

GCSE (9–1)

Prescribed Source Booklet

ANCIENT HISTORY

J198

For first teaching in 2017

From Tyranny to Democracy, 546–483 BC

Version 2



Overview of the depth study

The origin of political systems has fascinated writers and thinkers in every age, and ancient Greek political history is a particularly interesting and varied area of exploration for students of the ancient world. The events covered in this depth study are some of the most interesting and fascinating in Greek history. The first area of the specification alone allows students to read about a faked murder attempt, the impersonation of a goddess, a sexless marriage, a spurned lover, an insulted aristocratic girl, assassination and torture. This depth study allows students to understand the nature of two different political systems: tyranny and democracy through the actions and colourful personalities of the tyrants in Athens, Samos and Corinth and early democratic leaders.

Specification content

Key topics	Learners should have studied the following content:
Athens under the tyrants	The concept of tyranny; the Peisistratids, their actions and characteristics of their rule; the political structure under the tyrants; Harmodios and Aristogeiton's involvement in the assassination of Hipparchus; changes to the nature of Hippias' tyranny after Hipparchus' death; invasion by Sparta to remove Hippias; the fall of Hippias.
Tyranny and Samos	Accession of Polycrates; his treatment of political opponents; policy towards Egypt and Persia; Spartan and Corinthian opposition to his tyranny; building and engineering achievements of Polycrates; failed succession of Maeandrius, including his offer to introduce democracy and its subsequent withdrawal; Persian interference in Samian politics; support for the accession of Syloson; comparison with Athenian tyranny.

The Emergence of Democracy in Athens	Cleisthenes and his rivalry with Isagoras, including the involvement of Sparta; the introduction of <i>isegoria</i> by Cleisthenes; Cleisthenes' reforms, including restructuring of tribes, <i>demes</i> and <i>phratryes</i> , and the reorganisation of the <i>boule</i> ; Spartan attempt to restore Hippias; Corinthian arguments against restoring Hippias as tyrant in Athens; Corinthian opposition to tyranny on principle – the examples of Cypselus and Periander.
Democracy in action	Athenian democratic policy toward Persia; establishment of the ten strategoi; Athenian decision to support the Ionian revolt and subsequent withdrawal; the development of democracy in Ionia after Ionian revolt; the development of the navy under Themistocles and its significance for democracy; the battle of Marathon and its significance for democracy; changes to the status of the archonship; onset and uses of ostracism; the role and treatment of Miltiades, Themistocles and Aristides in the newly democratic Athens.

This source booklet lists the sources following the chronological order of the events. This has been done as it felt that this is the easiest way for students to gain familiarity with the facts, sources and chronology of the period. The themes in the specification can be accessed at various points throughout the course.



Athens under the tyrants: key places



Notes

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.13.1

[1] As the power of Hellas grew, and its acquisition of wealth grew faster and faster, the incomes of the Greek cities increased, and most of them saw tyrannies established. Until this point, they had been ruled by kings with clearly defined rights. The Hellenes also began to build fleets, and pay more attention to their understanding of the sea.

Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 14–17**14**

[1] Peisistratus seemed to be most well-disposed towards the people and achieved fame in the war against Megara. He covered himself with wounds and persuaded the people that he had suffered these things at the hands of his enemies, and to give him a bodyguard; Aristion wrote the proposal. [2] It is said that Solon opposed Peisistratus when he asked for a bodyguard and said that he was wiser than some and braver than others; for he was wiser than those who did not see that Peisistratus was making an attempt at tyranny, and braver than those who knew but kept quiet. When he did not persuade them by what he said, he took his arms out in front of his house door, and said that he had helped his country as much as he could (for he was already very old), and demanded that others should do the same. [3] Well Solon achieved nothing then by what he asked. Peisistratus on the other hand seized power and carried out public business more as a citizen than a tyrant. When his rule had not yet taken root, the followers of Megacles and Lycurgus joined together and threw him out in the sixth year after he first set himself up, in the archonship of Hegesias. [4] In the fifth year¹ after this, Megacles who was being hard-pressed in the political conflict, made a proposal of an alliance to Peisistratus, on condition that he

¹ The Greek has 'twelfth' here, but we have gone with Rhodes' suggested emendation to fifth (Rhodes PJ, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia*, Oxford, 1993)

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married his daughter, and restored him in an old-fashioned and rather simple way. For he spread the word that Athena was restoring Peisistratus and, having found a tall and fine-looking woman from the *deme* of Paiania according to Herodotus, but some say she was a Thracian garland-seller from Kollytos. Her name was Phye and, when he had dressed her up to look like the goddess, he led her in with Peisistratus. Peisistratus drove in in a chariot, with the woman standing next to him, and the people in the city fell down and worshipped him and received him with admiration.

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[1] Such then was his [Peisistratus'] first return. Then he fell from favour after this for a second time, in about the seventh year after his return. He did not hold power for a long time, but because he did not wish to have intercourse with the daughter of Megacles, he was afraid of both the political factions and left the country. [2] First he stayed in the area around the Thermaic Gulf which is called Rhaecelus, but from there he went to the country around Pangaeum, where he raised money and hired soldiers. Then he went to Eretria and in the eleventh year first attempted to recover his rule by force; many other men supported him, but especially the Thebans and Lygdamis of Naxos and the horsemen who still controlled the government in Eretria. [3] Having won a battle at Pallenis, he took the city, disarmed the people and firmly established the tyranny. He also captured Naxos and set up Lygdamis as ruler there. [4] He removed the people's weapons in the following way: he held an armed parade in the Theseum, began to address the assembled people, and spoke for a short time. When they said they could not hear him, he ordered them to climb up to the gateway of the Acropolis, so he could be heard better. While he used up time addressing the people there, those men who had been specially appointed for this purpose collected the weapons and locked them up in the buildings near the Theseum; then they came and gave a sign to Peisistratus. [5] When he had come to the end of the rest of his speech, he also told the people about what had happened to their weapons; he added that they did not have to be taken aback or

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dispirited, but should go away and concern themselves with their private affairs, and he himself would manage all public matters.

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[1] So the tyranny of Peisistratus was established from the start in this way, and such were the changes it went through. [2] Peisistratus managed matters in the city with moderation, as has been said, and more as a private citizen than a tyrant. For in other respects he was compassionate, merciful and inclined to pardon those who had done wrong, and in fact he lent money to those in need to help their daily work, so that they could support themselves as farmers. [3] He did this for two purposes, so that they would not spend time in the city, but would be scattered through the country, and so that, being moderately prosperous and involved with their own affairs, they would neither long for, nor have the free time to be concerned with, public affairs. [4] At the same time this helped him as his revenues also grew larger from the land being worked well, because he took a tenth of the income from the produce as a tax. [5] For this reason he also established judges throughout the *demes* and himself often went out into the country to oversee and resolve matters for those in dispute, so that they would not abandon their work because they had come into the city. [6] When Peisistratus was on one such trip, the matter concerning the man farming the plot later called the tax-free site is said to have occurred. When he saw that the man was digging and working away at a plot which was entirely made of rocks, he was amazed and ordered his slave to ask the man what he got out of the plot. The man replied, "Just misery and pain, and of this misery and pain Peisistratus has to take a tenth." So the man replied without recognising Peisistratus, who made him free from all taxes as he was pleased by his outspokenness and hard work. [7] He caused no trouble either to the mass of the people or in other ways during his time in power, but always provided peace and saw to it that there was quiet. It is because of this that it is often commonly said that the tyranny of Peisistratus was the Age of Cronos; for it was later, when his sons came to power, that it happened that the tyranny became

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much more harsh. [8] The greatest of all the things spoken about him was that he was well-disposed towards the people and compassionate in character. For in other respects he wanted to govern according to the laws, giving himself no advantage. Once when he was called to the Areopagus on a charge of murder, he appeared in person to defend himself, but the man making the accusation became frightened and left. [9] So he stayed in power for a long time, and when he was driven out he easily reclaimed it. For many people amongst both the aristocracy and the ordinary people supported him. This was because he won over the former by his companionship, the latter by his support for their personal affairs, and he had been well-disposed to both. [10] The Athenians had mild laws concerning tyranny at that time, both in general but especially the one concerned with setting up a tyranny. For this was their law: 'These are the laws and customs of the Athenians: if anybody rise up to set up a tyranny or helps in setting up a tyranny, both he and his family are deprived of their rights.'

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[1] Peisistratus grew old in power, and died in the archonship of Philoneos having been ill; he lived for 33 years from when he established the tyranny for the first time, of which he spent 19 in power; [2] he was in exile for the rest. So the people who say that Peisistratus was a lover of Solon and that he was a general in the war against Megara for control of Salamis are clearly foolish. For it not possibly because of their ages, if one counts up the life of each and the archonship in which each died. [3] When Peisistratus died, his sons took over the rule, conducting affairs in the same way. There were two sons from his marriage, Hippias and Hipparchus, and two from the Argive woman, Iophon and Hegesistratus (who had the surname Thessalus). [4] For Peisistratus married Timonassa, the daughter of an Argive man called Gorgilos; she had formerly been the wife of Archinos from Ambracia, who was a member of the Cypselid family. It was from this that Peisistratus' friendship with the Argives originated, and a thousand of them fought on his side in the battle at Pallenis, brought by Hegesistratus. Some people say that he married the Argive woman the first time he was exiled, others that it was when he first established his reign.

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Herodotus 5.55–5.56**5.55**

... Athens ... had been freed from tyrannical rule in the following manner: firstly, Hipparchus, the son of Peisistratus and brother of the tyrant Hippias, was killed by Aristogeiton and Harmodios, two men belonging to the family of the Gephyraei. Hipparchus had, in fact, been foretold of this evil by a dream. Following this, the Athenians spent four years as the subjects of a tyranny even stronger and more all-encompassing than ever before.

5.56

This was the vision which appeared to Hipparchus in his dream: the night before the Panathenaia, he thought he saw a tall, handsome man stood over him, muttering these strange rhymes:

“O lion, endure the unendurable with a lion’s heart.

No man on earth sins without punishment.”

As soon as morning came, he recounted this to the dream-interpreters, and put the dream out of his mind shortly afterwards, before setting out on the march to his death.

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Roman copy of the lost tyrannicides statue



National Archaeological Museum in Naples

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Thucydides, Book 6.53.3–6.59**6.53**

... [3] Those who had heard from the stories passed between generations that the tyranny of the Peisistratids ended in great oppression, and knew that they had been overthrown not by Harmodios or any effort of their own, but by the Spartans, so were in a constant state of fear and suspicion.

6.54

The endeavours of Aristogeiton and Harmodios arose from a love affair, of which I will tell the entire story. It will show how inaccurate the Athenians' accounts of their own tyrants really are, including of this particular incident; in fact, they do not know more than any other Greeks!

Peisistratus died an old man, in the position of tyrant. Then Hippias, his eldest son, inherited his power; not, as popular opinion suggests, Hipparchus. Harmodios was at his youthful prime, and Aristogeiton, a middle class man, became his lover. Hipparchus tried to gain Harmodios' affections, but they were not reciprocated, and Harmodios told Aristogeiton about it. Aristogeiton was, of course, horrified, and fearing that the powerful Hipparchus would resort to violence, immediately planned how to overthrow the tyranny. Hipparchus, meanwhile, tried again to seduce Harmodios, and again had no luck. Hipparchus decided thus not to do anything violent, but to start a clandestine smear campaign against Harmodios (the secrecy would stop his motive from being suspected).

The use of violence would have gone against the general character of the Peisistratids' rule, which was neither unpopular nor oppressive in the eyes of the people. In fact, there were never any tyrants who displayed greater virtue or ability than these men. Although they only taxed five percent of produce, they still improved and decorated the city and carried out successful military campaigns, and they also made regular sacrifice in the temples. The city was

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allowed to keep her ancient laws, but the Peisistratids were careful that one of their own was always in office. Amongst those who held the annual Athenian archonship was Peisistratus, son of the tyrant Hippias. He was named after his grandfather (Peisistratus), and dedicated the altar of the Twelve Gods in the agora during his archonship, as well as another altar in the temple of the Pythian Apollo. Later, the Athenians extended one side of the altar in the agora and obscured the inscription, but the one on the altar of the Pythian Apollo is still visible, although the letters are very worn now. It reads:

“Peisistratus son of Hippias dedicated this memorial of his archonship in the sacred bounds of the temple of the Pythian Apollo.”

6.55

Hippias was Peisistratus' eldest son, and I can confirm from the accurate information I have received that he was the one who held power. There is other evidence too: he was the only one of Peisistratus' legitimate sons who had children. This is proved by the aforementioned altar, and also by the column built in the Acropolis by the Athenians, to commemorate the oppression of the tyrants. For on that column, no son of Thessalus or Hipparchus is named, but five of Hippias' sons who were born to him by Myrrhine, daughter of Callias the son of Hyperechides. Now, the assumption is that the eldest son would be married first. What's more, his name can be found inscribed on the same column right after his father's; this again would suggest that he was the eldest son and succeeded him. I also believe that Hippias would have found it difficult to seize the tyranny if Hipparchus had been tyrant at the time of his death, and he had tried to step into his shoes. As it happened, because of the overwhelming constant dread which he had instilled in his citizens, and the strict control he kept of his guards, he kept control with flawless security and hardly any issue at all. Nor did he behave at all like the little brother who would have no clue how to take control because he had not had regular opportunities to command. Yet Hipparchus became famous because of his gory death, and as time went on people began remembering him (wrongly) as having been the tyrant.

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6.56

When Hipparchus was rejected by Harmodios, he carried out his plan to smear him. He had a younger sister, whom Hipparchus and his friends first invited to carry a sacred basket in a procession, then rejected her and claimed she was unworthy of the job and had never been invited in the first place. This made Harmodios very angry, and Aristogeiton even angrier because Harmodios was angry. They had already made their preparations with their supporters, but were awaiting the festival of the Great Panathenaia, when the citizens in the procession gather together in arms; if they had done this any other time, it would have looked suspicious. Harmodios and Aristogeiton were to initiate the attack, and the rest were to join in immediately by taking on the bodyguards. There were not many conspirators for reasons of secrecy, but they hoped that, however few launched the attack, those in the crowd who were armed would join in out of a desire to save their own freedom.

6.57

When the festival arrived, Hippias left the city and went to a place called the Kerameikos with his bodyguards, where he was in charge of organising the procession. Harmodios and Aristogeiton were ready with their daggers and preparing to strike, but were alarmed when they saw one of the conspirators talking to Hippias (who was easily accessible to anyone) in a friendly manner. They were convinced that they had been betrayed, and were about to be captured imminently. So, at this point, they decided first to exact their revenge on the man who had wronged them, and for whom they had put themselves in all this danger. So they rushed inside the gates, as they were, and found Hipparchus near what was known as the Leocoreum. There, they fell upon him in blind rage; one man with the rage of a wronged lover, and the other of a proud man stinging after an insult. They struck him down at once, and killed him. The crowd rushed together, so Aristogeiton was initially able to escape the guards, but was captured later and dealt with less than gently. Harmodios, meanwhile, died on the spot.

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6.58

News of this reached Hippias at the Kerameikos, and he went immediately not to the scene, but to the armed men who were about to march in the procession, who were suitably far away to be unaware of what had happened. He did nothing to give away the disaster which had just occurred, and ordered the men to leave their arms and proceed to a place of his choosing. They assumed he had something to tell them, and obeyed him. Then Hippias told his bodyguards to seize the arms, and immediately picked out those he believed to be guilty, and all of those who were found with daggers on their person, since it was customary to carry only a spear and a shield in the procession.

6.59

So goes the story of the conspiracy of Harmodios and Aristogeiton. It began with a lover's grievance, and concluded with a reckless act of daring caused by sudden fear. For the majority of people, the tyranny simply became more oppressive. Hippias, who was living in fear following his brother's murder, killed many citizens. He also began looking abroad, hoping to secure asylum somewhere in the event of a revolution. An Athenian himself, he married his daughter Archedicè to a member of the Lampsacene family: Aeantides, son of Hippocles the tyrant of Lampsacus. He did this because he had noticed how Hippocles' family had great influence over King Darius. She has a tomb at Lampsacus with the following inscription:

'This earth covers Archedicè, daughter of Hippias,
A man once great among the Hellenes of his day.
Her father, husband, brothers, and sons were all tyrants,
And yet her mind was in no way inflated by arrogance.'

Hippias ruled over the Athenians for three more years; in the fourth, he was deposed by the Spartans and the exiled Alcmaeonids. It was agreed that he would retire first to Sigeum, then to Aeantides at Lampsacus. From Aeantides, he went to Darius' court, and returned from there 20 years later, an old man accompanying the Persian expedition to Marathon.

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Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 18–19

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[1] Hipparchus and Hippias were in charge of affairs because of their standing and age. Hippias, who was the older and statesmanlike and prudent, was in charge of the reign. Hipparchus was childish, amorous and liked the arts. It was he who had invited the circle of Anacreon, Simonides and other poets to Athens. [2] Thessalus was much younger and bold and outrageous in his lifestyle, and he happened to be the root of all their troubles. When he fell in love with Harmodios, but could not gain his love, he could not contain his anger. He expressed this bitterly in other ways, but finally when Harmodios' sister was intending to be a basket-bearer at the Panathenaia, he prevented it. He also insulted Harmodios, saying that he was effeminate. So it turned out that Harmodios and Aristogeiton were encouraged to commit the crime, but there were also many collaborators. [3] They were lying in wait for Hippias on the Acropolis during the Panathenaia (for he happened to receive the procession, and Hipparchus sent it on its way). When they saw one of the conspirators talking with Hippias on good terms they thought that he was betraying them. They wanted to do something before their arrest, so they descended from the hill and, not waiting for the others, they killed Hipparchus as he was marshalling the procession by the Leocoreum. In this they ruined the whole plan. [4] Of them, Harmodios was killed immediately by Hipparchus' bodyguard, but Aristogeiton was killed later, after he had been caught and then tortured for a long time. Under duress he denounced many men, both those who were from leading families and who were friends of the tyrants. For it was not possible to discover any immediate clue to the conspiracy, but the story told that Hippias made those taking part in the procession stand apart from their weapons and discovered those carrying daggers is not true. This is because they did not process in those days under arms, but the people later established this

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practice. [5] Aristogeiton denounced the friends of the tyrants on purpose, or so democratic writers say, in order that the tyranny might be polluted and at the same time become weak as the innocent friends of the tyranny were killed. However some say that he did not make it up, but that those he denounced were conspirators. [6] And finally, when he had done everything he could, but could not achieve his death, he announced he would denounce many others, and he persuaded Hippias to give him his right hand as a sign of good faith. When he [Hippias] took it, he reviled Hippias because he had given his right hand to his brother's murderer. He enraged Hippias so much that he was unable to contain his anger, but drew his dagger and killed Aristogeiton.

19

[1] After these things, the tyranny was much harsher; Hippias took revenge for his brother's death, and for this reason he killed and exiled many men, and was suspicious and bitter towards everyone. [2] In about the fourth year after Hipparchus' death, as affairs in the city were not going at all well, he attempted to fortify Mounichia, in order to make a move there. He was in the middle of this when he was expelled by Cleomenes, the Spartan king; there had been many oracles given to the Spartans, always that they should end the tyranny. The cause of this was as follows. [3] The exiles, of whom the Alcmaeonids were the leaders, were not able themselves to bring about their restoration on their own, in spite of several attempts. For amongst other attempts they made when they were disappointed, they fortified Lipsydrium in the country beneath Mount Parnes. Some men from the city joined them there, but they were besieged and expelled by the tyrants. Later on from then, after this misfortune they always used to sing in their drinking-songs:

"Alas for treacherous Lipsydrium, what men you destroyed, men both good in battle and well-born, who showed what their lineage was."

[4] Therefore when they had failed in everything else, they were hired to build the temple at Delphi from which they had enough money to gain the help of the Spartans. When the Spartans consulted the oracle, the Pythian

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priestess always told them to free Athens. This went on until the Spartans were persuaded, despite the fact that the Peisistratids were guest-friends of theirs. The growing friendship of the Peisistratids towards Argos contributed no less a part to the decision of the Spartans. [5] Therefore first they sent Anchimolius by sea with an army, but he was defeated and killed because Cineas the Thessalian helped Hippias with a thousand cavalry. They next sent King Cleomenes by land with a larger force; he was victorious against the Thessalian cavalry who were preventing him from entering Attica. He shut Hippias up inside the so-called Pelasgic Wall² and with Athenian help besieged him. [6] While the place was being besieged he happened to capture the sons of the Peisistratids when they were being sent to safety. When they had been captured, the Peisistratids made an agreement for the safety of the children: in five days they removed their possessions and, in the archonship of Harpactides, handed over the Acropolis to the Athenians. They had held the tyranny for about 17 years from the death of their father; the total with those years when their father had reigned was 36 years³.

Herodotus 5.62–5.65

5.62

... Now I must go back further to the story which I started; the one about how the Athenians were liberated from their tyrants. The tyrant Hippias was becoming even nastier in his hatred of the Athenians because of Hipparchus' death. The Alcmaeonids, an Athenian family banished by the sons of Peisistratus, tried to force their way back in and free Athens, along with the rest of the exiled Athenians. They were unsuccessful, and indeed were pushed back a long way. Having fortified Lipsydrium, north of Paeonia⁴, and eager to use any means they could against the sons of Peisistratus, they offered their services to the

² wall supposedly built by the Pelasgians on the Acropolis of Athens

³ Again, we have accepted Rhodes' suggested emendation to the Greek which reads 49

⁴ Lipsydrium is a fort on the spur of Mount Parnes, north of the *deme* Paeonidae, not Paeonia as Herodotus states

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Amphictyons in building the temple of Delphi, which stands now, but did not back then. They were wealthy and well-renowned, just like their fathers, so they made the temple more beautiful than the plans: particularly the front of the temple, which they made out of Parian marble instead of the limestone they had agreed.

5.63

The Athenians say that these men set themselves up at Delphi, and bribed the Pythia to tell any Spartans who came to ask her advice on any matter, public or private, to set Athens free. Then the Spartans, as a result of the constant repetition of the same command, sent the well-respected Anchimolius, son of Aster, to drive out the sons of Peisistratus with military force. Even though they were close friends of Sparta, the will of the god weighed down upon them more heavily than the will of mankind. They sent these men over by sea. Anchimolius docked at Phaleron, and his army disembarked there. The Peisistratids, however, had already received intelligence on this plan, and asked for aid from the Thessalians, their allies. The Thessalians joined them at their request, and sent their own King Cineas of Condia with a troop of cavalry a thousand strong. When the Peisistratids had assembled this allied force, they made this plan: first they ravaged the plain of Phaleron, so the land could be ridden over, and set their cavalry against the enemy's army. The cavalry charged, killing Anchimolius and many other Spartans, and routed the survivors back to their ships. The first Spartan army thus drew off. Anchimolius' tomb is at Alopece in Attica, near to the Heracleum in Cynosarges.

5.64

After this, the Spartans sent a bigger army to attack Athens, and made Cleomenes, son of Anaxandridas, its general. This army was sent by land, not sea. When they burst into Attica, the Thessalian horsemen encountered them first, who were routed after a brief fight which killed more than 40 men. The survivors escaped for Thessaly down the shortest road they could find. Then,

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when Cleomenes and the freedom-seeking Athenians entered the city, he drove the tyrants' family into the confines of the Acropolis and laid siege to them.

5.65

The Spartans would never have taken the Peisistratids' stronghold; firstly, they had no intention to blockade it, and secondly, they had plenty of provisions. The Spartans only would have besieged it for a few days before going home. As it happens, there was a turn of fortune which was good for one side and bad for the other, for the sons of the Peisistratids were captured as they were being conveyed secretly out of the country. This confounded all their plans, and they decided to leave Attica within five days on the Athenians' terms, provided that their children were released. Then they left for Sigeum on the River Scamander. They had ruled Athens for 36 years. The family were the descendants of Pylos and Neleus, born from the same family tree as the families of Codrus and Melanthus, who once upon a time had come from abroad to rule Athens. For this reason, Hippocrates named his son "Peisistratus" in memory of the son of Nestor. This is how the Athenians disposed of their tyrants. ...

Herodotus 6.121, 6.123

6.121

It is clear that they [the Alcmeonids] hated the tyrants at least as much as Callias, the son of Phaenippus and father of Hipponicus, did. Callias was the only Athenian brave enough to buy Peisistratus' things when they were advertised for sale following his exile from Athens, and on top of that, he planned a number of other nasty, hateful deeds against the man.

6.123

... They [the Alcmeonids] shunned the tyrants consistently, and it was their doing that the sons of Peisistratus had been deposed from their tyranny.

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Therefore, in my opinion, they did far more to free Athens than Harmodios and Aristogeiton. Those men only vexed Peisistratus' remaining sons by killing Hipparchus, and made no effort to end the rest of the tyrannies; the Alcmeonids clearly freed their country, if it is true that they persuaded the Pythia to show the Spartans that they should free Athens (as I have detailed previously).

Notes

Tyranny and Samos: key places



Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.13

As the power of Hellas grew, and its acquisition of wealth grew faster and faster, the incomes of the Greek cities increased, and most of them saw tyrannies established. Until this point, they had been ruled by kings with clearly defined rights. The Hellenes also began to build fleets, and pay more attention to their understanding of the sea. It is said that the Corinthians were the first to produce a ship that resembles the current style, and also that the oldest Hellenic triremes were built there. It seems that a Corinthian ship builder called Ameinocles built four ships for the Samians, when he went to Samos approximately 300 years before the end of the Peloponnesian War. The earliest naval battle recorded was between the Corinthians and the Corcyraeans, which took place around 40 years after this.

Corinth, positioned as it was upon an isthmus, was, of course, an important location for business from the very beginning. For the old Hellenes both in and out of the Peloponnese, many years ago when they mainly communicated via land, had to cross Corinthian territory to reach each other. Corinth was also powerful due to her wealth; as confirmed by the ancient poets, who dubbed her "Corinth the rich". When sea-navigation became more widespread, the Corinthians, who already had a fleet, were able to take down pirates. As they could do business on both land and sea, the wealth and therefore the power of their city kept growing. Sometime later, during the era of Cyrus, the first king of Persia, and his son Cambyses, the Ionians became a great naval power. They did battle with Cyrus, and for some time controlled the sea around their home coasts. Polycrates, a tyrant of Samos during Cambyses' reign, also had a strong navy, which he used to capture several of the islands. This included Rhenea, which he subsequently dedicated to the Delian Apollo. ...

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Herodotus 3.39

Whilst Cambyses was waging war against Egypt, the Spartans were making war too; against Samos, and Polycrates, son of Aeaces, who had seized power in the island. First, he [Polycrates] divided the city into three parts, and gave a share in its governance to his brothers, Pantagnotus and Syloson. After a short while, however, he had Pantagnotus killed, and banished Syloson, the younger brother; thus, he made himself the ruler of all Samos. Subsequently, he drew up a treaty with Amasis, the King of Egypt, and there was an exchange of gifts between the two. Shortly after this, Polycrates' power and reputation grew so much that he was famous in Ionia and all across the Greek territories, because all of his military campaigns were successful. He had 150 triremes and 1,000 archers, and he plundered everywhere indiscriminately. He said that if he took something from a friend, he would receive more thanks for returning it than if he had not taken it in the first place. He captured a great many of the islands, and several mainland cities as well. He conquered the Lesbians (amongst others), who had brought their entire force to support the Milesians. Polycrates defeated them in a sea battle, and when they had become his captives, it was them who dug the trench which surrounds the Samian acropolis.

Herodotus 3.120**3.120**

... As they compared their various achievements, Mitrobates said to him: "You should not be considered a real man – your province is so close to the island of Samos, but you have not claimed it for the king's empire. And Samos is so easy to conquer, some local bloke is currently in charge of it after leading a revolt with fifteen hoplites." Some claim that Oroetes was angered by this jibe, and wanted not to punish its source so much as annihilate Polycrates, who gave the insult its context.

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Herodotus 3.44–3.60

3.44

Now, the Spartans waged war against the ever-fortunate unconquered Polycrates. They were invited to do so by the Samians, who later founded Cydonia on Crete. Cambyses, son of Cyrus, raised an army against Egypt. Polycrates, unknown to his people, had sent a herald to Cambyses and invited him to send a request to Samos for troops. When Cambyses received this message he was keen on utilising the Samians, and asked Polycrates to support him against the Egyptians with a fleet. Polycrates picked out all the men he considered the most likely to plan a revolt, put them in 40 triremes, and sent them to Cambyses with the instruction not to send them back.

3.45

Some say that these Samians never actually reached Egypt, and that when they had sailed as far as Carpathus they made a collective decision not to go any further. Others say that they did reach Egypt, where they escaped from the guard which had been assigned to them. As they made the return voyage to Samos, however, they were engaged in a naval battle with Polycrates' ships, in which they were victorious and landed on the island. There, however, they were defeated in a land battle, so sailed on again to Sparta.

There are some people who say that these Samians defeated Polycrates, but I do not believe this is true, for they would not have needed the Spartans' intervention if they had been able to overcome Polycrates alone. Indeed, it is rather unreasonable to believe that a man like him, with a huge army of mercenaries and bowmen of his own, could have been beaten by a small band of men like the exiled Samians. Polycrates took the wives and children of his subjects and held them in the boathouses, intending to burn the lot if their fathers and husbands decided to desert and side with the exiled Samians.

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3.46

When the Samian exiles arrived in Sparta, they stood before the kings and made a long speech to demonstrate the extent of their needs and the seriousness of their situation. The Spartans, however, announced on their first sitting that they had forgotten the speech's beginning and had failed to understand its end. For their second attempt, the Samians arrived with a sack and said only "The sack needs flour." The Spartans' reply was that they had perhaps been long-winded with "the sack", but agreed to help them.

3.47

Then the Spartans assembled an army and sent it to Samos; as the Samians would say, "returning a favour", since they had sent a fleet before to aid Sparta in the war against the Messenians. The Spartans, however, say that they did not send this force to help the exiled Samians, so much as to satisfy their need to avenge the theft of two items: a bowl which they were in the process of delivering to Croesus, and the breastplate which Amasis, King of Egypt, had given to them as a gift. The breastplate had been stolen by the Samians the year before they took the bowl; it was made of linen and decorated extravagantly with embroidered animals in gold and cotton. What made the breastplate so wondrous, however, is that each of its fine threads was made of 360 separate strands. It is an exact copy of the one dedicated by Amasis to Athena at Lindus.

3.48

The Corinthians were also keen to aid the expedition against Samos, because of a crime committed against them by the Samians a generation before the expedition, around the same time the bowl had been taken. Periander, son of Cypselus, sent 300 boys to Alyattes at Sardis, all of them sons of renowned men from Corcyra to be made into eunuchs. The Corinthians who were bringing these boys docked at Samos. When the Samians heard why they had come, they first ordered the boys to take sanctuary in the temple of Artemis, before refusing to allow them to be dragged from the temple. When the Corinthians

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tried to starve out the boys, the Samians held a festival whose celebrations remain the same today; for the duration of the boys' asylum, they threw dances every night for young men and women, to which it was a custom to bring sesame and honey cakes. As a result, the Corcyraean boys could snatch them up and eat them. They kept this up until the Corinthian guards got tired of it and left, and then the Samians returned the boys to Corcyra.

3.49

If the Corinthians had been friendly towards Corcyra after Periander died, they would not have taken part in the expedition against Samos. Ever since they colonised the island, however, they had been at odds, despite their kinship. This was why the Corinthians bore a grudge against the Samians. Periander had picked out the noble Corcyraean boys and sent them to Sardis in order for them to be made eunuchs as revenge, because the Corcyraeans had started the mutual dislike by committing a crime against him.

3.50

Periander, after killing his wife Melissa, had a stroke of misfortune to add to all the others he had suffered. He had two sons, aged 17 and 18, with Melissa. Their maternal grandfather, Procles, King of Epidaurus, sent for them to visit him and treated them lovingly (naturally, of course, as they were his daughter's children). As they were leaving, he said to them: "Boys, do you know who killed your mother?" The elder son paid no attention, but Lycophron, the younger one, was absolutely horrified. He would not speak to his father, his mother's murderer, when he returned to Corinth; would not answer him when addressed, nor reply to his questions. Eventually, Periander grew so angry with him that he banished the boy from his home.

3.51

Having sent the younger one away, he asked the elder son what their grandfather had said. He told his father that Procles had been very kind, but did not repeat his parting words because he had not been paying attention.

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Periander said that Procles must have dropped some sort of hint, so pressed him continuously until the boy eventually remembered and told him. Periander understood, and did not want to appear weak, so sent a message to those who were living with his younger son and banned them from keeping him in their house. So each time the boy was driven out and headed to another house, he would be banished from there also. Periander had threatened everyone who received him and ordered them to send him away. So, having been driven out again, he went to some other friends' house, and, although he was Periander's son and they were frightened of the consequences, took him in anyway.

3.52

Eventually, Periander proclaimed that whoever sheltered the boy, or even spoke to him, would owe a fine to Apollo of an amount specified by him. As a result, nobody wanted to speak to the boy, or let him into their house, and even Lycophron himself did not consider it right to attempt what had been forbidden; accepting his father's proclamation, he slept outside. Four days later Periander saw him, starving and dirty, and took pity on him. His anger lessened, and he approached him and said: "My boy, which would you prefer? To live life as you are now, or be good to your father and inherit my power and all my property? Although you are my son, a rich Corinthian prince, you prefer a beggar's lifestyle, an angry opponent of me, the one to whom you should be least opposed. If something has made you suspicious of me, then that is my misfortune and I must bear it, since I am its cause. But consider how much better it is to be envied than pitied, and how poor it is to be angry with your parents and superiors; consider these things, and come home." So Periander tried to move his son, but he still refused to say anything to his father other than to tell him that he owed Apollo a fine for speaking to him. When Periander saw exactly how unmoveable his son was in his stubbornness, he sent him far from his sight in a ship to Corcyra, which he also controlled. When he had sent him away, he launched an offensive against his father-in-law Procles, because he was most responsible for his current predicament. He captured Epidaurus and held Procles prisoner.

Notes

3.53

Time marched on, and when Periander had grown well into old age and realised that he was unable to conduct all of his affairs any longer, he sent to Corcyra to invite Lycophron to take over the tyranny. He had no hope for his elder son, who he did not consider especially bright. Lycophron made no reply to the invitation. Periander continued to put pressure on the young man, and instead contacted him in the next best way, via his daughter, Lycophron's sister. He thought he might listen to her. She came to him and said: "Young man, would you want the power to be passed to others, and our father's fortune to be destroyed, rather than come back and have it for yourself? Stop beating yourself up and come home. Pride is a nasty possession; evil cannot be cured with evil. Plenty of people prioritise a more attractive thing before a fair one, and many have lost their father's business by pursuing their mother's. A tyranny is a slippery thing, wanted by many. Our father is old now and cannot manage it any more: do not give up what is yours to others." So she spoke and passed on their father's arguments.

Lycophron replied that he would never return to Corinth as long as he knew his father was still alive. When she relayed this response, Periander sent a third messenger, via whom he proposed a swap: he would go to Corcyra, and Lycophron should return to Corinth and take power. His son agreed to this, and the two men prepared to exchange their places. When the Corcyraeans, however, learned of all this, they killed the young man so Periander would not come to their country; it is for this reason that Periander wanted revenge on Corcyra.

3.54

Then the Spartans came with a huge army and besieged Samos. They marched to the wall and infiltrated the seaside tower on the outskirts of the city, but there Polycrates himself launched a violent counter-attack which drove them out again. The mercenaries and a large number of Samians rushed out near the high

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tower on the ridge of the hill, and held back the Spartan advance for a short time, before fleeing, with the Spartans in hot and destructive pursuit.

3.55

If all the Spartans there that day had been like Archias and Lycopas, Samos would have been captured. Unsupported these two men entered the citadel alongside the fleeing Samians, were trapped, and killed within the city. I myself have met Archias son of Samius, the grandson of this Archias, in his hometown, Pitana. He honoured the Samians above any other guests, and explained that his father had been given the name Samius because he was the son of the Archias who had been killed during his brave fight at Samos. He also said that he honoured the Samians because they had granted his grandfather a state funeral.

3.56

When the Spartans had unsuccessfully besieged Samos for 40 days, they returned to the Peloponnese. There is a silly story from abroad that Polycrates bribed them to leave by presenting them with a huge quantity of specially-minted gilded lead coins as a native currency. This was the first expedition to Asia conducted by the Dorians from Lacedaemonia.

3.57

When the Spartans were about to abandon them, the Samians who had launched an offensive against Polycrates sailed off too, to Siphnos. They needed money, and at this time the Siphnians were the richest of all the islanders because of their native gold and silver mines. They were so wealthy that their dedications at Delphi, which is as rich as any there, comprised one tenth of their income. They divided the remainder of each year's yield amongst themselves. At this point, whilst assembling their offering in Delphi, they asked the oracle if their current wealth was likely to last long. This was the priestess' reply:

"When the town hall of Siphnos turns white
And the market goes white-browed, then it needs a clever man indeed.
Beware a wooden attack, and a red herald."

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Notably, at this time the agora and town hall of Siphnos were decorated with Parian marble.

3.58

They were completely unable to understand the oracle, both when it was spoken and when the Samians arrived. As soon as the Samians docked at Siphnos, they sent ambassadors to the city in one of their ships. In the old days, all ships were painted with vermillion, which is a red colour. This is what the priestess' warning of "a wooden attack and a red herald" meant. The embassy demanded a loan of ten talents from the Siphnians, and when they refused, the Samians began laying waste to the land. When the Siphnians learnt of this they rushed out immediately to drive them off, but were defeated, and many were cut off from the town by the Samians, who managed to take 100 talents from them.

3.59

Then the Samians captured the island of Hydrea near the Peloponnese from the men of Hermione and put it under the care of the men of Troezen. They themselves settled at Cydonia on Crete, although they had set out on their voyage intending to drive the Zacynthians from the island, rather than settle on Crete. They lived well there for five years; the temples which now stand at Cydonia and the shrine of Dictynna are all Samian-built. In the sixth year, however, the Aeginetans came with the Cretans, defeated the Samians in a naval battle, and enslaved them all. They also cut off the ships' boar-head-shaped prows and dedicated them to the temple of Athena in Aegina. The Aeginetans were acting on a grudge they had against the Samians, as in the old days when Amphicrates was their king, they had engaged in naval combat and suffered mutual losses.

3.60

I have written so much about the Samians, because they were the engineers of the three greatest Greek works of all time. The first of these is a tunnel with

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a mouth at each end, dug through the base of a hill 900 feet in height. The whole thing is 4,200 feet long, and eight feet high and wide. Throughout the tunnel there is a channel 30 feet deep and three feet wide, which conveys water from an active spring through pipes to the city of Samos. Eupalinus son of Naustrophus, a Megarian, designed this feat of engineering, and it is one of three remarkable works. The second is an ocean breakwater surrounding the harbour, with foundations 120 feet deep, and over 1,200 feet long. The third Samian accomplishment is the temple; the greatest of all temples we know. Its first builder was a Samian named Rhoecus, son of Philes. On account of these, I have given special attention to the story of Samos.

Notes

Temple of Hera, Samos



Herodotus 3.120–3.125

3.120

The following happened during Cambyses' illness. Firstly, the governor of Sardis, who had been appointed by Cyrus, was a Persian called Oroetes. Oroetes had wicked ambition. He had never been injured or insulted by Polycrates of Samos, and indeed, had never even laid eyes on him, yet still he wished to capture and kill him. Most people say this is why: as Oroetes sat at the king's doors alongside Mitrobates, another Persian who governed the Dascyleian province, their chatter turned to argument. As they compared their various achievements, Mitrobates said to him: "You should not be considered a real man – your province is so close to the island of Samos, but you have not claimed it for the king's empire. And Samos is so easy to conquer, some local bloke is currently in charge of it after leading a revolt with fifteen hoplites." Some claim that Oroetes was angered by this jibe, and wanted not to punish its source so much as annihilate Polycrates, who gave the insult its context.

3.121

A handful do say, however, that when Oroetes sent a messenger to Samos with some unspecified request, that messenger found Polycrates lying in the men's quarters with Anacreon of Teos. Whether or not he did so out of contempt for Oroetes, Polycrates lay with his face to the wall and would not turn or answer the messenger when he spoke.

3.122

These are the two alleged causes of Polycrates' death; you may choose which to believe. Either way, the consequence was that Oroetes, who was at that time at Magnesia above the River Maeander, learned of Polycrates' plans and sent the Lydian Myrsus, son of Gyges, to Samos with a message. Polycrates was the first Greek in memory to aim for naval dominance, Minos of Cnossus and any rulers of the sea before him excluded. Polycrates was the first of the modern human

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race, and had high hopes of controlling Ionia and the islands. So, Oroetes learnt of these intentions and sent him the following: "Oroetes addresses Polycrates thus: I understand that you are aiming for great things, but do not have enough money to achieve your goals. So: do what I say, and you will both succeed in your own plans, and save me. I have clear intelligence that King Cambyses wants me dead. Now, if you will transport me and my money, you may take a percentage of it for yourself; enough wealth to rule all Greece. If you do not believe me regarding my wealth, send one of your most trusted men and I will prove it to him."

3.123

Polycrates was delighted upon hearing this, and willing to comply, for he desperately wanted money. First he sent Maeandrius, son of Maeandrius, one of his townsmen, to see if Oroetes' claim was true. He was his scribe, and not long after this, dedicated all the glorious furnishings of Polycrates' men's quarters to the Temple of Hera. When Oroetes heard that he should await an inspection, he filled eight chests with stones, and left a small space at the top where he laid a layer of gold on top. He locked the chests and kept them ready. Maeandrius came, saw them, and reported back to his master.

3.124

Then Polycrates readied himself to visit Oroetes, against the advice of his diviners, friends, and a vision which came to his daughter in a dream. In her dream, she saw her father up in the air being washed by Zeus and anointed by Helios. Afterwards, she tried to convince him by any means at all not to make the journey to Oroetes, and as he embarked upon his fifty-oared ship, she prophesied disaster for him. When Polycrates threatened her with a long period unwed if he returned safe, she responded with a prayer asking for his threat to be fulfilled: she said she would rather remain unmarried than lose her father.

3.125

Polycrates, however, took no heed of any advice. He sailed to meet with

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Oroetes with a huge throng of followers, among whom was Democedes, son of Calliphon. He was from Croton⁵, and the most talented physician of his era. As soon as Polycrates reached Magnesia, however, he was murdered brutally, in a manner completely unworthy of him and his agenda. Apart from the kings of Syracuse, no king of any Greek race could be compared with Polycrates' magnificence. Oroetes killed him in an unspeakable way, and then crucified him. He let the Samians who had accompanied him go, and told them to thank him for their freedom. He kept the non-Samians and servants of Polycrates' followers as slaves. The image of Polycrates hanging overhead matched his daughter's dream exactly: he was washed by Zeus in the rain, and anointed by Helios as his body sweated.

Herodotus 3.139–3.147

3.139

Then King Darius conquered Samos, the greatest of all Greek or barbarian city-states. He made this conquest because when Cambyses, son of Cyrus, invaded Egypt, a large number of Greeks came with the army. Many of them were there to trade, as is to be expected, and others came to see the country itself. One such sightseer was Syloson, son of Aeaces, Polycrates' brother who had been exiled from Samos. He had a particular stroke of good luck: he was in the market at Memphis wearing a red cloak when he was seen by a man named Darius, an as yet unknown and unimportant guard of Cambyses. He wanted Syloson's cloak, and tried to buy it from him. When Syloson saw how keen Darius was, he said, on a whim: "I will not ask for any money for this; I will give it to you for free if you are so desperate for it." Darius was delighted, and accepted the cloak.

3.140

Syloson thought it was merely silly good nature which had lost him his cloak. But eventually, Cambyses died, the seven rebelled against the Magus, and out

⁵ an Achaean colony on the foot of Italy

Notes

of that seven it was Darius who became king. It was then that Syloson learnt that he had given away the cloak in Egypt to the new king. He travelled to Susa and sat in the entrance to the royal palace, claiming to be one of Darius' benefactors. When the guard told the king what he was doing, Darius asked "Which Greek benefactor should I thank? In the short time I have been king, scarcely any Greeks at all have come to visit us, and I must say, I have no want or use for a Greek. Still, bring him in, so I may know why he is here." Syloson was ushered in by the guards. He stood there whilst the interpreters asked him who he was, what he had done, and why he was calling himself the king's benefactor. Syloson told his story about the cloak, and identified himself as the giver. "You are a most generous man," said Darius, "you who gave me a gift when I had no power. Even though it was very small, I was no less grateful than I am now when I receive a big present. I shall give you huge heaps of gold and silver in return, so you may never regret the kind thing you did for Darius, son of Hystaspes." Syloson replied: "Do not give me gold or silver, o king; give me Samos, my country. Our slave has it in his power now that Oroetes has killed my brother, Polycrates. Please give me this without death or slavery."

3.141

When Darius heard this, he assembled an army and sent Otanes, one of the seven, to lead it. Darius gave him instruction to do whatever Syloson wanted. And so, Otanes travelled down to the coast to ready his army.

3.142

Samos was ruled by Maeandrius, son of Maeandrius, who had been delegated the task by Polycrates. His wish was to be the most just of all men, but that was completely impossible. When he learnt of Polycrates' death, he first of all set up an altar to Zeus the Liberator, and marked a sacred enclosure around it which can still be viewed in one of the city suburbs. Having done this, he called all the citizens to an assembly and said: "As you know, the sceptre of Polycrates and all of his power has fallen to me. Now it is in my power to rule you. But I myself shall not do anything which I would disapprove of another man doing, as far

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as I am able. I never liked how Polycrates or any other man would lord it over men who were just like him. Well, Polycrates has fulfilled his destiny, and now I proclaim equality as I invite you to take a share in what was his power. The only things which I will claim for my own use is six talents of Polycrates' fortune, and that my descendants and I will hold the priesthood of Zeus the Liberator: I have founded his temple, and now I give you all freedom." So Maeandrius made his promise to the Samians. One of them, however, stood and rebuked him: "You are not even worthy of ruling us, you low-born rat! You'd better tell us exactly how you have spent the money you've claimed."

3.143

This was spoken by Telesarchus, a well-respected man amongst the citizens. But Maeandrius realised that if he let go of power, someone else would claim it instead, so he decided not to let go of it. He withdrew into the acropolis, and sent for each man individually, as if he were about to give an account of the money. Then he seized and bound them, so they were held as his prisoners. After this, Maeandrius became ill. His brother Lycaretus thought he was very likely to die, and put all the prisoners to their deaths so he would be able to seize power more easily. The people of Samos had no apparent desire for freedom, **3.144** so, when the Persians returned Syloson to Samos, nobody so much as raised a hand against them. Instead, Maeandrius and his supporters offered to leave the island as part of a truce. Otanes agreed to this, and after the treaty had been made, the highest-ranking Persians sat in seats facing the acropolis.

3.145

Maeandrius had a mad brother called Charilaus, who was being held in chains in a dungeon for some crime or another. He heard what was going on, and peered out of the dungeon window to see the Persians sitting there in peace. Seeing this, he gave a loud shout asking to speak to Maeandrius, who heard his brother, and had him unbound and brought to him. As soon as Charilaus arrived in Maeandrius' presence, he began trying with heckles and insults to persuade Maeandrius to attack the Persians. He said: "Although I am your brother, you

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coward, and did nothing to warrant my imprisonment, you have bound and imprisoned me. But when you see the Persians taking over your home and your city, you aren't brave enough to take them on, even though you could beat them easily? If you personally are scared of them, give your soldiers to me and I will punish them for coming here; then I will give you a safe passage from this island."

3.146

This was what Charilaus said, and Maeandrius took his advice. I think not because he was silly enough to think he would be strong enough to beat the Persians, but because he did not want Syloson's recovery of Samos to be straightforward and hassle-free. He wanted to weaken the island as much as possible before he surrendered it by provoking the Persians. He well understood that they would be very angry with the Samians if they were hurt in any way. He also knew that he could leave the island safely whenever he wanted, as he had built a secret passage from the acropolis to the sea. So, Maeandrius sailed from Samos, but Charilaus armed all the mercenaries, threw open the gates of the acropolis, and attacked the Persians. They were taken by surprise, believing that a full agreement had been made as part of the treaty. The mercenaries attacked them and killed the very noblest of Persians, the ones who were carried in litters. As they were doing this, the rest of the Persian force appeared to reinforce their men, and the mercenaries were eventually forced to retreat into the acropolis.

3.147

When the Persian general Otanes saw how many Persians were dead, he deliberately forgot Darius' instructions not to kill or enslave any of the Samians, and to give the island safe and sound to Syloson. Instead, he ordered his army to kill everyone they took, both man and child. Whilst a number of Persians besieged the acropolis, the rest killed all they encountered, in and out of the temples.

Notes

Athens as a democracy: key places



Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 20–22

20

[1] When the tyranny had been overthrown, Isagoras the son of Tisander, a friend of the tyrants, and Cleisthenes from the Alcmaeonid family were in conflict with each other. When Cleisthenes was coming off worse because of the influence of political clubs, he turned to the people, promising to give the masses political rights. [2] So Isagoras, being left behind in the power-struggle, called back Cleomenes as he had guest-friendship ties with him. He persuaded him to 'drive out the curse', because the Alcmaeonids seemed to be among those cursed. [3] When Cleisthenes withdrew, Cleomenes arrived with a few men and drove out 700 Athenian households. Having achieved this, he tried to dissolve the *boule* (council) and to install Isagoras along with 300 of his friends as rulers of the city. When the *boule* (council) stood up to this and the people gathered together, those around Cleomenes and Isagoras fled to the Acropolis. The people laid siege to them for two days and blockaded them, and on the third day let Cleomenes go along with all those with him under a truce; they also recalled Cleisthenes and the other exiles. [4] The people gained control and Cleisthenes was leader and protector of the people. The Alcmaeonids were perhaps those most responsible for the overthrow of the tyrants and had maintained their opposition to them for a long time. [5] Still earlier, Cedon of the Alcmaeonids attacked the tyrants, because of which he too was sung about in drinking-songs:

'Fill the cup also for Cedon, servant, and don't forget him,
If it is necessary to pour wine for good men.'

21

[1] So for these reasons the people trusted Cleisthenes. Then being made leader of the masses, in the fourth year after the downfall of the tyrants, [2] when Isagoras was archon, he first divided all the people into ten tribes in place of

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the earlier four; he wanted to mix them up so that more would share in political power; from here comes the saying not to 'judge by tribes' repeated to those wishing to examine someone's family. [3] Then he set up the *boule* (council) as 500 instead of 400, 50 from each tribe – at that time there were 100 from each of four tribes. He did not divide the Athenians into twelve tribes to avoid allocating them according to the already existing thirds. There were twelve thirds in the four old tribes, so if he had used them, he would not have succeeded in mixing up the people. [4] He divided the country by *demes* into thirty parts, ten of those in and around the city, ten on the coast and ten inland, and these were called *trittyes*. He allocated three of these to each tribe, so that each had a share in each region. He made those living in each *deme* demesmen of each other, so that they did not greet each other with their fathers' names and so reveal who were the new citizens, but they did so by the name of their *demes*. This is why even now the Athenians call themselves after their *demes*. [5] He also established *demarchs*, having the same duties as the former *naukraroi*. So he made the *demes* in place of the *naukraroi*. He called some of the *demes* after their regions, others after their founders; for the founders did not all exist in their regions. [6] He allowed the clans, brotherhoods and priesthoods each to keep their existing traditions. He established eponymous founding heroes for the tribes; the Delphic priestess chose the ten from a prescribed list of 100.

22

[1] When these things had been done the constitution was far more democratic than Solon's. For it happened that the tyranny had suppressed Solon's laws since they were not in use. Also Cleisthenes set up others when he was after the support of the people; amongst these he also established the law concerning ostracism. [2] First then in the eighth⁶ year after the overthrow of the tyrants, when Hermocreon was archon, they created for the *boule* (council) of 500 the oath they still swear even now. Then they chose the generals by tribes, one from each tribe, but the leader of whole army was the *polemarch*. ...

⁶ Again we have followed Rhodes here, who follows Kenyon's suggestion of 'eighth' for 'fifth' in the Greek

Notes

Herodotus 5.65–5.78

5.65

... Now, I will recount all the impressive things which they did or endured after they were freed, before Ionia revolted against Darius, and Aristagoras of Miletus asked for the aid of Athens.

5.66

Athens, a once great city, became even greater with her tyrants gone. The two main power holders were Cleisthenes, of the Alcmaeonid family, who allegedly once bribed the Pythia, and Isagoras son of Tisandrus, who had impressive lineage though I could not describe it to you, other than that his family make sacrifices to Zeus of Caria. These men and their supporters ended up in contention for power. Cleisthenes was doing worse in the dispute, and absorbed the common people into his party. Shortly afterwards, he divided the Athenians into ten tribes rather than the previous four. He did not name them after the sons of Ion – Geleon, Aegicores, Argades, and Hoples – but instead gave them names taken from other heroes, all native to Athens except for Ajax. He added Ajax because he was a neighbour and an ally, even if he was a foreigner.

5.67

By doing this, I believe that Cleisthenes' was imitating his mother's father, Cleisthenes, tyrant of Sicyon. For Cleisthenes, having waged war against the Argives, ended bard competitions at Sicyon because the Homeric poems were full of praise for Argos and the Argives. Then he developed the desire to exile Adrastus son of Talau, a hero whose shrine stood then (and still stands now) in the very marketplace of Sicyon, because he was an Argive. He went to Delphi and asked the oracle if he should carry out this wish, but the priestess replied: "Adrastus is king of Sicyon, and you are nothing but a stone-thrower." When the god would not allow him to do what he wanted, he went home and tried to make another plan which would get rid of Adrastus. When he

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thought he had one, he sent to Thebes saying that he would be happy to welcome Melanippus, son of Astacus, into Sicyon. The Thebans handed him over. When Cleisthenes had brought him in, he consecrated a sanctuary for him in the government house itself, which he gave the highest security. I must say why Cleisthenes brought Melanippus in: he was Adrastus' worst enemy, since Adrastus had killed his brother, Mecisteus, and his son-in-law Tydeus. When he had selected the area for him, Cleisthenes took away all Adrastus' sacrifices and festivals and gave them to Melanippus. The Sicyonians were used to honouring Adrastus because the land used to belong to his maternal grandfather Polybus; he had died heirless and had left Adrastus the kingdom. Other honours aside, the Sicyonians also celebrated his terrible fate with tragic choruses in his own honour, rather than Dionysus'. But Cleisthenes gave the choruses back to Dionysus, and the rest of the honours to Melanippus.

5.68

So this is what he did about Adrastus. As for the Dorian tribes, he changed their names so they would not be shared by Sicyonians and Argives. He made the Sicyonians look particularly stupid by giving their tribes names based on the words for "donkey" and "pig", only changing the endings. He did not change the name of his own tribe like this, and gave it a name to represent his own rule: the "Archelaoi", "rulers of the people". The rest were "Swinites", "Assites", and "Porkites"; the Sicyonians used these names under Cleisthenes' rule, and for 60 years or more after he died. After this, however, they decided to change the three tribes' names to the Hylleis, Pamphyli, and Dymanatae, and added a fourth which they called Aegialeis, after Aegialeus, son of Adrastus.

5.69

This is what Sicyonian Cleisthenes did, whereas the Athenian Cleisthenes, following in the footsteps of his grandfather and namesake, decided out of (I think) contempt for the Ionians that his tribes should not be the same as theirs. When he had absorbed the Athenian people, which was banned from all rights

Notes

at that time, into his own party, he increased the number of their tribes and gave them new names. He appointed ten tribe-leaders (*phylarchs*) instead of four, and assigned ten districts (*demes*) to each tribe.¹ By the time he had won over the people, he was far stronger than his rival.

5.70

Isagoras, who was losing badly to Cleisthenes, drew up a counter plot, and asked for the help of Cleomenes, who had been his friend since the siege on the Peisistratids. It is even said that Cleomenes regularly visited Isagoras' wife. Cleomenes firstly sent a messenger to Athens calling for the banishment of Cleisthenes and many other Athenians besides; he called them the "Accursed". He sent this in his message by Isagoras' instruction; the Alcmaeonids and their supporters were accused of that dreadful deed, whilst Isagoras and his friends had no part in it.

5.71

Now I will explain how the Athenian "Accursed" got their name. There was an Athenian called Cylon, who was a former Olympic victor. He acted like he was aiming to become tyrant of Athens, and having assembled a company of his friends, attempted to capture the Acropolis. When this attempt was unsuccessful, he sought shelter by the statue of the goddess [Athena]. They were removed from their position by the presidents of the naval boards, the Athenian rulers of the time. They were then killed, even though they were eligible for any punishment except death, and their deaths were blamed on the Alcmaeonids. All of this took place before Peisistratus' time.

5.72

When Cleomenes had sent out his demands for the exile of Cleisthenes and the Accursed, Cleisthenes himself departed in secret. After this, Cleomenes appeared in Athens with a modest force. When he arrived, he banished 700 Athenian families picked out for him by Isagoras, in order to break the curse. Having done this, next he tried to dissolve the Council, handing over

¹ Herodotus wrongly states that there were 10 *demes* in every tribe. Since *demes* could vary greatly in size, they were arranged so that each tribe had roughly an equal population.

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government offices to Isagoras and his supporters. But the Council resisted, so Cleomenes and Isagoras seized the Acropolis with their supporters. The rest of the Athenians pulled together and besieged them for two days. On the third, all the Spartans left the country under a truce. The prophetic voice which Cleomenes had heard was fulfilled, for when he climbed to the Acropolis with no intention of capturing it, he approached the shrine to address himself to the goddess. The priestess stood up from her seat, and before he had crossed the threshold, said: "Turn back, Spartan stranger, and do not enter this holy place. It is unlawful for a Dorian to come here." He replied: "Madam, I am not a Dorian, but an Achaean." And, ignoring the omen, he tried to do what he wanted; as I have said, he was then driven out together with his Spartans. The Athenians threw the rest in prison under a death sentence. Timesitheus the Delphian was one of the prisoners; his achievements of strength and courage were incredible.

5.73

So, these men were bound and killed. Afterwards, the Athenians sent for the return of Cleisthenes and the 700 families whom Cleomenes had expelled. Wishing to form an alliance with the Persians, they also sent envoys to Sardis, as they knew they had provoked the Spartans and Cleomenes into going to war. When the envoys arrived at Sardis and passed on their messages as instructed, Artaphernes son of Hystaspes, the governor of Sardis, asked: "You, men who want a Persian alliance: who are you and where have you come from?" When they had given him the answers he wanted, he made a reply which said, to paraphrase, that if the Athenians gave earth and water to King Darius, he would honour their wishes; if they did not, he would order them to leave. The envoys discussed this amongst themselves, and decided to do what was asked out of their desire to form the alliance. Then they came home and found that they had received huge blame for what they had done.

5.74

Cleomenes, however, was fully aware that the Athenians had wronged him in deeds and words, and gathered up an army to represent the entire Peloponnese.

Notes

He did not publicise why he had assembled this army, mainly so he might avenge himself on the Athenians, and establish Isagoras (who had accompanied him out of the Acropolis) as tyrant. Cleomenes got as far as Eleusis with a large force, and the Boeotians seized Oenoe and Hysiae, *demes* on the borders of Attica, in a joint offensive. The Chalcidians, meanwhile, attacked from a different direction, and made raids on some Attic districts. The Athenians found themselves surrounded by hostile forces, and decided to face the Spartans at Eleusis and tackle the Boeotians and Chalcidians later.

5.75

When the armies were on the cusp of engaging, the Corinthians, realising that they were acting immorally, changed their minds and left. Later, Demaratus son of Ariston (the other Spartan king) did the same, despite having come from Sparta as Cleomenes' joint commander of the army, and never having been at odds with him before. Consequently, the Spartans made a law decreeing that when an army was sent out, both kings could not be sent with it. Until this time, the kings had gone together, but now one king was released from service, and one of the sons of Tyndarus could also be left at home. Previously, both sons of Tyndarus were also asked to go with the army and offer their support. Now, when the rest of the allies saw the difference of opinion between the Spartan kings, and that the Corinthians had left Eleusis, they turned back too.

5.76

This was the Dorians' fourth trip into Attica. They had come twice before as invaders, and twice to help the Athenians. The first time was when they established a settlement at Megara (which may rightly be attributed to the reign of Codrus), and the second and third when they had set out to expel the sons of Peisistratus. This was the fourth, when Cleomenes reached as far as Eleusis with his Peloponnesian allies.

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5.77

When this army had been ingloriously scattered, the Athenians then marched against the Chalcidians to punish them. The Boeotians came to the Euripus strait to the Chalcidians' aid, and as soon as the Athenians saw them, they decided to attack them first rather than the Chalcidians. When they fought the Boeotians they won well, killing many and capturing 700. On the same day, the Athenians crossed over to Euboea to face the Chalcidians, and also beat them. When they had won this battle, they left 4,000 tenant farmers in the horse-breeding country. "Horse-breeder" was the epithet given to the rich among the Chalcidians. They threw all of the survivors of this group into chains, and held them in captivity alongside the Boeotians.

Eventually, however, they set them free for a carefully considered ransom of two minae. They hung their chains in the Acropolis, where even in my day they could still be viewed on the walls charred by the Persians' fire, opposite the west-facing temple. They also made a dedication of ten percent of the ransom, which was used to make a four-horse chariot which stands on the left hand side of the entrance hall of the Acropolis. It is inscribed with the following:

"Athens fought Chalcis and Boeotia,
Threw them into chains and quashed their pride.
Prison was grief, and ransom cost them dear
One tenth of their ransoms donated to Pallas produced this magnificent chariot."

5.78

And so, the Athenians grew more powerful still, and proved the benefits of equality (*isegoria*) in every respect. This is demonstrated by how, when still under tyrannical rule, the Athenians were no better in war than any of their neighbours. Without their tyrants, however, they were undoubtedly superior to all. This proves that under a tyrant they were cowardly, like a man working for a master; when they were free, every man was eager to achieve for himself.

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Herodotus 5.90–5.96

5.90

... When the Spartans learned about the Alcmaeonids' plot with the Pythia, and her plot against them and the Peisistratids, they were furious for two reasons: firstly, because they had driven out their own guest-friends from the country they lived in, and secondly, because the Athenians had given them no thanks at all for doing so. They were also encouraged by the oracles, which foretold that the Athenians would commit many wrongdoings against them. They had not known anything of these oracles before, but Cleomenes had brought them to Sparta, where the Spartans had familiarised themselves with them. Cleomenes took the oracles from the Athenian acropolis, which had previously been in the possession of the Peisistratids. They left them in the temple upon their exile, from where Cleomenes took them.

5.91

Now, having retrieved the oracles, the Spartans saw the Athenians' power growing, and were in no way inclined to obey them. They realised that the Athenians would have equal power to them if they remained free, but if they were oppressed by a tyranny, they would be a weak and ready subject. All this considered, they sent for Peisistratus' son Hippias to come from Sigeum on the Hellespont, where the Peisistratids were taking refuge. When he arrived, the Spartans sent for envoys from all of their other allies and told them this: "Gentlemen, our allies, we acknowledge that we have done wrong. We were deceived by false prophecies, drove men who were our friends from their native lands, and promised to make Athens subject to us. Then we handed that city over to a thankless people, and no sooner than it had raised its head in the freedom we gave it, it had audaciously expelled us and our king. Now it has developed such a proud spirit and growing power which its neighbours in Boeotia and Chalcis have learnt to their cost, and soon others may also discover,

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unless they mind their step. Since what we did was a mistake, now we will try to make amends with your help. This is the only reason that we have sent for Hippias here, and why we have brought you from your cities: by uniting our power and expertise, we might bring him to Athens and restore what we took away."

5.92

This is what the Spartans said, but it did not go down well with most of their allies. As the rest stayed silent, Socles the Corinthian said:

5.92A

"In truth, now that you the Spartans are destroying the rule of equals and reinstate tyranny in the cities, the world will go upside-down. Heaven will be beneath the earth, and the earth high in the sky about heaven; men will live in the sea and fishes where we lived before; now you are reinstating tyranny, which is more unrighteous and bloody than anything else on earth. If you actually think it a good idea for the cities to be ruled by tyrants, then establish one for yourselves first before you try to establish it elsewhere. As it happens, you, who have never even tried tyranny and in fact take the greatest precautions to prevent it from being established in Sparta, you are abusing your allies. If you ever had the experience we have, then you would be more sensible advisers on the topic than you are now.

5.92B

I will describe here the order of the Corinthian state: it had an oligarchy, and a group of men called the Bacchiads held the most power in the city, and intermarried amongst themselves. Amphion, one of these men, had a disabled daughter named Labda. Since none of the Bacchiads would marry her, she was married to Eetion, son of Echecrates, from a town called Petra. He was a Lapith by blood, and one of the descendants of Caeneus. When no sons were born to him by this wife or any other, he went to Delphi to ask about acquiring offspring. As soon as he entered, the Pythia said this to him:

"Eetion, honourable man, no man honours you.

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Labda is pregnant, and her child will be like a millstone
which will fall upon the ruling class and bring justice to Corinth."

This oracle was made known to the Bacchiads somehow. They had not understood the earlier oracle which had been sent to them at Corinth, despite the fact that it meant the same as Eetion's. That oracle went like this:

"An eagle has conceived in the rocks, and will produce
A strong, fierce lion. It will loose many knees.
Think on this, Corinthians,
Who live beside lovely Pirene and the overhanging heights of Corinth."

5.92C

This earlier prophecy had been a complete mystery to the Bacchiads, but as soon as they heard Eetion's, they understood it at once, as they recognised the similarities between the two. Now, understanding both of the oracles, they kept quiet, but decided to kill off the offspring of Eetion. As soon as his wife gave birth, they sent ten men from the group to Eetion's town to kill the child. They came to Petra, into Eetion's courtyard, and asked for the child. Labda knew nothing about why they had come, and thought they wanted to see the baby because they were fond of his father, so she brought out the child and handed it to them. They had planned on the way that the first one to hold the child should dash it to the ground, but when it was handed over, it happened to smile at that first man who took it. He saw, and was prevented from killing it by compassion. He handed it to the second man, full of pity, and the second man handed it to the third. In fact, it passed between the hands of all ten men, as none of them would make the move. Then they gave the baby back to its mother, left, and stood in front of the door having a go at each other, and especially the first man to hold the baby as he had broken the agreement. They eventually decided to go back in and all have a hand in the killing.

5.92D

It was fated, however, that Eetion's offspring would live and be a source of misfortune for Corinth. For Labda had heard everything, as she was stood close

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to the door. Afraid that they would change their minds and actually kill her baby, she took it away and hid it in what she thought was the best hiding place, in a chest; for she knew that if they returned and started searching (which they did) then they would not look everywhere. So, when they came back, searched, and did not find the baby, they decided to leave again and tell the ones who had sent them that they had completed the task. So they went away and said this.

5.92E

Eetion's son, however, grew up, and was named Cypselus after the chest, because of his narrow escape. When he had become a man and was seeing an oracle, one was given to him at Delphi with two meanings. He believed it, made an attempt on Corinth, and captured it. This was the oracle:

"The man who steps into my house is lucky:
Cypselus son of Eetion, the king of noble Corinth,
He and his children, but not his grandchildren."

Cypselus, however, when he had won the tyranny, behaved like this: he exiled many Corinthians, bankrupted many Corinthians, and more than anything else killed many Corinthians.

5.92F

After a reign of 30 years, he died at the very height of his wealth and power, and was succeeded by his son Periander. Periander was a gentler ruler than his father to begin with, but after he had corresponded with Thrasybulus, tyrant of Miletus, he became even more bloodthirsty than Cypselus. He sent a herald to Thrasybulus and asked how he could govern his city best and most safely. Thrasybulus led Periander's herald outside the town, and reached a sown field. As he walked through the corn, he asked continually why the herald had come from Corinth, whilst cutting off all the tallest ears of wheat in sight and throwing them away, until he had destroyed the best part of the crop. Then, having made this journey and offering no counsel, he dismissed the herald. When he returned to Corinth, Periander was keen to hear what counsel his messenger had brought back, but he had to admit that Thrasybulus had offered him none. The herald

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added that he had been sent to a very odd man who was a wanton destroyer of his own possessions, and explained to Periander what he had seen Thrasybulus do.

5.92G

Periander, however, understood completely, and understood that Thrasybulus had advised him to kill those from his people who were notable in influence and ability. And so, he began to rule his citizens harshly. Whatever act of slaughter or exile which Cypselus had left undone, Periander did. One day he stripped every Corinthian woman naked, because of his own wife, Melissa. Periander had sent messengers to the Oracle of the Dead on the River Acheron in Thesprotia, to enquire about a deposit left by a friend, but Melissa came to him as a ghost and said that she would tell him nothing, nor reveal the location of the deposit, because she was cold and naked. She said that the garments with which Periander had cremated her had never been burnt, so were useless to her. Then, to prove that she was speaking the truth, she added that Periander had “put his loaves into a cold oven”. As soon as this message was relayed to Periander (he knew it was true, because he had had sex with Melissa’s dead body), he proclaimed that all the women of Corinth should come to the temple of Hera. The women came out as if going to a festival, in their best clothes, and Periander set his guards about stripping them all: ladies and servants, and piled up all their clothes in a pit while he prayed to Melissa as he burnt them. When he had done this and sent a second message, Melissa’s ghost told him where his friend had laid his deposit.

This, then, Spartans, is what tyranny is like, and what it does. We Corinthians were amazed when we saw that you were sending for Hippias, and now we are even more astounded at what you have said. We sincerely beg you in the name of all the gods of Greece not to bring tyranny back to our cities. If you do not stop this attempt, and your unrighteous efforts to reinstate Hippias, please know that you are doing so without Corinth’s blessing.”

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5.93

These were the words of Socles, the Corinthian envoy. Hippias responded, invoking the same gods as Socles had done, and said that the Corinthians would be the first to want the Peisistratids back when the time came for them to be vexed by the Athenians. He said this, since he knew more about the precise nature of the oracles than anyone. However, the rest of the allies, who had been silent until now, piped up when they heard Socles speaking out. They sided with Corinth, and begged the Spartans not to harm any Greek city.

5.94

So Sparta's plan crumbled, and Hippias was forced to leave. Amyntas, king of Macedon, offered Hippias Anthemus, and the Thessalians offered him Iolcus, but he would have neither. He retreated to Sigeum, which Peisistratus had taken at spearpoint from the Mytilenaeans, and where he had made Hegesistratus tyrant, his bastard son by an Argive mother.

Hegesistratus, however, could not keep what Peisistratus had given him without fighting. There was a constant, long-lived war between the Athenians at Sigeum and the Mytilenaeans at Achilleum. The Mytilenaeans were demanding the land be returned, and the Athenians, with proof to show that the Aeolians had no more of a claim to the land of Troy than they themselves and all the other Greeks who had aided Menelaus in avenging the seizure of Helen, would not consent.

5.95

Amongst the many incidents during this war, one is particularly worth mentioning: during a battle which had an Athenian advantage, Alcaeus the poet fled and escaped, but his armour was taken by the Athenians and hung in the temple of Athena at Sigeum. Alcaeus wrote a poem about this and sent it to Mytilene, in which he expresses his misfortune to his friend Melanippus. Peace was made between the Mytilenaeans and the Athenians by Periander, son of Cypselus, who mediated the matter, and set terms of peace which decreed that each side would keep what they had.

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5.96

So, this was how Sigeum entered Athenian rule but Hippias, having come from Sparta to Asia, left no stone unturned. He criticised the Athenians to Atraphrenes, and did all in his power to bring Athens under the rule of Darius and himself. Whilst Hippias was doing all these things, the Athenians got wind of it and sent messengers to Sardis, warning the Persians not to believe Athenian exiles. Artaphernes, however, called upon them to take Hippias back if they wanted to be safe. When the Athenians received his message, they did not consent to it, and so it was decided that they should accept open hostility with Persia.

5.97

It was when the Athenians had made this decision, and were already on bad terms with Persia, that Aristagoras of Miletus, who had been driven out from Sparta by Cleomenes, came to Athens, since it was the most powerful city of all. He came before the people and spoke similar words to what he had said to the Spartans', about the positive aspects of Asia, and how the Persians did not fight with a shield or a spear, so could be overcome easily. He added that the Milesians were Athenian settlers, and it was only right to save them, since they themselves [the Athenians] were a very powerful people. His plea was so earnest and left no promise unpromised, until he won them over at last. It would seem that it is easier to deceive many than it is to deceive one; he could not deceive Cleomenes alone, but he could fool 30,000 Athenians. The Athenians, duly persuaded, voted to send 20 ships in aid of the Ionians, and made Melanthius, a citizen with a flawless reputation, their general. Those ships were the beginning of troubles for both the Greeks and Persians.

5.98

Aristagoras sailed ahead of this fleet, and when he reached Miletus, he made a plan which would be of no benefit to the Ionians (that was not the point at all: which was to anger Darius). He sent a messenger into Phrygia, to the Paeonians.

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These men had been taken as captives from the Strymon by Megabazus, and now dwelt in Phrygian territory in a village by themselves. When the messenger reached the Paeonians, this is what he said: "Paeonians, I have been sent by Aristagoras, tyrant of Miletus, to show you how you might be saved, if you do what I say. All of Ionia is now revolting against the king, and it is possible for you to win your way back home safely; we will take care of you afterwards." The Paeonians were relieved to hear this, and although some of them stayed there for fear of danger, the rest took their families and fled to the sea. When they arrived, the Paeonians crossed to Chios. They were already in Chios when a huge Persian cavalry force came after them, but unable to overtake them, sent a message to Chios ordering the Paeonians to return to Phrygia. They refused, but were taken to Lesbos by the Chians, then to Doriscus by the Lesbians, and only from there did they make their way by land back to Paeonia.

5.99

The Athenians brought their 20 ships, alongside five Eretrian triremes which had come not to please the Athenians, but because they had a debt to repay to the Milesians. The Milesians had once allied with Eretria against Chalcis, when the Samians joined forces with the Chalcidians against them. So when these and the rest of the allies had arrived, Aristagoras planned a march against Sardis. He did not go with the army himself, but stayed at Miletus, and appointed others as generals: his own brother Charopinus, and another man called Hermophantus.

5.100

When the Ionians had reached Ephesus with this force, they moored at Coressus and marched inland with a huge army, taking the Ephesians as guides. They followed the River Cayster, and after crossing the ridge of Tmolus they came to Sardis and captured it with ease. They took it all except the citadel, which Artaphernes himself held with his own great force.

5.101

They were prevented from plundering the city because most of the houses in

Notes

Sardis were made of reeds, and even the brick houses had reed roofs, and so, when one of these was set on fire by a soldier, the fire spread across the entire city. Whilst it burned, the Lydians and the Persians in the citadel were closed in on every side, with the fire consuming all the outer areas and offering no escape route from the city. So they thronged into the marketplace to the River Pactolus, which flows through the market square, bringing gold dust from Tmolus, and into the River Hermus, which flows to the sea. They gathered in the marketplace by this river, and had to defend themselves there. When the Ionians saw some of their enemies defending themselves, and many others on the way, they took fright and fled to the mountain named Tmolus. From there, they boarded their ships and left under the cover of darkness.

5.102

In the fire at Sardis, a temple of the native goddess Cybebe was burnt, and the Persians later took this as reason for burning the Greeks' temples. At this time, the Persians from provinces this side of the Halys gathered together when they heard about this, and came to the Lydians' aid. It so happened that they did not find the Ionians at Sardis, but intercepted them at Ephesus. The Ionians were drawn up in rank and file to meet them there, but were completely routed in battle. The Persians slew many famous men, including Eualcides, the Eretrian general, who had won crowns as a victor at the games, and earned the praise of Simonides of Ceos. The Ionians who managed to escape fled to their respective home cities.

5.103

This is how they fared in battle. Soon afterwards, however, the Athenians cut all ties with the Ionians and refused to help them, although Aristagoras sent frequent, pleading messages. Although they had lost their Athenian allies, the Ionians passionately continued the war against the king, as what they had done to Darius had left them committed to the cause. They sailed to the Hellespont and made Byzantium and all the other nearby cities their subjects. As they sailed from the Hellespont, they gained most of Caria as supporters of their cause, for

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even Caunus, which had not wanted to be their ally before, made an alliance with them after the burning of Sardis.

Herodotus 6.25

After the sea battle for Miletus, the Phoenicians, as ordered by the Persians, returned Aeaces son of Syloson back to Samos, because his achievements were great, and his service of great worth to them. Due to deserting their ships during the battle, the Samians were the only rebels whose city and temples remained unburnt. When Miletus had been captured, the Persians immediately took Caria. Some towns willingly submitted to their rule, whilst others only did so when forced.

Herodotus 6.43–6.44

6.43

When spring came, however, the king removed the other generals from office. Mardonius son of Gobryas, a young man, recently married to Darius' daughter Artozostre, arrived on the coast leading a huge army and fleet. When Mardonius had led this army to Cilicia, he boarded a ship and sailed with the fleet, whilst other generals led the army to the Hellespont. Mardonius did something on arrival in Ionia, during his voyage along the Asian coast, which I have recounted here for the benefit of those Greeks who will not believe that Otanes would have declared amongst the seven conspirators that democracy was the best system for Persia. Mardonius deposed all the Ionian tyrants, and established democracies in their place, before rushing to the Hellespont. When a huge fleet and huge army were assembled, the Persians crossed the Hellespont by boat, and marched through Europe against Athens and Eretria.

Notes

6.44

These were the official objectives of their expedition, but they intended to subdue as many Greek cities as possible. Their fleet defeated the Thasians, who barely even lifted their hands against it; their army added the Macedonians to their ranks of slaves (already large, because all the states between them and Macedonia had already become Persian subjects). They crossed from Thasos and followed the coast as far as Acanthus, then tried to sail round the peninsula at Athos. But a great, violent north wind set upon them on their journey and treated them harshly, dashing much of the fleet upon Athos' shoreline. They say some 300 ships were lost, and more than 20,000 sailors. Since the coast of Athos is populated by wild beasts, many men died when they were carried off by these creatures, whilst others, particularly those who could not swim were smashed against the rocks, or killed by the cold.

Herodotus 6.102–6.107**6.102**

Once they [the Persians] had overcome Eretria, they spent a few days there and then sailed towards Attica in good spirits, expecting to have the same success against the Athenians. Hippias the son of Peisistratus led them towards Marathon, which was the part of Attica closest to Eretria and most suitable for cavalry.

6.103

When the Athenians learned about this, they came to meet them at Marathon. The Athenian forces were led by ten generals, of whom the tenth was Miltiades. As it happened, his father Cimon, son of Stesagoras, had been banished by Peisistratus, son of Hippocrates. While he was in exile he was lucky enough to win the chariot race at Olympia; by this victory he achieved the same honour as his half-brother Miltiades. At the next Olympic festival, he won again with the very same horses, but allowed Peisistratus to be announced as the winner;

Notes

because of this he returned to his own land with the agreement of Peisistratus. With the same horses he won again at another Olympic festival, but he was killed by the sons of Peisistratus once Peisistratus himself had died. These men sent some men to kill him [Cimon] at night by the Council House. Cimon is buried outside the city, on the other side of what is called the 'hollow road'; opposite him are buried his horses, with which he won three Olympic victories. One and only one other team of horses belonging to Euagoras the Spartan had already achieved this distinction. The older of Cimon's children was then living with his uncle Miltiades in the Chersonese, while the younger (who was named after Miltiades who set up the settlement in the Chersonese) was living with Cimon in Athens.

6.104

This then was the Miltiades who had returned from the Chersonese, having escaped death twice, and now was one of the Athenian generals. The Phoenicians had pursued him as far as the island of Imbros, very keen to capture him and bring him to the Persian king. After escaping from them he arrived home safely as it seemed; but his enemies were waiting for him and took him to court, prosecuting him for his tyranny in the Chersonese. After he had been acquitted, he was chosen as an Athenian general by the people.

6.105

While they were still in the city the generals sent to Sparta a herald called Pheidippides, an Athenian and an experienced long-distance runner. As Pheidippides himself reported to the Athenians, the god Pan met him on Mount Parthenion above Tegea, and called out his name. The god Pan told Pheidippides to ask the Athenians why they did not show respect to him, although he was well-disposed towards them and had often been useful to them in earlier times, and would be again in the future. The Athenians, once their situation was again secure, as they believed this story was true, dedicated a shrine to Pan beneath the Acropolis and worshipped him from that time onwards every year with sacrifices and a torch-race.

Notes

6.106

Pheidippides was sent by the generals at that time, when he said that Pan appeared to him, and reached Sparta on the day after he left Athens; when he came before the Spartan magistrates he said: "Men of Sparta, the Athenians ask you to come to help them and not to allow the most ancient city of Greece to be thrown into slavery by foreigners; for already Eretria has been enslaved and Greece is now weaker through the destruction of a notable city." In this way Pheidippides did what he had been told to do; the Spartans wanted to go to help the Athenians, but it was impossible for them to do so immediately, as they did not wish to break their laws. For it was the ninth day of the month, and they said they could not march out on the ninth until the moon was full.

6.107

The Spartans waited for the full moon, while Hippias, the son of Peisistratus, led the barbarians towards Marathon. The night before Hippias had had a dream in which he seemed to be sleeping with his mother. He interpreted this to mean that he would return to Athens and recover control of the city, ending his life as an old man in his own country. The next day he was showing the Persian forces the way; the slaves taken from Eretria were put ashore on an island belonging to the city of Styra, called Aegilia. Then he took the ships to Marathon where they came to anchor, and he organised the troops when they had disembarked. While he was doing this he happened to sneeze and cough more violently than usual. As he was fairly old, the majority of his teeth were loose, and he coughed with such force that one came out of his mouth. It fell on the sand, and Hippias made every effort to find it. When the tooth could not be found, with a groan he said to those who were with him: "This land is not ours and we will not be able to bring it under control; my tooth now has whatever part of it was mine."

Notes

Herodotus 6.109

The opinions of the Athenian generals were split: some did not wish to engage with the enemy (for the Athenians were few in number to fight with the army of the Persians), while others (among them Miltiades) were ready to fight. This division persisted and the weaker tactic was on the point of being chosen. There was an eleventh member of the war council, the man selected by lot to be the War Archon (for in the past the Athenians used to give the War Archon the same voting rights as the generals). At this time it was Callimachus from the *deme* Aphidnae, so Miltiades went to him and said: 'It is down to you, Callimachus, either to enslave Athens or to make her free and to leave a memorial of yourself for the whole span of human history greater than even Harmodios and Aristogeiton. For now the Athenians have come to the greatest crisis they have ever faced, and if they submit in slavery to the Persians, it is clear what they will suffer when handed over to Hippias. But if this city survives, it will be able to become the most powerful of all the Greek cities. How these things can be brought about and how the decision about what to do has fallen to you, I will now tell you. We generals are ten in total and we have different opinions about what to do, some wanting to engage the enemy and others not. If we do not fight, I expect that the Athenians' resolve will be shaken and they will go over to the Persian side. But if we fight before this rot has entered any Athenian minds, if the gods give us fair fortune, we are able to be victorious in the battle. Everything now depends on your decision, and on you alone. If you accept my opinion about what to do, our fatherland will be free and will be the first city in Greece. But if you choose to vote with those who do not wish to fight, you will achieve the opposite of what I have just said.

Notes

Herodotus 6.121–6.124

6.121

It is a wonder to me, and I do not believe the story, that the Alcmaeonids would have ever agreed to hold up a shield as a sign for the Persians out of their supposed desire to place Athens under the rule of foreigners, and of Hippias. It is clear that they hated the tyrants at least as much as Callias, the son of Phaenippus and father of Hipponicus, did. Callias was the only Athenian brave enough to buy Peisistratus' things when they were advertised for sale following his exile from Athens, and on top of that, he planned a number of other nasty, hateful deeds against the man.

6.122

This chapter has deliberately been omitted as it is generally held to be an interpolation.

6.123

The Alcmaeonids hated tyrants just as much as Callias did, or at least, no less. Consequently, I find it odd and even unbelievable that they, of all men, would have displayed a shield. They shunned the tyrants consistently, and it was their doing that the sons of Peisistratus had been deposed from their tyranny. Therefore, in my opinion, they did far more to free Athens than Harmodios and Aristogeiton. Those men only vexed Peisistratus' remaining sons by killing Hipparchus, and made no effort to stop the rest of the tyrants; the Alcmaeonids clearly freed their country, if it is true that they persuaded the Pythia to prophesy to the Spartans that they should free Athens (as I have detailed previously).

6.124

Perhaps [it might be argued that] they betrayed their country out of some grudge against the Athenians; but there were no others more honoured or respected at Athens than they were. As a result, clear logic prevents belief that they of all people could have held up the shield for such a reason. It cannot be denied that the shield was held up, because it did happen, but I do not know who did it, and cannot comment any further.

Notes

Cornelius Nepos, *Miltiades*, 6–8

6

[1] It does not seem unsuitable to explain what reward Miltiades gained from this victory, so that we can more easily understand how the nature of all states is the same. [2] For just as honours from the Roman people were once rare and slight, and for that reason full of glory, but are now extravagant and common, so was it with the Athenians, as we shall discover. [3] For the following honour was granted to Miltiades, the man who had freed Athens and the whole of Greece: when the Battle of Marathon was painted in the colonnade, called Poecile (painted), his image was placed first among the number of ten generals. He was shown encouraging his soldiers and joining battle. [4] That same people, much later, gained a greater power and, corrupted by bribery from their magistrates, decreed 300 statues to Demetrius of Phaleron.

7

[1] After the battle the Athenians entrusted Miltiades with a fleet of 70 ships to make war on those islands which had helped the barbarians [the Persians]. In this command, he forced most to resume their obligations, some he took by force. [2] Among these was the island of Paros, proud of its own wealth, which he was unable to recover by negotiation. He led his forces from the ships and lay siege to the city and deprived it of all source of supplies. Then with covered shelters and in tortoise-formation he approached nearer to the walls. [3] When he was at the point of possessing the town, a distant grove on the mainland, which could be seen from the island, was set on fire by some accident during the night. Both townspeople and attackers saw the flames, and both thought it was a signal from the fleet of the Persian King. [4] This event caused the Parians to be deterred from surrendering, while Miltiades was afraid that the King's fleet would arrive. He therefore burnt the siege works he had set up, and returned to Athens with the same number of ships with which he had set out, much to

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the disgust of his own citizens. [5] He was accused of treachery, on a charge that when he could have taken Paros by force, he had been bribed by the King and had left without finishing the job. At the time he was sick due to his wounds, received in an attack on the town. Therefore, since he could not speak for himself, his brother Stesagoras pleaded his case. [6] When the trial was held, he was found guilty; however, he was not given the death penalty, but a fine assessed at 50 talents, the same amount as was spent on the fleet. Because he could not pay the money at the time, he was thrown into prison and died there.

8

[1] Although he was charged with the crime to do with Paros, there were other reasons for his condemnation. For the Athenians, because of the tyranny of the Peisistratids a few years before, feared the power of all their citizens. [2] Miltiades was much involved in holding power and dealing with important matters of state and did not appear to be able to remain just a private citizen, especially as it seemed he was attracted to the desire for power by force of habit. [3] He had had a permanent power in the Chersonese during the years he lived there and had been called a tyrant, but a just one. He had not obtained the tyranny by force but at the wishes of his citizens, and he retained his position of power through his good conduct. However, all are called and thought of as tyrants, who hold continual power in a state which once enjoyed freedom. [4] But in Miltiades there was the greatest kindness to others and a remarkable courtesy so that there was no one so lowly who could not openly approach him. He had great influence among all the states. He had a noble name, and the greatest praise in military matters. But the people looking at this preferred that he be punished, despite his innocence, than that they should fear him any longer.

Notes

Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 22

[1] ... he [Cleisthenes] also established the law concerning ostracism. ... [3] In the twelfth year after this [the overthrow of the tyrants] they were victorious in the Battle at Marathon, when Phainippos was archon. Leaving an interval of two years after the battle, when the people was then full of confidence, then for the first time they used the law concerning ostracism. This was set up on account of a suspicion of men in positions of power because Peisistratus had been a popular leader and general and then made himself tyrant. [4] Hipparchus from Kollytos, son of Charmos, a relation of Peisistratus, was first to be ostracised. Cleisthenes had set up the law especially on account of this man as he wanted to drive him into exile. This was because the Athenians allowed the friends of the tyrants who had not been party to their crimes during the troubles to live in the city, employing the customary mildness of the people. Hipparchus was the leader and chief of these men. [5] Immediately in the next year, when Telesinos was archon, they chose the nine archons by lot by tribe from 500 previously chosen by the *demes*. Previously all of these had been elected. Megacles from Alopece, the son of Hippocrates, was also ostracised. [6] So for three years they kept ostracising the friends of the tyrants, on whose account the law was passed. But after this, in the fourth year, they also began to remove anyone else if they seemed to be too dominant. The first of those to be ostracised who was not connected with the tyrants was Xanthippos, the son of Ariphron. [7] In the third year after this, when Nicodemos was archon, when the mines at Maroneia were found and the city had a profit on 100 talents from the workings, some suggested that the money should be given out to the people. Themistocles prevented this; he did not say what he would use the money for, but ordered them to give each of the hundred richest of the Athenians a talent each. If the expenditure pleased them, it would be a cost to the city, but if not, the money should be recovered from those who were lent it. When he had got hold of it on these terms, he had a 100 triremes built, with each of the 100 having one built;

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with these ships they fought the sea battle at Salamis against the barbarians. During these events Aristides the son of Lysimachus was ostracised. [8] In the third⁷ year, when Hypsichides was archon, the Athenians recalled all those who had been ostracised because of the expedition of Xerxes. And they decided for the future that those who were ostracised should live between Geraistos and Skyllaion or they would lose their citizenship completely.

Plutarch, *Life of Aristides* 7.4–7.5

[4] ... The way it was done – to give a general outline – was as follows. Each voter took an ostrakon (a small piece of pottery) and wrote on it the name of the citizen he wanted to remove from the city, then brought it to a place in the agora which was all fenced off with railings. [5] First the archons counted the total number of ostraka that had been given in, because if there were less than 6,000, the ostracism was invalid. Then they separated the names, and the man with the most votes was banished for ten years, but he had the right to keep the income from his property. ...

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⁷ Again, we have gone with Rhodes et al. in place of the Greek text which has 'fourth'.

Ostraka



Notes

Plutarch, *Life of Aristides* 2–5, 7

2

[1] Aristides was good friends with Cleisthenes who sorted out the Athenian state after they got rid of the tyrants. Above all other statesmen, he admired Lycurgus the Spartan who was his role model. So he preferred an aristocratic form of government, which meant that Themistocles the son of Neocles as champion of the people was always opposed to him. Some writers say that even when they were boys and fellow-pupils, in everything they said and did, either serious or trivial, they disagreed with one another, [2] and that the rivalry itself revealed their natures straightway: Themistocles was resourceful, reckless, unscrupulous and easily carried away by his impulsiveness into anything and everything; Aristides was a firm character, intent on justice, and incapable of lying, being vulgar or tricking someone, even for a joke. ...

[4] Themistocles joined a political association, and in this way, got himself considerable support and power. So that when someone told him that he would be a good man to be in charge of the Athenians if he could be fair and unbiased towards everyone, he replied: "I never want to sit on a tribunal where I shall not be able to give my friends an advantage over strangers."

[5] But Aristides went about his political life by himself, on his own private path because, in the first place, he did not want to join with any comrades in doing wrong, or to annoy them by not doing them favours. In the second place, he saw that any power they got from friends encouraged many men to do wrong and so was on his guard against it, believing it right that a good citizen should only put his confidence in his own words and fair conduct.

3

[1] However, since Themistocles was always suggesting reckless changes, and opposed and frustrated him on every item of state business, Aristides was forced to set himself up in opposition to what Themistocles was trying to do, partly

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in self-defence, and partly to limit Themistocles' power, which was increasing because of the support of the people. Aristides thought it was better that the people should do without some advantages than that Themistocles should become too strong by always getting his own way. [2] Finally there came a time when he stood up to and defeated Themistocles when he was trying to do something really necessary. Then Aristides could no longer keep quiet, but stated, as he left the Assembly, that there was no safety for the Athenian state unless they threw both Themistocles and himself into the death-pit for criminals.

On another occasion Aristides himself had brought a certain proposal to the people, and was carrying it through successfully, despite the opposition attacking it. But just as the president of the Assembly was putting it to the final vote, he realised, just from the speeches that had been made against it, that this proposal of his was not a good idea, so Aristides withdrew it without a vote. [3] Often, Aristides got other men to introduce his proposals so that Themistocles would not stand in the way of what was beneficial to the state because of his rivalry with Aristides. Aristides was especially admirable because he had the strength to stick to what he was doing even when political feelings kept changing. He did not get too excited when he was given honours and was calm and in control when things went against him.

He always thought it was his duty to help his country freely and without any reward, either in money, or, what meant far more, in reputation. [4] The story goes that this is what happened when these lines written by the playwright Aeschylus talking about Amphiaraus (a character in the play *Seven Against Thebes*) were recited in the theatre:

"He wishes not to seem fair, but rather to be fair;
his mind is like a field ploughed with deep furrows
from which he reaps a harvest of honourable guidance."

All the spectators turned their eyes on Aristides, feeling that he above all men possessed such excellence.

Notes

4

[1] He was a most determined supporter of justice: not just because he was not motivated by good-will or personal favour, but also he was unaffected by anger and hatred. Anyway, there is a story of how when he was prosecuting an enemy in court, after he had made his accusation the judges did not want to hear the defence at all, and wanted to vote against the defendant straightway. But Aristides jumped to his feet and supported the defendant's request for a hearing which was the usual legal way of doing things.

[2] On another occasion, when he was acting as private mediator between two men, one of them said that his opponent had done Aristides just as much injury. Aristides replied: "Tell me what he has done wrong to you; it is your case I am judging not mine."

When he was elected to be in charge of the public revenue, he proved clearly that large sums of money had been embezzled, not only by his fellow officials, but also by those of in office previously, and particularly by Themistocles, "The man was clever, but had no control of his hand." [3] For this reason, Themistocles brought many men together against Aristides. He prosecuted him for theft in the examining of his accounts, and according to Idomeneus, actually got a conviction against him. But the finest leading men of the city were very angry about this, and he was not only let off for the fine, but even given the same job back again. Then he pretended to be sorry for how he had behaved before, and acted in a more laid back way. This pleased the men who were stealing the public money since he did not investigate them or look carefully at what they were doing, [4] so that they filled their pockets with public money. Then they praised Aristides highly and appealed to the people in his behalf, eagerly wanting him to be elected again for the job. But just as they were about to vote, Aristides told the Athenians off.

He said: "When I did my job with devotion and honour, I was disgraced and persecuted, but now that I am throwing away a lot of the public money to thieves, I am thought to be an admirable citizen. [5] As far as I am concerned,

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I am more ashamed of being honoured now than I was of being convicted before, and I am very distressed for you, because it is more honourable in your eyes to please bad men than to guard the public money."

By these words, as well as by revealing their thefts, he closed the mouths of the men who had been shouting loudly in his favour, but he won genuine and fair praise from the best citizens.

5

[1] When Datis was sent by Darius supposedly to punish the Athenians for burning Sardis, but really to take power over all of Greece, he landed at Marathon with all his troops and started ruining the countryside. Ten generals were appointed by the Athenians to fight the war and out of these Miltiades had the best reputation, but Aristides was second in reputation and ability. [2] When Miltiades wanted to attack, Aristides supported his proposal which had an important effect on the issue. Each general held the supreme command for one day in turn but when it was Aristides' turn, he handed it over to Miltiades showing to his fellow officers that it is not disgraceful to obey and follow a wise man, but dignified and beneficial. By calming the jealousy of his colleagues in this way and encouraging them to be cheerfully content to adopt a single plan (and the best plan), he provided Miltiades with the strength which comes from undivided power. For each of the other generals at once gave up his own right to command for a day in turn, and put himself under the orders of Miltiades. ...

7

[1] Now, to resume, at first Aristides was loved because of this name. But afterwards he was jealously hated, especially when Themistocles set the story going among the people that Aristides had got rid of the public courts of justice by his mediating and judging everything in private, and that, without anyone noticing, he had made himself the king of Athens, except that he did not have an armed bodyguard. By this time the people too must have got too excited over their victory over the Persians and thought they could do anything, so they

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were annoyed with anybody who stood out above the other people because of his name and reputation. [2] So they assembled in the city from all the countryside around, and ostracised Aristides, saying that they were afraid he was becoming a tyrant to cover up for their jealousy. The sentence of ostracism was not a punishment for doing something wrong. It was misleadingly described as the humbling and prevention of oppressive status and power. But really it was a humane way to get rid of the people's jealous hatred, which satisfied their desire to harm, not in an irreparably bad way, but by means of someone being sent out of the city for ten years. ...

[5] ... The story goes that as the voters were writing the names on their ostraka, an illiterate and bad mannered man gave his ostrakon to Aristides, and asked him to write 'Aristides' on it. [6] Aristides was astonished and asked the man what harm Aristides had possibly done to him. "None at all," was the reply, "I don't even know the man, but I am fed up of hearing everyone calling him 'The Just!'" When he heard this, Aristides did not answer, but he wrote his name on the ostrakon and gave it back. Finally, as he was leaving the city, Aristides lifted up his hands to heaven and prayed (a prayer which was the opposite of the one Achilles made) that no crisis would happen to the Athenians which would force the people to remember Aristides.

Cornelius Nepos, *Aristides*, 1

[1] Aristides, the son of Lysimachus, the Athenian, was almost the same age as Themistocles. So they opposed each other over the leadership of the city, because they were rivals in politics. [2] Yet in these two men we realise by how much eloquence might overcome integrity. For although Aristides was so superior in self-restraint that he alone, in the history of men whom we have heard of, was called the 'Just', nevertheless, he was beaten by Themistocles in an ostracism and was punished with exile for ten years. [3] When, understanding that the mob, once roused, could not be restrained, he gave in to them. He

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noticed someone writing that he ought to be banished from his country. He is said to have asked this person why he did this or what crime had Aristides committed that he deserved so great a punishment. [4] He replied to Aristides that he did not know him, but did not like him because he had worked so eagerly to be called Just more than other men. [5] He did not serve the full ten years exile according to the law. For, after Xerxes marched into Greece, in almost the sixth year of his exile, he was recalled to his homeland by decree of the people.

Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 22.7

[7] In the third year after this, when Nicodemos was archon, when the mines at Maroneia were found and the city had a profit on 100 talents from the workings, some suggested that the money should be given out to the people. Themistocles prevented this; he did not say what he would use the money for, but ordered them to give each of the hundred richest of the Athenians a talent each. If the expenditure pleased them, it would be a cost to the city, but if not, the money should be recovered from those who were lent it. When he had got hold of it on these terms, he had a 100 triremes built, with each of the 100 having one built; with these ships they fought the sea battle at Salamis against the barbarians. ...

Notes

Plutarch, *Life of Themistocles* 3.1–3.2, 4, 5.4

3

[1] It seems that fame attracted Themistocles strongly and that he was speedily drawn into public affairs while he was still full of youthful enthusiasm. He wanted very much to have an important position in the state, so from the beginning, in his desire to be at the top, he boldly accepted the hostility of the men who had power and were already very important in the city, especially Aristides the son of Lysimachus, who was always his opponent. But people think that his hostility with this man had quite a childish beginning.

[2] Ariston the philosopher wrote that they were rivals for the love of the handsome Stesilaüs, who was from Ceos, and after that they continued to be rivals in public life as well. But the huge difference between their lives and personalities must have increased their disagreement. Aristides was gentle by nature, and had a conservative personality. He went into politics, not to win popularity or a reputation, but to get the best results for safety and justice. Since Themistocles encouraged the people to try many new things and introduced huge reforms, Aristides was forced to stand up to him often and to try to prevent his influence from increasing. ...

4

[1] The Athenians usually shared between themselves the money coming from the silver mines at Laurium, but only Themistocles dared to suggest to the people that they should stop sharing the money out and that the money should be used to build triremes to fight the war against Aegina. At the time, that was the fiercest war going on in Greece and the islanders of Aegina controlled the sea because of the number of ships they had. [2] This made it easier for Themistocles to make his point. He did not need to terrify the citizens with dreadful pictures of Darius or the Persians who were too far away to inspire any serious fear of them attacking. Instead he stirred up the bitter

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jealousy which the Athenians had towards Aegina in order to get the ships built that he wanted. The result was that they used the money to build 100 triremes which they actually used to fight against Xerxes at Salamis. [3] After this he gradually persuaded the Athenians to turn their attention towards the sea. He pointed out that with their army they were no match even for their nearest neighbours. But he told them that with the power they would get from their navy they could not only keep away the Barbarians but also be the leaders of all of Greece. To use Plato's words, instead of dedicated hoplites he made them into sea-tossed sailors. This caused the following accusation: "Themistocles robbed his fellow citizens of their spears and shields, and relegated the Athenians to the rowing benches and the oars." As Stesimbrotus tells us, Themistocles managed this even though Miltiades was against it.

[4] It is for the philosophers to decide whether he harmed the reliability and simplicity of the Athenian constitution by doing this. But it is a fact that, at that time, the Greeks were saved by their domination of the sea. It was those very triremes which won Athens back after it had fallen, and what Xerxes himself did proves this, never mind any other proof. Since, although his army was still intact, he escaped after his navy was defeated, because he thought he could not stand up to the Greeks any more. It seems to me that he left Mardonius behind, not in the hope of conquering the Greeks but to slow them down if they chased him.

5

... [4] However, he was on good terms with the common people, partly because he could remember the name of every citizen, and partly because he was a safe and unbiased mediator in private cases and out of court settlements. Once Simonides of Ceos had made an inappropriate request from Themistocles when he was a magistrate and Themistocles said: "You would not be a good poet if you sang out of tune, and I would not be a good magistrate if I did people favours against the law."

Notes

Cornelius Nepos, *Themistocles*, 2

[1] His first stage (position) in the management of state affairs was in the Corcyraean War.⁸ He was appointed by the people to conduct the war. And not only in the current war but also in the future, he made the citizens more confident and courageous. [2] Since the public income, which came from the mines, was annually wasted by the corruption of the officials, he persuaded the people to build a fleet of 100 ships with the money. [3] This was quickly constructed and with it he broke the resistance of the Corcyraeans, then, by pursuing the pirates, made the sea safe. In this he provided the Athenians with riches and also made them very skilled at naval warfare. [4] The extent to which this contributed to the safety of Greece was realised in the Persian War. ...

Old Oligarch, 1.2–1.3

[2] So first I will say this, that there the poor and the people rightly have more than the aristocracy and the wealthy, because it is the people who crew the ships and give strength to the city. The helmsmen, the men who mark time for the rowers, the officers, the look-outs, the ship-builders, these are the men who give strength to the city far more than the hoplites, the aristocracy or the good. So as this is how things are, it seems that it is right that everyone has a share in the offices of state, both those chosen by lot and those elected, and anyone of the citizens who wishes to is allowed to speak. [3] Then whichever offices of state bring safety to the people if they are well handled, but danger if not, the people have no need to have a share of these offices. (They think there is no need for them to have a share by lot in the generalships or command of the cavalry.) For the people know that they gain more themselves by not holding these offices, but in allowing the most powerful men to hold them. Whatever offices are held in return for pay or benefit to their household, these the people are eager to hold.

⁸ this is a mistake in Nepos' account - it should be the Aeginan War

Notes

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.37.1

The Athenian constitution is not a rival to the laws of our neighbour states; rather, we are an example to others than imitators ourselves. It favours the majority, instead of the few; this is why it is called a "democracy". If we consider the laws, they provide equal justice to all in their personal disputes; they also recognise worthiness, so that if one citizen is particularly distinguished, the majority does not honour him because of his social class, but because of his virtue. So long as he can do good for the state, he will not be returned to poverty because of the obscurity of his social status.

Notes



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