Philosophy of Politics
Dracon

- First Public Law
- ca. 621 B.C.
- Political power to the hoplites (?)
- All offences punishable by death

“because the least offence deserves it, and I couldn’t think of anything worse for the more serious offences.”
Solon

- Originally from Salamis
- ca. 624 – 558
- Archon in 594/3
- Asked to reform the constitution in 592
- Repealed Dracon’s law code.
- Best laws?
- “Best they would accept”
Social Divisions:

- Wealth, not birth, as the qualifier
- Pentecosiomedimnoi:
  - 500 bushel men
  - Aristocrats, large land owners
- Hippeis
  - 300 bushel men
  - Cavalry
- Zeugitai
  - 200 bushel men
  - Hoplites
- Thetes
Trade:

- **Olive oil:**
  - No other exports permitted
  - Maximize profit potential

- **Salamis and Euboea**
  - Links with Corinth and Chalcis
  - Eliminates Aegina
Solon’s Constitution

- **Ecclesia**
  - Assembly of citizens
  - Previously restricted by property

- **Boule**
  - Open to all but the Thetes
  - Purely deliberative

- **Areopagus (Hill of Ares)**
  - A ‘supreme court’ of sorts
  - Ratification of measures from the Boule
Solon’s Reforms

- Written law code
  - Public law means rule of law
- Heliaia
  - A ‘people’s court’
  - Anyone could bring a prosecution
- Seisachtheia
  - “shaking off of burdens”
  - Hectemoroi (sixth part people)
  - The body as chattel
The Archon in Athens

- Nine archons served for one year
- Took office after 21 June
- Chosen from the eupatridae
- Selection by lot
- Eponymous Archon
  - Supervised civil administration
- Archon Basileus
  - Supervised religious functions
- Polemarch
  - President of the board of strategoi
- 6 Thesmothetai
  - Supervisors of the laws
- Joined the Areopagus council
Tyrants

Where the skin of the lion doesn’t reach... stretch it out with the skin of the fox.
Tyrants

- One-man rule
- No constitutional foundation
- Popular support
- Usually:
  - initiated to solve a crisis
  - Absolute power corrupts absolutely
  - Economically beneficial
  - Ruthless
Tyranny

- Kings are guarded by citizens at arms because kings rule willing subjects
- Tyrants are guarded by foreign soldiers because tyrants rule unwilling subjects

Aristotle Politics 1285a 1
Pheidon of Argos

- **King of Argos**
  - Argos at war with Sparta
  - Abdicated kingship
  - Consolidated the Argolid
- **Battle of the Champions (669 BC)**
  - Self appointed president of the Olympic games in 668 BC
- **Died in a war with Corinth**
Argolid
Tyrants of Corinth

- **Cypselus: 655 – 625 BC**
  - Re-establish independence from Argos
- **Periander: 625 – 585 BC**
  - Son of Cypselus
  - Eliminated rivals
  - Foreign bodyguard
  - Suppression of public education and association
Periander & Thrasybulus

- Thrasybulus: Tyrant of Miletus
- Envoy from Periander:
  - What is the best way to maintain power?
- Thrasybulus and the barley...
  - Eliminate the leaders
  - Level the masses
The Athenian Stasis

592 - 580 BC:

- **Aristocrats:**
  - Lost capital in the Seisachtheia

- **Peasants**
  - Free... but still poor

- **Merchants**
  - Profited from the new trade laws
  - Still without full self-determination
Athenian Factions

The Plains:
- Aristocrats
- Traditionalists
- Oligarchy

The Coast:
- Merchants and craftsmen
- Progressive, Liberal
- Mixed constitution

The Hills:
- Various socio-economic interests
- Broad representation of stake-holders
Peisistratus

- Son of Hippocrates, descendant of Nestor of Pylos and Codrus
- Associated with Megara and Miletus
- Family estates around Mt. Pangaeus
- Hippias and Hipparchus by Athenian wife
- Married Timonassa daughter of Gorgilus of Argos
A Bad Imitation of Odysseus

- 560 B.C.
- Peisistratus fakes a wound
- Is granted a bodyguard
- Takes control of the Acropolis
- "He was supported by the majority of both nobles and the common people (Arist. A.P. 16.9)"
Peisistratus

Undertook civic programs:

- Temples
- Festivals
- Theatre - Festival of Dionysus
- Expanded Athenian influence abroad
- Introduced coinage (and taxes)
- Published the *Iliad*
- Grants for purchase of farmland
Career:

- **554**: Megacles and Lycurgus join to expel Pisistratus
- **548**: Megacles and Athena help Pisistratus return
- **541**: Megacles shifts again
- **530**: Battle of Pallene
- **527**: Pisistratus dies
Athenian Sphere ca 527 BC
Hippias

- Eldest son
- Succeeded in 527
- Lost Theban alliance
- Hipparchus, murdered in 514
- Hippias expelled in 511
- Flees to Sigeum
Athenian Sphere ca 527 BC
Cleisthenes

- Archon in 525/4
- Exiled after the murder of Hipparchus
- Defeated at Lipsydrion in 511
- Bribed the Pythia
  - Cleomenes of Sparta fooled by the oracle
  - Tyrants expelled in 510
Recall of Cleisthenes

- Lacked support from the traditional sources of power and influence
- Saw the potential of popular support
- Directed his reforms to energize and capitalize on an existing trend.
- Sought to distance the people from their aristocratic overlords and cults
- Sought to centralize identity and loyalty.
Cleisthenes’ Reforms

- Solon’s economic classes unchanged
- Higher magistracies unchanged
- Self-determination moved down the scale
- Increased the citizen population
- Identity redefinition
  - Followed Peisistratus’ centrality program
  - Deflected identity definition from the local cults
Cleisthenes’ Reforms

- Divided Attica into 30 trittyes
  - 10 from the Coast
  - 10 from the City
  - 10 from inland
- 139 Demes
  - Identity
- Ten new tribes
  - Each made of one trittus from each region
- Cross Population
- Areopagus
  - Only past magistrates

- Boule
  - Increased to 500
  - 50 representatives of each tribe
  - Chosen by lot
  - Financial administration of the City
  - Deliberated on measures for the Ecclesia

- Ecclesia
  - Quorum of 6000 citizens
  - Policy (foreign and domestic)
  - Election of magistrates
Citizenship

- 18 yrs.
  - Enrolled in his father's deme
  - Serves as an ephebe in the military for 2 yrs.
- 20 yrs
  - Eligible to attend the Ecclesia
- 30 yrs
  - Full citizen
  - Eligible to hold a magistrate (Boule, strategos, etc)
Ostracism

- **Annual**
  - Ecclesia votes on necessity
  - 6000 votes cast (ostracon)
  - Simple majority

- **Exile**
  - Individual leaves Athens for ten years
  - No loss of citizenship
  - No loss of property

- **Hipparchus**
  - Ostracized in 487
The War on Athens

- 507/6 BC:
  - Sparta and Corinth
  - Thebes and Chalcis
  - Alliance dissolves at Eleusis
  - Athens Counter attacks:
    - Chalcis conquered
    - Thebes concedes Olorus
Foreign Policy

- Fear of Spartan Aggression
- Embassy to Persia
- Earth and Water