

Week 6: The Rise of Athens

Lecture 10, **Athens**, Key Words

Autochthonous

Synoikismos

Boeotia

Phylai

Ionia

Apaturia

Phratries

Gene

Orgeones

Eupatrids

Areopagus

Archon Eponymos

Archon Basileus

Thesmothetai

Ecclesia

Hippeis

Zeugitai

Thetes

Cylon

Theagenes

Alcmaeonidae

Code of Draco

Salamis

Sigeum

Hektemoroi

Seisachtheia

Georgoi

Euboea

Pentakosiomedimnoi

Boule of 400

Heliaia

Oracle of Apollo

Anarchia

Eupatridae

Demiourgoi

Paralioi

Megacles

Politeia

Pediakoi

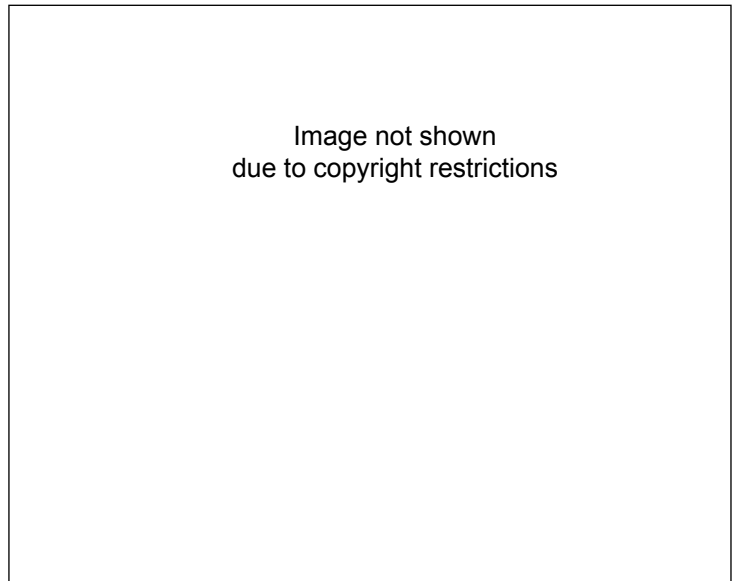
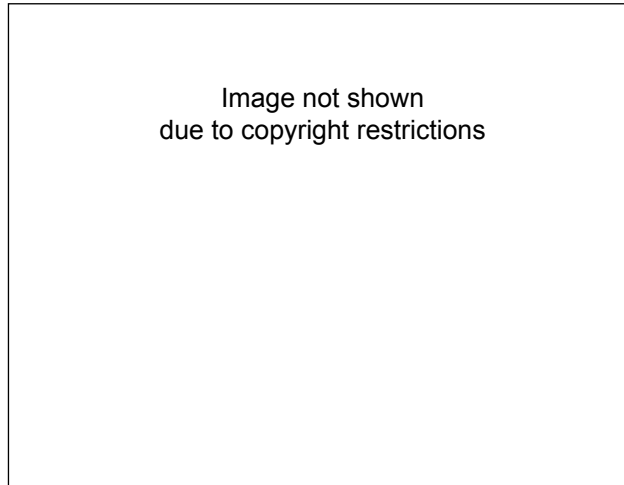
Lycurgus

Diakrioi

Diakria

Hyperakria
Brauron
Peisistratus
Demotikotatos
Neleid
Phye
Pangaeus
Eretria
Thebes
Lygdamis
Naxos
Marathon
Pallene
Medici
Chersonese
Panathenaia
Dionysus
Eleusinia
Golden Age
Hippias
Hipparchus
Lysidrium

Athenian silver coin: obverse



Athenian silver coin: reverse

Lecture 11, **Cleisthenes**, Key Words

Alcmaeonidae
Hippias
Delphi
Cleomenes
Isagoras
Trittyes
Asty
Paralia
Mesogeion
Demes
Probalinthos
Tetrapolis
Demarch
Naucraries
Nomenclature
Demotic
Boule of 500
Cleisthenes of Sicyon
Psephismata
Probouleutic
Gerrymandering
Isonomia
Isegoria
Hoplite democracy
Ostracism
Agora
Aristides
Broneer shards
Referendum
Thucydides son of Melesias

Map of Athens

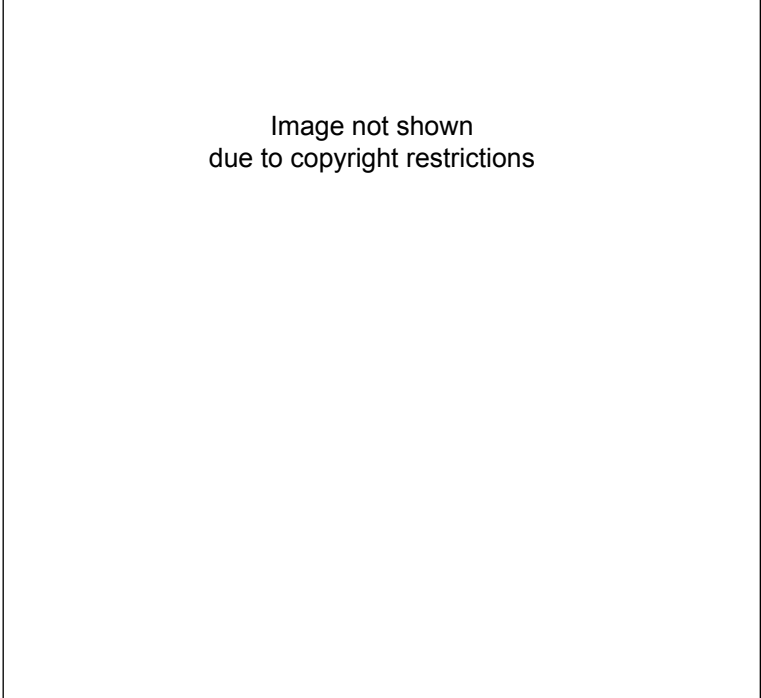


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510/9 possible revision of citizen lists; ownership of land no longer required for citizenship; landless thetes and thetes whose produce was less than 200 measures (i.e., artisans and laborers) could now participate in the assembly; Athenians outlaw torture of citizens.

508/7 Cleisthenes, having failed to obtain leadership among the nobles, reorganizes the government with the support of the demos, passes his legislation through Council of Four Hundred, and lays the basic framework for Athenian democracy: new territorial system of 10 tribes based on 139 *demes* and 30 *trittyes*; enrollment in a *deme* the criterion for citizenship instead of earlier criterion of membership in a phratry; tribal affiliation dependent upon the *deme* one is registered in; from *deme* registers candidates obtained for the various boards of magistrates, Council of 500 and the law courts (fifth century); transforms the Archaic Athenian state based on oligarchic principles and religious rites; breaks up local religious cults and local aristocratic power blocks through new tribal system; Council of Five Hundred replaces Solon's Council of Four Hundred; 50 councilors per tribe. Isagoras appeals to King Cleomenes and drives out Cleisthenes by invoking the hereditary Alcmaeonid curse (Hdt. 5.69-72); Cleomenes expels 700 Athenian families as accursed whose names had been supplied by Isagoras; attempt to dissolve Council of 400 and put Council of 300 in place under Isagoras and his partisans fails; Athenians force Isagoras and Cleisthenes to leave Athens under a truce after seizing the acropolis; subsequent Spartan attempt to install Isagoras as tyrant made it as far as Eleusis; Cleisthenes and the 700 families recently exiled recalled; Cleisthenes establishes law on Ostracism.

507/6 Archonship of Alcmaeon marks the inauguration of the Cleisthenic secular democratic system.

506 Cleomenes arranges a threefold attack on Attica with the Thebans and Chalcidians of Euboea; the Athenians defeat the Boeotians and Chalcidians after the Corinthians, followed by the Spartan King Demaratus, withdraw after reaching Eleusis; Athenians follow up victory by capturing and dividing up into 4,000 lots (*kleroi*) a large part of the Lelantine plain where the Chalcidian aristocrats had their estates; Athenians settle a number of citizens (*cleruchs*) on the land, who retain their Athenian citizenship and act as a garrison to keep watch on Chalcis.

501/0 Archonship of Hermocreon; oath which the 500 councilors had to take introduced; Athenians began to elect the ten generals (*stratego*) by tribes, one from each tribe; Cleisthenes' reorganization completed.

488/7 Ostracism of Hipparchus; first instance of ostracism

Chronological Table for the Development of Athenian Democracy to 500

1400-1200 Late Bronze Age; height of the Mycenaean civilization on mainland Greece; powerful monarchs (*wanax*) control massive palace sites at Mycenae, Argos, Pylos, Tiryns, Athens, Orchomenus and Thebes; Greek writing on Linear B tablets; highly organized and centralized palace centers with bureaucratic control of agriculture and the crafts; palaces ruled by a king, *wanax*, with extensive, if not absolute, civil, military and religious powers; beneath the king was the *lawagetas* who was possibly an army leader; a minor official named in the Linear B tablets is the *basileus*, who may have been a village ruler.

1200-1100 destruction of Mycenaean palace sites; loss of writing

1100-800 Dark Age in Greece; time of migrations throughout Greece and eastward across the Aegean; Athens escapes Dorian invasion/migration; kingship survives the collapse of Mycenaean civilization, but the king is far less powerful than the *wanax* of the palace period; numerous petty kings—*basileis*—are the heads of various *oikoi* and prominent leaders, claiming descent from gods or heroes; these figures attend the king's council and later form the class of "nobles"; existence of assemblies of the people (i.e., the fighting men); laws in this period are the ancestral customs, rules and judgments which have evolved from generation to generation to regulate society and to make civilized life possible; In Homer they are called *themistes* or *dikai*; contrast the uncivilized Cyclopes; Thucydides describes the decentralization that existed in Attica during the Dark Age: "Under Cecrops and the first kings, down to the reign of Theseus, Attica had always consisted of a number of independent cities, each with its own town hall and magistrates. Except in times of danger the king of Athens was not consulted; in ordinary seasons they carried on their government and settled their affairs without his interference; sometimes they even waged war against him, as in the case of the Eleusinians with Eumolpus against Erechtheus" (2.15.1). Athens, like other Greek states in the Dark Age, was ruled by a hereditary king, who, with the addition of nobles from other settlements, gradually lost power and became a *primus inter pares*.

800-700 the nobles seriously curtail the powers of the kingship and place two magistrates beside the king, the archon (ruler) and the polemarch (leader in war), who take over the most important functions of the government; eventually the kingship ceases to be a lifelong hereditary office and becomes an annual magistracy instead; early aristocracies were controlled by an exclusive council and a small number of magistrates who succeeded the kings; in Athens the Areopagus council develops from an old Council of Elders, which had advised the king; it becomes an important and dominant body in the aristocratic state.

750 Writing is reintroduced in Greece, which is a crucial development for the codification of laws.

725-650 increase in movable wealth and the beginnings of hoplite warfare.

700-300 Age of the Polis in Greece

700 Social and political structure of Athens, like other Greek states, was based on tribes, phratries, *gene* (i.e., members of the Eupatrids), and *oikoi*, the *oikos* being the predominant family unit; the Athenians were grouped in the four Ionian tribes (*phylai*), each tribe consisting of a certain number of *phratries*, which in turn were composed of one or more *gene* and also the non-*gennetai* or commoners; real or imagined kinship and common cults further united the members; by this date the unification of Attica is well advanced—a political amalgamation (the majority of the people continued to live in the communities of their birth), a *sympoliteia* whereby all free inhabitants of Attica share common Athenian citizenship, contrasting with the 12 Boeotia cities which never united under the chief city Thebes; Thucydides attributes the synoecism of Attica to Theseus: “In Theseus, however, they had a king whose intelligence matched his power; and one of the chief features in his organization of the country was to abolish the council chambers and magistrates of the petty cities, and to merge them in the single council chamber and town hall of the present capital. Individuals might still enjoy their property as before, but they were henceforth compelled to have only one political center, namely, Athens; which thus counted all the inhabitants of Attica among her citizens, so that when Theseus died he left a great state behind him” (2.15.2).

682/1 annual archonship established; possible time when kingship becomes an annual magistracy instead of a hereditary lifelong office; year named after eponymous archon; the archon (chief executive of state) presided over the council when it sat in a legislative or deliberative capacity and over meetings of the assembly; he also had jurisdiction in litigation concerning the family; the *polemarch* (leader in war), in addition to his military duties, had jurisdiction in cases affecting resident aliens in Attica; and the *basileus* (king) retained only his supervision over the religious practices of the state (i.e., the ancestral rites and sacrifices); he also presided over the council when it sat as a judicial body to try cases involving religion.

632 Cylon attempts to become tyrant at Athens (Thuc. 1.126.8); attempt put down by the Alcmaeonids, polluted by slaying the followers of Cylon; By this time six other archons appear called *thesmothetai* (lawmakers) for a total of nine archons; the full development of the aristocratic republic complete by mid-seventh century – power of Eupatrids secure with “their *genos* and phratry organization, their wealth in land, their military superiority, and their monopoly in knowing and administering the unwritten customary laws.” (Fine, 188)

621 Draco makes the first codification of Athenian laws to lessen feuding among the various *gene*; his law on homicide made the important distinction between premeditated and unpremeditated murder; his code was famous for the severity of its punishments; codifying the unwritten laws and reducing them to writing helps break down the privileged position of the aristocrats who had monopolized the knowledge, interpretation and application of the unwritten laws; control over the administration of justice formed the main base of the aristocratic government; the hoplite class led the assault on the aristocracies of birth.

594/3 Solon’s archonship; led Athens to victory over Megara regarding Salamis; sought to establish the reign of good law, *eunomia*; ended debt slavery by laws forbidding loans secured on the borrower’s person; enacted the *Seisachtheia*, the shaking off of burdens, which cancelled all debts secured by the borrower’s person and was made retroactive the liberation all debtors who had fallen into slavery or had become *hektēmoroi* (sixth-part men, probably meaning that they

owed one sixth of their lands yield to a creditor); his amnesty law restored citizenship to all who had been banished except those condemned for murder or for seeking to establish a tyranny; removed the *horoi* (“boundaries”), ending the enslavement of “Black Earth” by returning the land to its owners and thus eliminated the class of *hektemors*; forbade the export of all natural products except olive oil (Plutarch, *Solon* 24.1); stimulated trade and reduced dependence on Aegina by changing the Athenian system of weights and measures from the Aeginetan to the Euboean standard, which was also employed by Corinth; maintained system of family tenure of land through inalienability of land.

Solon’s codification of the laws supplanted that of Draco (except for the laws on homicide) and his constitution weakened the Eupatrids’ monopoly of the magistracies (the nine archons) and the Council of the Areopagus; Solon set up four census classes based not on birth (i.e., Eupatrids) but on an individual’s wealth, measured in the amount of grain and olive oil produced each year: *pentakosiomedimnoi*, 500 measures or more; *hippeis*, horsemen, between 300 and 500 measures; *zeugitai*, hoplites (“yoked together”), between 200 and 300 measures; *thetes* (“laborers”), under 200 measures; under Solon the classes acquired political in addition to prior military significance: top two classes eligible for the archonship.

Top three classes eligible to serve on the *probouleutic* Council of Four Hundred, 100 members from each tribe, which Solon created to prepare agenda for the assembly; *thetes* admitted only to the assembly and the law courts; Council of the Areopagus was composed of ex-archons and appointed to the duty of guarding the laws; law made dealing with impeachment (*eisangelia*) placed under the jurisdiction of the Areopagus; Solon gave all citizens the right to appeal verdicts of all magistrates to the assembly (called the *Heliaia* when it sat as a court of appeal to distinguish it from the *ecclesia*, the assembly in its legislative and electoral capacities), but not those of the Areopagus; “He [Solon] appointed the Council of the Areopagus to the duty of guarding the laws, just as it had existed before as overseer of the constitution (*politeia*), and it was this council that kept watch over the greatest number and the most important affairs of state, in particular correcting offenders with sovereign powers both to fine and punish, and making returns of its expenditures without adding a statement of the reason for the outlay, and trying persons that conspired to put down the people (*demos*), Solon having laid down a law of impeachment (*eisangelia*) in regard to them.” (Aristotle, *Ath. Const.*, 8.4); he also created the public action (the *graphe*), which enabled any citizen who wished to institute a public action to secure justice for himself or others; Aristotle (*Ath. Const.*, 9) considered the prohibition of loans secured on the person, the *graphe*, and the right of appeal to the law courts the three most democratic features of Solon’s constitution.

People elect generals one from each tribe; Board of four generals on the basis of the four Ionian tribes.

561/0-510 Rule of the Peisistratids; manipulate archonship but retain the main features of Solon’s constitution, such as the Council of Four Hundred. Peisistratus established a system of thirty local or circuit judges to decide minor disputes in rural areas of Attica; they handled disputes against a tribe other than their own. These magistrates were abolished after the expulsion of Hippias.

508/7 Cleisthenes establishes the framework for Athenian democracy; he substitutes 10 tribes based on demes for the four traditional Ionian tribes based on phratries and gene as the fundamental units of government, but retains the aristocratic and plutocratic character of the state; essentially discards the four old Ionian tribes as a political factor; 10 tribes instituted to reduce factional struggles between powerful families; four census classes serve as criteria for assignment of privileges and duties: leadership of men connected with powerful and wealthy families; higher magistrates chosen only from the 2 upper classes, the *pentakosiomedimnoi* and the *hippeis*; a boy, on becoming 18 years of age was enrolled in the deme of his father; this enrollment automatically assigned him to the tribe of that deme and indicated citizen status; sons of Athenian parents not legally married were also enrolled in demes and recognized as citizens, but as illegitimate children (*nothoi*) they were barred from membership in a phratry, limiting their rights of inheritance and prevented them from holding the archonship and priesthoods; minimum age for eligibility for the archonship 30 years old, after a term of one year archons automatically become members of the Areopagus council; no pay for government service kept the poor from significant participation in political life of Athens; Areopagus retains considerable influence as a highly conservative body; Board of 10 generals established; people elect generals on a tribal basis, one from each of the 10 new tribes; officers known as *taxiarchs* elected by the assembly to command the tribal regiments; chief organs of government are the archons, generals and various boards of magistrates; assembly (*ecclesia*) of all citizens, including the landless *thetes*; assembly met on the hill of the Pnyx one time in a *prytany* (one-tenth of the year); Council of Five Hundred (Boule), with 500 new members each year from the top three census classes (*pentakosiomedimnoi*, *hippeis* and *zeugitai*), possibly appointed by lot following a preliminary election.

506 Athenians condemn to death *in absentia* Isagoras and his partisans who, acting with Cleomenes seized Eleusis.

501/0 *Bouleutic Oath*: oath taken by members of the Council of Five Hundred which included a provision not to put to the vote any motion contrary to the laws (Aristotle, *Ath. Const.*, 29.4); enforced by the *prytaneis*

Early Athenian History and Solon's Reforms (594-93)

BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY:

Archon, polemarch, basileus, *thesmothetai*, Areopagus, *Boule*, *Ekklesia*, *Heliaia*, Cylon (632), Megacles, Draco (621), Solon (594), anarchy, Damasias (582-80), *Eupatridae*, Alcmaeonidae, *pentakosiomedimnoi*, *hippeis*, *zeugitai*, thetes, metics, *seisachtheia*, *hektemoroi*, *horoi*, synoecism

CONSIDER:

1. What sources of information do we have for Solon's career? How reliable are they? What is the date and relative value of each?
2. What changes took place in the Athenian economy during the seventh century? To what extent are the economic, social and political pressures in Athens similar to or different from those in states that experienced tyrannies in the seventh century? Is Athens politically progressive or backward in the seventh century?
3. What was the system of government in Athens like before Solon? How stable was it? What do Cylon's conspiracy and Draco's code indicate about Athenian politics in the generation before Solon? Was Draco's code a progressive or a regressive measure?
4. To what extent does the evidence of Solon's career shed light upon the economic problems of his day? Who were the *hektemoroi*? Did they differ from those being enslaved for debts? Were economic conditions getting worse, or did Solon's reforms result from the growing assertiveness of newly prosperous classes demanding yet faster change? Was the situation that led to his reforms merely the attempt of aristocrats to manipulate grievances long extant in Attica so as to pave their way to a tyranny by betraying the class-interests of other groups?
5. What was Solon's social, economic and political background? Was he a revolutionary or a reformer, a radical, a moderate or a conservative? Was Solon a tyrant? Who benefited the most from his reforms? What did he do for the lower classes, for the 'middle' classes, for the wealthy? Was Athens under Solon a democracy or was it an oligarchy?
6. Did Solon found a Council of 400? Did he reform the coinage system? What role did the *Ekklesia* have in his constitution?

The Peisistratids (561-10) & Cleisthenes (508-07)

BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY:

Peisistratus, Hippias, Hipparchus, Cleisthenes, Miltiades, Harmodius, Aristogiton, *phylai*, *trittyes*, *deme*, *phratry*, *Boule*, Isagoras, Cleomenes, ostracism, plain, hill, shore

CONSIDER:

A restoration of the archon list for Hippias' early years runs as follows:

[On]eto[rides]	527/6	Peisistratid candidate
[H]ippia[s]	526/5	Peisistratus' son
[K]leisthen[es]	525/4	An Alkmeonid; grandson of Kleisthenes, the tyrant of Sikyon; great-uncle of Perikles
[M]iltiades	524/3	Miltiades the Younger; son of Kimon, who had been killed at the instigation of Peisistratus' sons (<i>p.</i> 528); later, the general at Marathon (490); father of Kimon, an opponent of the Alkmeonid Perikles in the 460s
[Ka]lliades	523/2	
[?Peisi]strat[o s]	522/1	Conjectural reading; son of Hippias

1. What does this list suggest about the attitude of some leading Athenian families toward the tyranny? Does this list suggest that the position of Hippias was strong or weak after his father's death? What impact did the assassination plot have on the downfall of Hippias? What other factors were at work? Why was Hippias less successful than his father in maintaining power? Why he was unable to regain power, as his father had done?
2. Consider Cleisthenes' family and background. What political stance was he likely to have held? What position had the Alcmaeonids taken toward Cylon's attempt at tyranny (? 632)? How did they benefit from Solon's archonship? What was their position during the period of Solon's self-imposed exile? Was Cleisthenes hostile to the tyranny? If yes, why was he?
3. What were the elements of Cleisthenes' reforms? Do they include the development of ostracism or the enfranchisement of a large number of people who were formerly not citizens? What is the importance of new social groupings?
4. What was the purpose of Cleisthenes' reforms? Were they intended to break the aristocratic monopoly of government? Were they intended to secure the position of the clan of Cleisthenes in Attica? What was the purpose of the *trittyes*?
5. Was Cleisthenes a democrat by conviction, an aristocrat who betrayed his class and his own principles to gain power, or an aristocrat who did not realize the implications of the reforms?

he initiated? Did Cleisthenes intend the results of his reforms or is he an opportunist who let things get out of hand?

6. Reconstruct the political scene in 509/08. Which groups supported Isagoras? Was he a 'friend of the tyrants,' or was this just Cleisthenic propaganda? What type of government did Isagoras envision? Why were Harmodius and Aristogiton gloried in the popular memory as the liberators of Athens and Cleisthenes ignored?
7. Why did the Spartans act in the peculiar manner they did? What do the events suggest about Cleomenes' position in Sparta, and about Sparta's position within its system of alliances? Does Sparta deserve its ancient reputation for having liberated Greece from tyranny?