

# The End of Tyranny and the Reforms of Kleisthenes



# Reminder: Mini-Essay (paper #1)

- Due Fri. Oct. 22 by 11:59 pm to CCLE “Turn-It-In” Link
- Check document on CCLE called “Mini-Essay Information”
- “This essay should exhibit an **informed reaction either to an image from Greek material culture or to a select chunk of primary reading** (that is, a portion of Homer, Herodotus, lyric poetry, etc., but not McInerney, which is a secondary, scholarly source). This essay is to be no more than 500 words, double-spaced (= 2 pages).”
- If choosing passage (speech, Homeric simile, etc.), print at top of paper: passage is not part of word count.
- Perform a “close reading” of the object or passage. What does your close analysis of its details reveal about its possible meaning(s)?
- Good essays **favor analysis over summary.**
- **Questions? Email me or your TA.**

# Picking up on a few points from last time

1. Solon's reforms moderate but obviously don't resolve class tensions.
2. Period of rule by the Peisistratids demonstrates the extent to which the term "tyranny" does not always connote negativity. Better to think of tyrants as "rulers" who seize power but could exercise it for good and/or ill.
  - a) Archon lists indicate that there were still archons (often friends of the tyrants): see McInerney p. 164.
3. Later attempts to "erase" evidence of tyrant rule at Athens part of Athenian self-mythologization as founders of democracy.
4. But if not so bad (2), why erase (3)? Two basic reasons:
  - a) There *were* repressive, abusive tyrants in Greece, and thus just having been ruled by anyone with that title could sound bad.
  - b) And, fundamentally, even if a tyrant worked for the common good in some fashion, he still held power by force and often seized it without the consent of the governed (or by trickery: remember Peisistratus with "Athena" in the chariot).

The End of  
Tyrants in  
Athens:  
The Story of  
Aristogeiton  
and  
Harmodios



Replica Statues  
of Aristogeiton  
and  
Harmodios  
("The Tyrant-  
Slayers")

# Revision to Point from Earlier

1. But if tyrants not so bad, why erase their memory? ~~Two~~ THREE basic reasons:
  - a) There *were* repressive, abusive tyrants in Greece, and thus just having been ruled by anyone with that title could sound bad.
  - b) And, fundamentally, even if a tyrant worked for the common good in some fashion, he still held power by force and often seized it without the consent of the governed (or by trickery: remember Peisistratus with “Athena” in the chariot!).
  - c) If you’re Athenian and your tyranny ends in part because of *Spartan action*, better to come up with a story that makes the Athenians seem like they took a bigger role than they did.



# Aristogeiton and Harmodios



Summary at  
McInerney pp.  
163-4

## “Remembering” the “Tyrant-Slayers”

1. Issue of class? Aristogeiton as “an Athenian and a citizen of the middle class” (Thuc. 6.54): that is, a figure with whom many citizens, especially not of the upper class, could identify.
2. Narrative that will become dominant in the drinking song converts the lovers’ privately motivated act into a public-spirited moment of rebellion, benefitting future generations.
3. Where to sing such a song? At a symposium!



# Democratic Reforms of Kleisthenes (an Alkmaionid)





# Kleisthenes' Reforms

- Ten new tribes (*phylae*) to replace old tribes:
  - Each tribe subdivided into *trittyes*, or thirds, composed of clustered “demes” (villages and townships), with each “third” coming from one geographic region (city, shore, and inland)
- So, to make a *tribe*, take one *trittys* from each geographical region and put three together. Thus one *phylê* consisted of three *trittyes*, one from each of the geographical regions.

# LOS ANGELES



Shore  
City  
Inland

One “Los Angeles Tribe” would consist of a Shore, City, and Inland *trittys*. Each third would be composed of different demes.

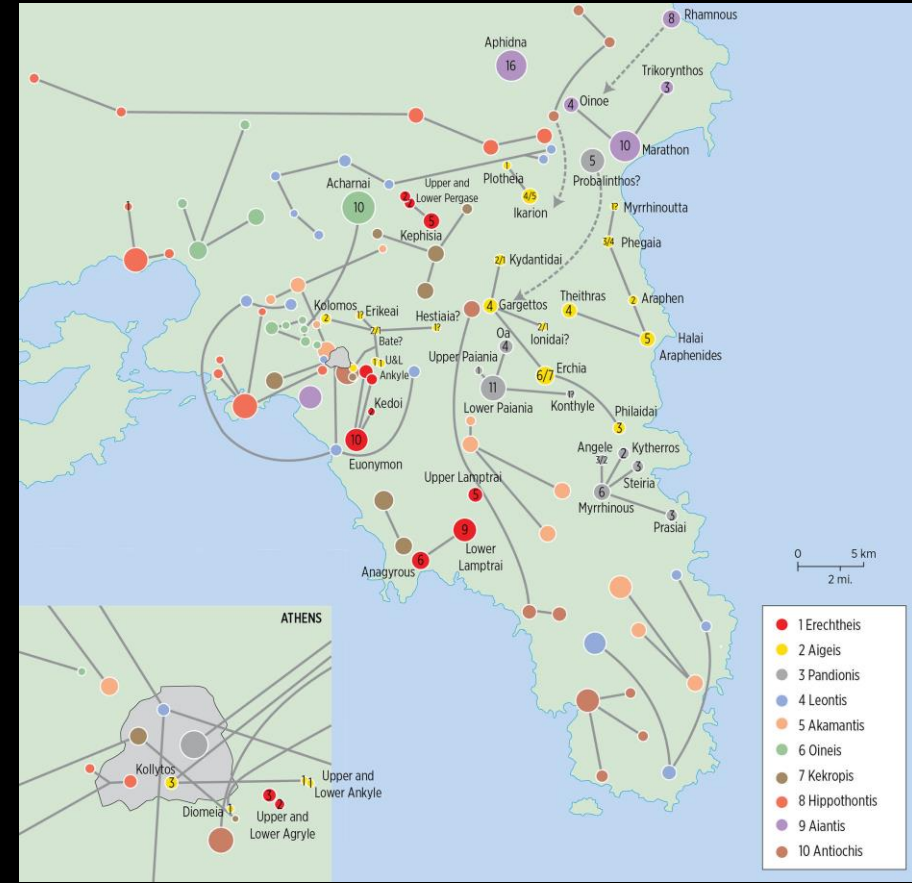
**Tribe A:** Venice, Koreatown, Pomona

**Tribe B:** Santa Monica, Compton, Pasadena

**Tribe C:** Long Beach, Inglewood, Sylmar

# Some Effects of Kleisthenes' Tribal Reforms

- Weakens “voting-block” and local deme loyalties; switches loyalty to wider “tribe”
- Also means that it doesn't matter as much if you're from a poor area of Attica or an area with bad crops: you are linked through your *phylê* to people from other geographical regions
- Participation with your tribe in the army as well as religious activities creates sense of unity across Attica



# Question of How to Develop Democracy

McInerney p. 169: “Can democracy be engineered by an elaborate set of institutions, or does it depend on a deeper, more fundamental commitment to such principals as equality and the rule of law?”



# Two Other Reforms from Kleisthenes

- **Council (*Boulê*) of the Five Hundred**

- Fifty members per tribe ( $50 \times 10 = 500$ ), chosen by lottery
- Drew up legislation for Assembly (*ekklesia*) to vote on
- Each tribe in charge for one-tenth of year

- **Ostracism**

- Expulsion of a public figure for ten years



Pnyx Hill, Athens, Site of  
Council Meetings

# Ostraka →

- Way of checking power on potentially power-hungry individuals
- Ostracism was rare event; interval between votes (An “are-you-sure?” period)





# From Public to Private? The Symposium





# Kylix (drinking cup)





# Aristocratic Bonding in the Face of Change?











Self-  
Reflection?





## Example of Symposium Song by Theognis (lyric poet, 6<sup>th</sup> C BCE)

“Fire is used by experts when it comes to testing  
silver and gold,  
but it’s wine that brings to light the  
temper of a man.”

(Quoted in D. Sansone, *Ancient Greek Civilization*, 2017, p. 90)

## Theognis (lyric poet, 6<sup>th</sup> C BCE)

“We are concerned with **quality** only, my beloved Kyrnos, when we breed sheep and mules and horses, and everyone wants to breed them from good stock. But a man of quality, if someone offers him a fortune, has no hesitation about taking a worthless wife from a worthless family. Nor does a woman refuse to be a wife of a worthless man – **as long as he’s rich! – choosing wealth over worth ... Money debases the generations**” (lines 183-90, trans. Sansone, adapted)

# Anacreon of Teos (6<sup>th</sup> C BCE)

1] **fragment 359** (trans. Miller)

For Cleobulus I long,  
On Cleobulus I dote,  
At Cleobulus I gaze.

2] **fragment 360** (trans. Miller)

Boy whose glance is girlish,  
I pursue you, but you pay no heed,  
not knowing that you hold my soul's  
reins in your hand.

# Statues & Songs (for Friday)

