The Athenian polemarch in Marathon year was Kallimachos of Aphidna.\(^1\) Herodotos\(^2\) describes him as τῷ κυβάνετα "Λῃσσαίων πολεμαρχέας. In the Athenian Constitution Aristotle\(^3\) notes that in 487/6,\(^4\) in the archon year of Telesinos, the Athenians ἐκλέγοντο τις ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ κατὰ φυλάς ἐκ τῶν προκριθέντων ὑπὸ τῶν δημωτῶν πεντακοσίων τότε μετὰ τὴν τυραννίδα πρῶτον. οἳ δὲ πρώτεροι πάντες ἔσαν αἰρετοὶ.

Almost universally it has been considered that Aristotle and Herodotos are in contradiction. Again almost universally, it is held that Aristotle is right and Herodotos wrong. Writes Hignett,\(^5\) ‘Herodotos is careless about the minutiae of the Athenian Constitution.’\(^6\) Herodotos’ error, notes Buck,\(^7\) was ‘corrected even in antiquity.’ Certainly, Pausanias\(^8\) stated that Kallimachos was elected polemarch by the Athenians. Buck points out too that Idomeus held that Aristides, the eponym archon of 489/8, was elected, not chosen by lot.

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2. Herodotos loc. cit.
4. One year after (Ath. Pol. 22.5) the ostracism of Hipparchos Charmou, itself two whole years after (Ath. Pol. 22.3) Marathon.
6. Perhaps a more controversial remark than is often allowed for. Quite possibly the prytanies of the naukraries saddled at Herodotos 5.71.2 with blame for the fate of the Kylonids are figments of self-justificatory propaganda on the part of Alkmeonid informants, rather than a manifestation of attention to constitutional detail on the part of Herodotos; but there is some room for doubt. The prytanies might just be the archons inculpated by Thucydides (1.126.8) under an antique guise (see F. Wusst, Historia 6 (1957), pp. 176–191) and the broken thread story, preserved by Plutarch (Solon 12) could be the core of the real Alkmeonid version – too unconvincing even for a pro-Alkmeonid Herodotos to swallow. But what of Herodotos’ (5.69.2) assertion that Kleisthenes created ten phylarchoi, one for each tribe? Is this just slipshodness? I have my doubts. It is at least conceivable that officials so named were the equivalent of strategoi, first elected, and by a different process to their Kleisthenic counterparts, in the year of Hermokreon (see Ath. Pol. 22.2). According to Lysias (12.43), Eratosthenes and Kritias, after Aegospotamo and before the abolition of the democracy, placed phylarchoi over the tribes. A sort of shadow cabinet to the strategoi? A throw back to the Kleisthenic constitution, which was not anathema to the oligarchs (see Ath. Pol. 29.3 – Kleitophon’s rider) like subsequent innovations?
8. Pausanias, 1.15.3.
In an article written in 1959, M. Lang\(^{10}\) suggested that Herodotos may have been misunderstood. Kallimachos, she argued, may have been elected by his tribe, but allotted as representative of that tribe to the polemarchy. I cannot see that this clashes with the sense of Aristotle’s remarks about the reform of 487/6.\(^{11}\) Seemingly more fatal to Lang’s view is the objection, which I have often heard raised in discussion, that it is simply incompatible with Herodotos’ mode of expression.

But is it? With an emphatic τὸ κυρίως, to be interpreted as by Lang, does not Herodotos drive home an important point? At the archon elections in 491/0 for 490/89, nine archons together, probably, with a grammateus of the thesmothetai were elected directly by the ekklesia. The ten successful candidates were then assigned by the bean to the eponymous, king, and polemarch archonships, and so on. The polemarchy fell to Kallimachos. And how lucky for Athens that it did. At Marathon time Athens was riddled with political dissension. There were influential medisers within the city, among them, certainly, the Alkmeonidae\(^{12}\) and their hetairoi.\(^{13}\) More likely than not that among the ten elected to the archontate were men who favoured submission to Persia, even at the price of Hippias’ return. If the lot had brought one of these into the polemarchy, what would have been the outcome then? On Herodotos’ view\(^{14}\) of the preliminaries to Marathon, no resolution of a deadlock among the strategoi in favour of Miltiades anxious with good cause to fight at the first favourable opportunity. No battle joined. Time for stalemate to breed irresolution that would play inexorably into the hands of his opponents.\(^{15}\)

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12. Herodotos’ defence of the family (at 6.12ff.) is palpably laboured. Understandably, The ostraka of the 480s surely make the Alkmeonids’ complicity a certainty. I have discussed this evidence in an article entitled ‘The Command Structure and Generals of the Marathon Campaign,’ which is to appear in ‘L’Antiquité Classique.’
13. Among them were the Kerykes, as I have argued in the piece cited above and at *Mnemosyne* 22 (1969), p. 141. The eponymous archon of 490/89 was named Phainippos. The name is not all that common for Athens and it was borne by the great-grandfather of the leading Keryx at Marathon time, Kallias Lakkoplotos (see Herodotos, 6.121 for the Keryx Phainippov and at *PA* 7825 for his great-grandson).
14. Which may well be influenced by the pretensions of Miltiades’ family, see again my Marathon article.
15. That is, if the medisers merely temporised. No doubt they were capable of more positive actions than shield-flashing. The actions of Sparta would be crucial. Right up to the belated appearance of her hoplites, there must have been doubt as to whether she
would intervene. There were assuredly pro- and anti-Alkmeonid factions at Lakedaimon. To anticipate what I hope to develop on another occasion – the Spartan friends of the Alkmeonidai were behind the invasion of Attika in 512/11 by Anchimolios. His failure demanded an attempt by Sparta to recoup its prestige. A new invasion in 511/10 was led by Isagoras’ friend Kleomenes. When Kleisthenes bid fair to dominate post-Peisistratid Athens, Kleomenes intervened to prop up his ally. Repulsed, he invaded Attika yet again, only to be thwarted by his colleague Demaratos at the instigation of the pro-Alkmeonid faction. Later: Kleomenes intervened at Aigina to take hostages from a medising regime supported by the Alkmeonidai. Again the rival faction tried to thwart him. It was Kleomenes’ successors who had the final word at Marathon time, but it may have been a close call.
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