing from Athens; see also Culasso Gastaldi, *I Filaidi*, cit., 499 ff. This is hard to prove, and would imply rethinking Cimon’s stay in Sparta after the earthquake, taking into account possible family bonds with Isagoras’ descendants, although they would have hardly been well seen in Athens.

⁴⁷ A connection between *philos* and *xenos* is already common in Homer (Intrieri, *Philoï kai xenioi*, cit., 130). For hospitality and the bonds between the status of *iketēs* and *xenos* in the *Odyssey* see A. Ercolani, *L’ottavo libro dell’Odissea ovvero il contrastato rapporto di Odisseo con i Feacî*, «Sileno» XXV (1999), 51-78, part. 57 ff. Partial overlaps between *philia* and *xenia*, and more relevant Homeric definitions, in Konstan, *Friendship*, cit., 33-37; 83-87; see also S. Reece, *The stranger’s welcome. Oral theory and the aesthetics of the Homeric hospitality scene*, Michigan Monographs in Classical antiquity, Ann Arbor 1993, part. chs. 1, 5. On the role of Homeric (and Hesiod’s) works in defining Greek cultural and specifically aristocratic identity, see G. Nagy, *Aristocrazia: caratteri e stili di vita*, in S. Settis (a cura di), *Storia Einaudi dei Greci e dei Romani*, III, *Agli albori del mondo greco. Ambiente e storia*, Torino 1996, 577-598, part. 595-598. On the Peisistratid form of the Homeric poems see R. Merkelbach, *Die peisistratische Redaktion der homerischen Gedichte*, «RhM» XCV (1952), 23-47.

⁴⁸ On which see M. Giordano, *La supplica. rituale, istituzione sociale e tema epico in Omero*, «AION» Quaderni 3, Napoli 1999, ch. 3, part. 82-87. In Cimon’s time, Themistocles as well had employed supplication with Admetus (Plu. *Them.* 24, 2-3) and, apparently, enjoyed *xenia* with Argive families ([Themist.] *Ep.* I 2, a believable information according to G. Cortassa - E. Culasso Gastaldi (a cura



generally the value of hospitality so often found especially in the *Odyssey*, are literary models built according to a cultural perspective which was still perfectly valid in the first half of the V century. We must look to such models in order to grasp an idea of what philolaconism could mean at the time of Cimon: having aristocratic friends in Sparta, possibly behaving like a Spartan, but definitely not thinking to attack the Athenian constitution nor to damage or betray his own community. Through these foreign *philoï* did Cimon promote his international policy, to these *philoï* maybe he partially owed support among Athenian aristocrats, and to these *philoï* and *xenoi* did he offer help after the great Peloponnesian earthquake? In other words, while Cimon was required to provide personal help to his Spartan kinsmen, it may not be so obvious that Athens was expected to do the same. Did, perhaps, Cimon go too far in pushing the assembly to revive a not so widely accepted *symmachia*⁴⁹ based on his personal, although state-promoted, obligations?⁵⁰ This may be the case, and could explain why, once the expedition turned out to be a humiliating waste of resources for Athens, he was harshly criticized: but this means that Cimon's philolaconism had a political weight only at the very end of his career as the major Athenian politician and, anyway, not in the meaning later associated to *lakonismos*.

Conclusions

The interest of sources in private immoral episodes, the lack of any actual political activity aimed at subverting the Athenian constitution, the following confusion between the various alleged reasons behind Cimon's ostracism, and the adherence to well-settled aristocratic cultural archetypes, all lead to think that the historical and political weight of Cimon's philolaconism has been heavily overestimated. Two themes recur in Cimon's guilts: sexual abnormality, which draws first from oral, then literary tradition (comedy and Stesimbrotus); and "political" philolaconism as a cause for ostracism. The latter has been modelled *a posteriori* on late V century Athenian history, when interest in Sparta became

di), *Le lettere di Temistocle*, Saggi e materiali universitari. Serie di Antichità e tradizione classica 14, Padova 1990, II, 261).

⁴⁹ Sources record official *symmachia* between Athens and Sparta at the time of the Ithome campaign (e.g. Th. I 102, 2; 102, 4; see D.S. XI 63, 2), although other passages seem to imply that, after Pausanias' fall in the 470s, Athens and Sparta were rather anomalous, or at least uneasy, *symmachoi*: Th. I 89, 1; Plu. *Luc.* 45, 4 (= *Comp. Cim. Luc.* 2, 4); *Cim.* 16, 3 and 16, 9. On the meaning of Hetoimaridas' episode see above, § 1.

⁵⁰ On such kind of aristocratic custom to help peers in distress, see Critias' tragic version of Theseus and Peirithoos' adventure in the underworld (Vanotti, *Rileggendo Crizia*, cit., 66-69; M. Centanni, *Atene assoluta. Crizia dalla tragedia alla storia*, Saggi di Antichità e tradizione classica 21, Padova 1997, 159-170), which possibly stressed the value of aristocratic *philia* and *pistis* (G. Angiò, *Etica aristocratica ed azione politica in Crizia*, «QS» XXIX, 1989, 141-148, 142-146).



synonym of a political crime, due to prejudice and to the “true” philaconians political terrorists variously connected to the Socratic circle. Cimon’s rather questionable fame of philolacon seems thus in large part a literary and cultural *topos*.

Cimon and Elpinice’s relationship may actually be explained as what, to the Athenians, could have been perceived as socially unacceptable, thus comically vulnerable: Cimon’s very same “Laconian style” and Elpinice’s freedom (at best felt as disturbing to the Athenian male-dominated society) could derive from the parody, misunderstanding and blurring of both an aristocratic and Thracian cultural background.⁵¹ In addition, Cimon’s “laconizing” policy can be read through the specific values of *xenia* and *philia*, as they emerge from his contemporary aristocratic education, void of any aggressive political implications towards Athenian *politeia*. The sort of political leadership promoted and employed by Cimon, still adherent to “archaic” aristocratic values, based on personal wealth, sympotic celebration, and a strong network of *philoï*, was later stigmatized and presented as purely oligarchic and eversive. But Cimon’s political position was ἀριστοκρατική καὶ Λακωνική (Plu. *Cim.* 10, 8) in the sense that one term depended from the other: although Plutarch underlines right in *Cim.* 2, 5 the weight of πάθος and πολιτική ἀνάγκη in explaining a man’s choices, he seems to overlook that these were exactly the factors on which Cimon’s philolaconism was based.⁵²

Tradition has thus been either deforming in its praise (Ion), malicious (Stesimbrotus, the comics, and “countless others”), or naïve (like Plutarch, whose work is obviously apologetic, but conforms to the settled meaning of philolaconism),⁵³ possibly aiming to add rhetorical strength to Cimon’s

⁵¹ The Thracian origins of Cimon’s and Elpinice’s mother could explain their discussed love and her freedom as alien (to Athens) cultural traits (Fuscagni, *Cimone*, cit., 92-101, 107-108, also underlining some parallels between V century Laconian and Thracian lifestyle). See also the (compatible) explanation of Cimon and Elpinice’s affair as *homometrioï* incest provided by L. Piccirilli, *Il filolaconismo, l'incesto e l'ostracismo di Cimone*, «QS» XIX (1984), 171-177 (see L. Piccirilli, *Temistocle Aristide Cimone Tuciddide di Melesia fra politica e propaganda*, Università. Series storica 3, Genova 1987, ch. 3.2 and part. 3.4); we should also remember the infamous sexual freedom of Spartan women as perceived in late V century Athens (see e.g. L. Bertelli, *L'utopia sulla scena: Aristofane e la parodia della città*, «CCC» IV, 1983, 215-261, 259-260). Cimon’s sympotic fame (see § 1) seems to span from that of a drunkard (Plu. *Cim.* 4, 4) to that of a perfectly educated gentleman (Ion F 106 *ap. Cim.* 9, 1), maybe deriving, on the one hand, from Thracian peculiar customs which the Athenians would have seen as uncivilized, while on the other, on his “Laconian” moderation (see Critias’ drinking ethics, on which Iannucci, *La parola e l'azione*, cit., 95-107).

⁵² See Fuscagni, *Cimone*, cit., 46-47, 50; see 90-91, 107 ff., 131-134 for a realistic evaluation of Cimon’s policy and ideology which goes beyond ancient and modern stereotypes. The key, deformed, Plutarchean elements of Cimon’s politics are philolaconism and *energesia* toward the *demos*, two obviously contrasting features if one thinks to what late V century philolaconism implied. On *Cim.* 2, 5, probably intended to excuse Lucullus rather than Cimon, see Duff, *Plutarch’s Lives*, cit., 58-60. On Plutarch’s understanding of V century Athenian politics see A.W. Gomme, *A historical commentary on Thucydides*, I, Oxford 1956, 59-61; but see also P. Desideri, *I documenti di Plutarco*, in *ANRW* II.33.6, 1992, 4536-4567, 4558.

⁵³ Note, anyway, that Plutarch, although trying to temper the portrait of Cimon provided by Stesimbrotus, does not regularly contradict him, and finds him worth of belief: Coletti, *Il valore*



philolaconism and to make a satisfying narrative in order to explain his ostracism. It may be that the real reason behind the ostracism was Cimon's falling popularity starting from at least the Thasos campaign, to which the waste of resources committed in the Ithome expedition added further unpopularity.⁵⁴ Philolaconism and sexuality had little or no role in this, but their rhetorical weight was much more appealing, thus the deformed tradition: even in hostile sources, sexual implications are so strong while presenting Cimon's ostracism only because the political factor in his laconizing was weak, otherwise he would have been demonized as later happened with Critias. Furthermore, coherently with this, favourable disposition towards Sparta has probably evolved, through V century Athens, from a socially acceptable function, lacking any strong negative implications, through a weird trait associated to sexual disorder and, eventually, to a political crime. Both these processes possibly have their very roots in the late 460s, at the time of Cimon's expedition to Ithome, but most probably evolved rather dramatically through the course of the V century. Our sources on Cimon's career, conforming to the final product of this trend, provide biased and confused information, which must be carefully read in order to understand the contemporary Athenian political scenario. Cimon's peculiar bond with Sparta is as well paradigmatic in showing how ancient sources developed and then deformed, due to the weight of Athenian historical facts, the very concept of philolaconism.

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storico, cit., 80-83). Nor does Plutarch actually deny Cimon's dissolute youth, but rather uses it as a positive comparison to that of Lucullus in the *Comparatio* (1, 4; see M. Tröester, *Themes, character, and politics in Plutarch's Life of Lucullus*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 201, Stuttgart 2008, 51 ff.). Stesimbrotus' fame as a Homeric exegete (*FGrHistCont*, IVa, fasc. I, 51; Vanotti, *A proposito di Stesimbrotos*, cit.) suggests that he perfectly knew the above archetypes, but chose to present Cimon's policy as something different.

⁵⁴ I do not believe it is necessary to add to this the Datos/Drabeskos disaster (as is instead often implied: see e.g. Bultrighini, *Maledetta democrazia*, cit., 132-133; Vanotti, *Plutarco "lettore"*, cit., 80-81, although correctly underlining the lack of Cimon's open involvement in the sources; see also C. Bearzot, *Cimone, il disastro di Drabesco e la svolta democratica del 462/1. A proposito di Aristotele*, *AP* 27,1, «AncSoc» XXV, 1994, 19-31), contemporary to the Thasos campaign (Th. I 100, 3). The name of Cimon, actually, never happens to be directly associated to it in our sources. Instead, this expedition to the Thracian inland rather may be an idea promoted by Leagros and Sophanes, who led it as *strategoï* (Hdt. IX 75; Paus. I 29, 4-5). It is tempting to attribute to an Athenian anti-Cimonian tradition the fabrication of the besieged Thasian appeal to the Spartans for help against Athens, as an earlier attempt to disrupt Cimon and his foreign *philoï* (Vanotti, *Plutarco "lettore"*, cit., 83-84): even in this case, Cimon's philolaconism seems turned into a "crime" no earlier than the late 460s.