



**Charmides** of Athens, son of Aristotle                      Andoc. 1.47–48, 1.51  
 [PA/APF 15510 (828.6) LGPN2 5 Χαρμίδης  
 Ἀριστοτέλους]  
 b. ±440  
 mother: daughter of Andocides I, sister of  
 Leogoras II  
 ward of Leogoras II  
 first cousin of Andocides IV  
*See stemma: Andocides.*

Charmides was an orphan, reared in the wealthy household of Leogoras II (his mother's brother). Evidently because of his relationship to Andocides IV, Charmides was accused by Diocles of defacing herms in 415 and imprisoned but, having succeeded in persuading Andocides to incriminate the real culprits, members of Andocides IV's drinking club, was released on Andocides IV's information (see Exc. 1). This Charmides has often been confused with Glaucon III's son, Charmides s.v.

<b>Charmides</b> of Athens, son of Glaucon III	Pl. <i>Chrm.</i>	speaker
[PA/APF 15512 (8792.9) LGPN2 28 RE 2 DPhA	Pl. <i>Prt.</i> 315a	present
102 OCD <sup>3</sup> PP PX Χαρμίδης Γλαύκωνος]	Pl. <i>Smp.</i> 222b*	
tribe: ?Erechtheis	Pl. <i>Ltr.</i> 7.324b–d,	
±446–403	unnamed †	
mother: daughter of Antiphon I	[Pl.] <i>Thg.</i> 128d	
sister: Perictione	[Pl.] <i>Ax.</i> 364a	present
ward of Critias IV	Xen. <i>Symp.</i> , <i>passim</i>	
lover of Clinias III	Xen. <i>Mem.</i> 3.6.1, 3.7	
member of the Piraeus Ten under the Thirty	Xen. <i>Hell.</i> 2.4.19	
<i>See stemma: Plato.</i>	Andoc. 1.16	
	SEG 13.28	

*Life.* The record offers no precedent among older relatives for the name 'Charmides'. His birth, into a family of some wealth and influence, is normally

set at “about 450 or just after” (*APF*) but that is too early. One consideration for Plato’s dialogues is that Alcibiades III s.v., the great beauty of his age, was born in 451 and was on campaign in Potidaea with Socrates. Charmides is represented as some years younger, the great beauty of his own age cohort. If Charmides had been born in 450, he would have been too old, at twenty, to fit the youthful portrait of him in *Charmides*, dated in May of 429 when the siege at Potidaea had ended and the troops had returned (see App. I); in fact, he would have been too old to have required a guardian, though Plato represents Critias IV as having become Charmides’ guardian during Socrates’ almost three-year absence from Athens from the summer or fall of 432, i.e. between *Protagoras* and *Charmides* (154a, e). Charmides, a young poet (155a), was no more than seventeen the spring of Socrates’ return and, because that is so, he was hardly more than an adolescent in the *Protagoras*, where he appears with the sons of Pericles I in the group flanking Protagoras. By 416, however, when Plato’s *Symposium* is set, Charmides is mentioned only when Alcibiades III describes him among those whose amorous advances were spurned by Socrates.

Much speculation in the secondary literature has centered on the fact that Charmides was made ward of his first cousin, Critias IV, rather than of his father’s elder brother, Callaeschrus I, or his mother’s brother (Plato’s stepfather), Pylilampes s.v. In 5th and 4th c. Athens, if a man with minor sons or unmarried daughters of any age died without having stipulated a guardian, it was the archon’s duty to appoint one. Athenian law specified in great detail degrees of kinship and their implications for widows and orphans, particularly since access to wealth was often gained or lost that way (see Harrison 1998: 1.143–9; MacDowell 1978: 98–9; Patterson 1998, with clear diagrams; App. III). We can bypass the conjectures about availability and suitability of the uncles on the assumption that Glaucon III, like most fathers, especially when there was considerable property and the dangers of war, had stipulated a guardian for his children in the event of his death (Harrison 1998: 1.99).

*Profanation of the Eleusinian mysteries in 415.* When he was about thirty-one, Charmides and three men of Scambonidae—Alcibiades III, Adeimantus, and Axiochus—were accused by Agariste III s.v. of having illegally performed the secret Eleusinian mysteries in the house by the Olympieum belonging to Charmides (see Exc. 1). Charmides’ possessions were confiscated immediately and he was condemned to death *in absentia*.

Several texts of Plato, pseudo-Plato, and Xenophon link the persons involved in Agariste III’s charges, not only the four accused, but Agariste III’s husband, Damon s.v., as well—in part, through ties to Socrates. Charmides, Alcibiades III, and Adeimantus of Scambonidae are present in the *Protagoras* with Socrates. Socrates is linked to Charmides (Pl. *Chrm.*; Xen. *Mem.* 3.6.1, 3.7, *Symp.*), and to Alcibiades III (Pl. *Smp.*, where Alcibiades III mentions Charmides; [Pl.] *Alc.*, where Damon is mentioned, 2 *Alc.*; and Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.40). Damon is praised at some length in *Laches*, and his theories are discussed in *Republic*. Alcibiades III and Adeimantus were *stratēgoi* together in Andros in 407 (*Hell.* 1.4.21–22; cf. Lys. 14.38 for a link in 405). Axiochus, a paternal uncle of Alcibiades III, had a son, Clinias III, who is prominent in *Euthydemus* and the pseudo-Platonic

*Axiochus*, where he is Charmides' beloved (364a). It is *Axiochus* that most clearly links the profanation group. In the opening scene, Socrates sees Clinias III, Damon, and Charmides running toward Callirhoë, a spring near the Olympieum whose water was used ritually (Thu. 2.15.5), and all four then join *Axiochus* at home.

Xenophon's *Symposium* depicts Charmides as a poor man, living on public assistance, who now sleeps better than when he was rich and had to worry about burglars digging through his walls (4.31). The dialogue is set notionally in August of 421, but the date, already anachronistic on a variety of grounds, should not detain us. If only it were possible to have more confidence in the erratic Xenophon, we might know more about the situation of the men perhaps formally exonerated of Agariste III's charges years after the event. It is Xenophon wearing his historian's hat (Xen. *Hell.* 1.4.13–21), and well supported on this occasion by Diogenes (13.69.1–3) who describes the city's reversal in 407, when Alcibiades III was recalled to Athens, his sentence overturned, the curse on him retracted, and compensation promised for his confiscated property. The profanation of which Alcibiades III, Charmides, *Axiochus*, and Adeimantus had been accused by Agariste III (and, presumably those accused with Alcibiades III by Andromachus) was now treated as never having happened at all. But there was, for some of the men at least, a catch: confiscated property that had been sold could be bought back by the *polis* and returned to its original owner—but not property that had been resold by the purchaser. Alcibiades III's compensatory property was still not available when his son was due to inherit it in 404 (see Alcibiades IV s.v., cf. Exc. 4). Charmides, with less clout than Alcibiades III, may well have found himself in 407 back in a city depleted through long years of war, without resources at a time when his cousin Critias IV s.v. was in exile in Thessaly, Pylilampes s.v. had been dead since <413, Demos s.v. was away on embassies, and others in the family were not yet old enough to be householders.

*Political career.* In Xenophon, Socrates has regard for Charmides (*Mem.* 3.6.1) but encourages him to overcome his natural reticence and shyness and become active in public affairs by taking a more voluble role in the Assembly (*Mem.* 3.7.1–9; cf. D. L. 2.29). Charmides did in fact become one of the Ten (Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.19) chosen by the Thirty ([Aristot.] *Ath. Pol.* 35.1) to govern the Piraeus 404–3; thus he is included in the “fifty-one” that Plato mentions as the size of the government (*Ltr.* 7.324c). Burnet (1924: *Ap.* 32c6n) and Bury (1929: *Ltr.* 7.324dn) mistake Charmides for a member of the Thirty, and it is still a common mistake in the literature (Huss 1999a: 400; Wolfsdorf 1998: 130; PCW 639; Kahn 1996: 49n24, 185; Nails 1995: 210; Brickhouse and Smith 1994: 167; Wallace 1992: 329, 331; Sprague 1976: 30; Guthrie 1975: 11). Charmides does not appear in the ancient list of the Thirty (Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.2–3), but he is listed among those killed in the battle of Munychia between the forces of the Thirty and Thrasybulus' group of exiled democrats in 403 (Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.19).

*In inscriptions.* An inscription of some interest and originally dated ±300 (*SEG* 13.28) is a fragment of a marble block recovered from the site of the Academy

and bearing four reconstructed names (Pritchett 1934: 189), originally thought to be the names of dialogues:

ΧΑΡΜ[ΙΔΕΣ]  
ΑΡΙΣ[ΤΟΝ]  
ΑΞΙ[ΟΧΟΣ]  
ΚΡΙΤΟΝ

i.e., Charm[ides], Aris[ton], Axi[ochus], Crito. The fragment was later reinterpreted as the names of schoolboys from the dialogues and redated to the 2nd c. (*SEG* 21.638; cf. Jones 1999: 231n51 with Brumbaugh 1992: 171–2):

ΧΑΡΜ[ - - - ]  
ΑΡΙΣ[ - - - ]  
ΜΕΝΕΚΡ[ΑΘΗΣ]  
ΚΡΙΤΩΝ[ - - - ]?  
[ . ] Ε[ - - - ]

i.e., Char . . . , Aris . . . , Menecr[ates], Crito . . . , . . . ?e . . . . It is a lesson in what different reconstructions there may be of a worn stone inscription.

*Prosopographical notes.* There has long been special interest in determining Charmides' deme because one might then safely extend the identification to some other males on the maternal side of Plato's family who feature in the dialogues and in history, most notably Critias IV, but also the characters of the *Timaeus* and *Critias*. Since Charmides says he was taxed when he was rich (*Xen. Mem.* 4.31), one might expect to find inscriptions celebrating his liturgies, but so far there is nothing that qualifies. The one suggestion made in *APF*, Charmides of Lamptrae (*PA* 15514) "*tamias* of the Other Gods in 420/19 (*IG* I<sup>2</sup> 370.11 [cf. I<sup>3</sup> 472]), of the right social class and of the right tribe," is unsuitable. Charmides of Lamptrae, to have reached the age of thirty by 420/19, must have been born by 450/49, so he is too old to have required a guardian in 429.

*In modern bibliography.* A number of modern scholars looking at Andocides IV's *On the Mysteries* in the course of some larger project (e.g., *APF*, *DPhA*, and Kahn 1996: 32) have mistakenly taken all references to 'Charmides' in Andocides IV to be univocal, leaving unexplained why, after the profaner Charmides is named without demotic or patronymic (1.16)—as if everyone knows him—Andocides IV *later* takes such care to introduce the Charmides, son of Aristotle, who is his own cousin (1.47 and 48), and advisor in prison. Scholars who have dealt with the text directly have assumed naturally that there are *two* men named Charmides in Andocides IV's speech (Maidment 1941, MacDowell 1962, Aurenche 1974,

Dover *HCT*: 277, Wallace 1992: 331, and Ostwald *CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>: 364). Dover notes that the chronology of events would be affected if there were only one Charmides because he would have to have been released from prison—as a result of Andocides IV's evidence—just in time to flee Agariste III's denunciation (*HCT*: 281). Besides, Andocides IV carefully constructed his speech precisely to distance himself from anything smacking of profanation, so it would have been exceedingly unlikely for him to cite a criminal in so central a way, as his counselor, in his own defense.

On the quite separate matter of whether the first Charmides, the profaner, was also Plato's uncle, only Wallace (1992: 331–5) argues that the case is certain, and I use some of his material above, though Ostwald (*CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>: 364) says “probably,” MacDowell (1962: 76) says “possible,” and Dover (*HCT* 283) says “could be” and “perhaps.” Both Ollier (1961: 115) and Stanley (1986: 179–81) defend Xenophon against charges of anachronism by suggesting other ways in which Charmides might have gone from rich to poor before 421. (A few sources from the later tradition are occasionally mixed into contemporary discussions; see later testimonia in *SSR* 2.VIB.)

