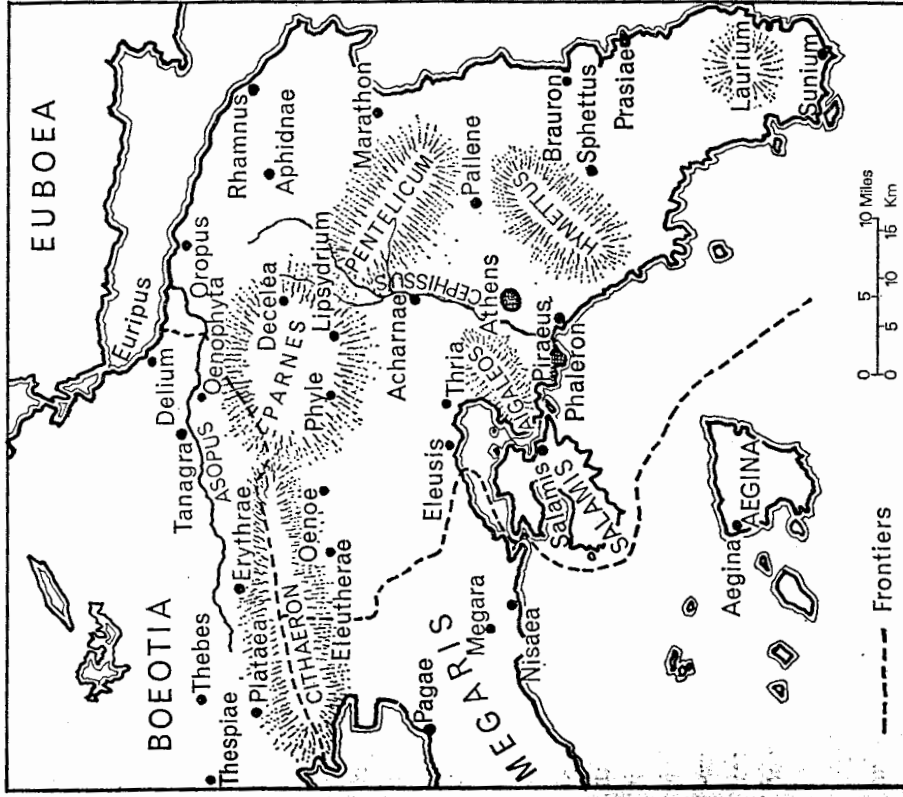


seventh), after having been an independent state under kings of its own. Like Sparta, Athens held a comparatively large territory; but unlike Sparta, Athens did not rule over subjects free or bond, rather



3. Attica and Surroundings

the whole of Attica was citizens' land. In Homer, Attica is never mentioned; it was identical with Athens (*Il.* 2, 546 ff. *Od.* 3, 278), a view necessarily based on the fact of synoecism.<sup>2</sup>

The city-state which emerged from the process of unification preserved to some extent earlier tribal features, as in fact every

### III

## ATHENS BEFORE AND UNDER SOLON

### I. The Aristocratic State

Athens, practically — though not entirely — untouched by the various invasions after 1300 B.C., had been actively involved in the Ionian migration (see p. 6), and Athenian pottery had flourished in the ninth and eighth centuries; after that there is no evidence that Athens was of importance till the time of Solon. What the Greeks themselves later wrote about early Athenian history is partly legend and partly the story of the transition from monarchy to aristocracy, which was general among Greek states. Some conclusions, however, can be drawn from later sources.<sup>1</sup> If we concentrate here on Athens, it is not only because of her later importance but also because we have so very little evidence for other states. In general they will have developed along similar lines, though Athens was never really typical. The most important fact is that the whole of Attica, originally divided among many *poieis* (cf., e.g., the 'Tetrapolis' round Marathon), was united under the rule of Athens at an early date. This was later described as a single act of synoecism, and regarded as the work of Theseus, mythical hero and king of Athens. Thucydides (2, 15) tells us that Theseus did away with the independent *poieis* and created one *bouleuterion* and one *prytaneion*, that is, one council chamber and one seat of government. It can be accepted as historical that a political unification took place without any large transfer of population. It is, however, out of the question that it all happened in one single move; we must rather assume that there was a lengthy process, probably ending when the ancient sanctuary and town of Eleusis with its fertile hinterland, the Thriasian plain, lost its independence in the late eighth century (or even the early

polis did, more or less. Athens, just like Thebes and Syracuse, had a name that indicated a plurality of communities (*hai Athenai*); the fact has never been explained, though it probably derives from an original synoecism.<sup>3</sup> There were four phylae, some of which also appear in other Ionian cities; but there was less uniformity among Ionians than Dorians. The names of the Athenian phylae cannot be explained.<sup>4</sup> Each was headed by a tribal king (*phyllobasileus*), whose title shows that he was subject to the king of Athens. Smaller communities within each phyle were the phratries (brotherhoods), to which originally only members of the noble families were admitted. These families, based on the household unit of the *oikos*, were bound together in a clan or *genos* by common mythical ancestry. While the phratries had a common cult of Zeus Phratrios and Athena (perhaps Phratría), the clans worshipped, apart from special deities, Zeus Herkeios (the god of the hearth) and Apollo Patroos (the family god), that is to say, they bound their members, living and dead, together in one sacred tradition of kinship which gave the whole body of clans a firm basis of solidarity. The clans with their patronymic names were the natural units of the aristocracy, and sometimes a particular clan might dominate a phratry; the clans exercised power in local districts, and sometimes villages (*demes*) would be called after a clan, though that could also happen with a phratry. The main distinction between clan and brotherhood is that the former were related, at least in theory, by blood, their members being parts of a *genos* (*gennetai*) or milk-brothers (*homogalaktes*), while the phratries were not brothers in any sense of real kinship.<sup>5</sup> The phratries, in fact, were the link between clan and state; every child within a clan was to be admitted to a phratry and thus became a future citizen. Clans may have not come into existence before the settlement of the tribe, while the phratry belongs to an earlier past when phylae and phratries were also military divisions (as in *Il.* 2, 362 f.) of the tribe.

Athenian society under the rule of kings and the bonds of religious worship was an aristocracy of the clans. Later tradition saw its rise chiefly in terms of constitutional changes; the transition was put into a scheme such as recorded by Aristotle (*AP* 3), which is clearly not historical. We are told that after the kings there were first life-long archons ('rulers'), followed by decennial, and finally,

annual officials of that name. Whether the life-long archons represented a stage of elected instead of hereditary kingship is at least doubtful; the ten-years archons are pure invention. The name archon indicates that a magistrate has taken the place of the king. At an early date the office was divided into three; the first was the *basileus*, a title which could never be abolished as it involved the ruler's duties towards the gods. The second office was the *polemarchos*, the leader of the army, the third that of the (first) archon, the eponymous official.<sup>6</sup> This is the order given by Aristotle and it has rightly been doubted. Both the archon *basileus* and the first archon can only have come into being when there was no longer a king. The later list of eponymous (and therefore annual) archons probably began with the year 682-681.<sup>7</sup> It is not certain whether this year also marks the introduction of annual archons, but it is at least not unlikely. The polemarch as the leader in war could represent a later division; but since in the Linear B tablets an army leader (*lawagetas*) is mentioned beside the king (*wanax*), it seems possible that there may have been an army leader also at Athens, while monarchy was still in existence; the analogy of the Spartan kings who remained military leaders is not conclusive, especially as there were two. 'Many years afterwards,' Aristotle tells us (3, 4), six further archons were added, the 'law-setters' or *thesmothetai*, who were responsible for jurisdiction and the preservation of the laws, that is to say, the knowledge of the customary law.<sup>7a</sup> The offices of the various archons remained individual offices; it was only the thesmothetai who formed a board like most of the other officials at Athens. Other similar magistrates were introduced in the course of time and thus the power of the archons was gradually limited; there were, e.g., the treasurers (*iamiai*) of the temple of Athena, the *kolakretai*, who administered the treasury of the community, that is to say, the growing amount of public revenue and expenses, the *poletai*, who were responsible for public sales and tenancies, the eleven (*hendekai*), who served as police and also as judges. Probably all the officials were elected by the 'people', the *ekklesia*, i.e. an assembly of landholders, rather than being chosen by the council on the Areopagus, as Aristotle maintains (*AP* 8, 2). When he stresses that the archons were chosen 'from among the nobles and the rich' (*aristiden kai ploutinden*) he states a historical fact, not a

constitutional rule. Of the procedure of the election we know nothing; for the rest, the *ekklesia* is unlikely to have had any rights except that of saying Yes or No to questions of decisive importance. The Areopagus (as we usually call the council, from the hill where it met) consisted of the traditional elders; what exactly their functions were, apart from generally giving advice and, of course, carrying out judicial duties, is difficult to know. Aristotle's views are clearly influenced by the romantic conservatism of Isocrates' *Areopagiticus*; but there can be no doubt that the council had great power and a prestige unrivalled by any other constitutional element, as the only institution created by the gods.

Archons and Areopagus were the exclusive domain of the nobles. They were called *eupatridai*, the sons of good (i.e. noble) fathers; they were the 'high-born', the aristocracy consisting of many clans.<sup>8</sup> There were two other classes or groups in early Athens, the farmers (*agroikoi*) and the artisans (*demourgoi*). It seems unreasonable to doubt the early existence of the three 'classes', though they will not have been legally acknowledged separate units.<sup>9</sup> The nobility were the large landowners, mainly corn-growers and to some extent cattle-breeders, later cultivators of olives and vines; olive oil became one of the chief sources of Athenian prosperity. These wealthy families were a clear minority of the people, but they held most of the fertile land in the Attic plains, while the small farmers generally lived on the poorer land in the hills.<sup>10</sup> The Eupatrids, in every sense the high and mighty, held not only the great offices of state but also the few official priesthoods; they ruled the community as the heirs to the power of the kings. The clans were not always a united body; there were just as in other states many regional and personal conflicts among them, but they were an essentially uniform society featuring, as we can see from the vase paintings, athletics, paederasty and wine drinking.<sup>10a</sup> The main thing, however, was that they formed a more or less united front of the wealthy and powerful against those who had no political rights, the free peasants and the landless. At the same time the contrast was, or at least grew, even stronger between those – whether noble or non-noble – who held some land and those who did not, and therefore had no share in public life at all.

Two facts show that the rule of the aristocracy and the hereditary

principle based on noble birth were not uncontested. First, there were similar cult associations whose members (*orgeones*) were non-nobles.<sup>11</sup> They aimed at getting into the phratry or to have equal rights with their members, in order to gain full citizenship; they eventually succeeded, though the final achievement may have been as late as the time of Solon. At some time other cult associations (*thiasoi*) were introduced as parts of the phratry, probably as a means of mixing nobles and non-nobles. The decisive general factor was the change of military tactics of which we have spoken before (p. 21). With the introduction of the phalanx, those who could afford it served in war as hoplites; most of the *georgoi* must have been among them. The effect on both aristocrats and peasants will have been strong indeed, especially as phylae and phratry had been the army divisions in the field. When the heavily armed soldiers, the hoplites, became the main strength of the army, its units must have included the non-nobles as well – in fact, as the largest contingent. They gradually intensified their claims, and the nobles began to give way; indeed, whether compelled to do so or by voluntary action, they now played a decisive role within the whole community, not only as a ruling society. They began to accept the existence of a state authority, though this still remained essentially in their hands, and the law developed in the direction as described before. The archons may at first have had the task of restraining and supervising the use of self-help by the clans, but soon this proved insufficient, as the ruling class had to recognize that arbitrary jurisdiction by noble judges, such as we know it from Hesiod, would no longer be possible.

The second important fact which influenced the aristocratic order were the local ties of neighbourhood and the regional nuclei of clanish power. Local and family interests became more and more intertwined. Some of the clans had their estates chiefly near the city, others far away. Obviously the situation was bound to create different political trends and opposing groups.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, a territorial division of the whole state became inevitable, and this must have altered the purely personal character of the phylae. It seems that most members of a phyle had settled near to one another. When Aristotle (*AP* 8, 3) tells us that each phyle had three subdivisions, the *trittyes*, and each of these four *naukrariai*, it is clear that this is

a regional division. The number of twelve *trittyes* corresponds with the tradition of twelve *poleis* in early Attica, and with the altar of the twelve gods regarded as the centre of the state.<sup>13</sup> In the forty-eight *naucrariae* the citizens were registered for financial and administrative purposes. According to Herodotus (5, 71, 2), their presidents (*prytanis*) played an important political part of which otherwise nothing is known; they may have actually been the heads of the *trittyes*. Anyway, the *naukeratos* meant originally the master of a ship; as the leader of a *naucrasy* he will have been the head of a body of citizens responsible for the means of building and equipping a warship. As the *naucrariae* were parts of the *trittyes*, and they of the *phylae*, the latter must have had some regional meaning. On the other hand, they did not lose their traditional personal bonds. Their heads, the four tribal kings (mentioned above, p. 52), had once judicial power in cases of bloodshed; that was primarily a religious duty to avoid pollution of the community. They later lost this power, but had other religious tasks. We never hear of any political or administrative action taken by them, another indication that the four *phylae* remained essentially 'personal', not local, units.

## 2 · The Social Crisis

The nobility, firmly entrenched in the security of their political power and their bonds of kinship, cult, and neighbourhood, and so far not yet seriously affected by the slow rise of the peasantry, were to face an economic and social crisis which not only undermined their own power but also severely shook the whole community. Our evidence is scanty and partly obscure; but the essential outlines are frequently reported.<sup>14</sup> Like other states, Athens faced the danger of being ruled by a tyrant. In 632 (or 636) a young nobleman, Cylon, a former Olympic victor and the son-in-law of the tyrant Theagenes of Megara, seized the Acropolis, but was prevented from further success by the remarkable action of the peasants who flocked into town, were armed, and saved the situation for the authorities. The people were probably incensed by the fact that Megarian soldiers helped Cylon, as the Athenians in general may have feared the predominance of Megara; but the support by the

peasants will also have been due to their dependence on the upper class and, on the other hand, to promises made by the latter which materialized shortly afterwards in Dracon's legislation. Cylon's attempt failed; he himself escaped, but his followers were dragged from the altar to which they had fled and were killed. This sacrifice was chiefly attributed to the archon Megacles, the head of the Alcmaeonid family, and the memory of his crime played some part in later Athenian history.<sup>15</sup>

The enmities among the noble families and the blood-bath that ended the Cylonian affair were symptoms rather than causes of general conditions otherwise hardly known to us. There was more to it than the failure of a conspiracy. 'After that,' Aristotle writes (*AP* 2, 1), 'there was for a long time civic struggle between the nobles and the people.' That conflict must have been simmering under the surface for some time past. The events surrounding Cylon, whatever their significance, showed general disturbance and unrest, though at the same time a united front against tyranny. The people in arms had become a serious danger to the ruling class. Only a few years later Dracon (about 624) gave Athens the first written codification of laws and thus granted the people some safety against arbitrary jurisdiction. The only part of his code which survived Solon's legislation was his laws on homicide, which were renewed late in the fifth century, and preserved on stone.<sup>16</sup> Dracon was the first to distinguish between murder and manslaughter. We know nothing of his further laws, though they must have existed; after Solon the Greeks themselves had practically no knowledge of that earlier legislation. Their belief that more or less every crime down to theft and larceny was punished by the death penalty is nonsense, and probably the whole story that Dracon 'wrote his laws in blood' was later invention. On the other hand, part of the social crisis which Solon was to overcome, must have been caused by laws of a clearly severe nature. When Solon (24, 9 D) speaks of the men sold into slavery, about whom we shall have to say more, as enslaved 'wrongly' (*ekdikēs*) or 'rightly' (*dikaiōs*), the meaning is not moral but legal. It was the question whether the sale into slavery was based on law or not. That law can hardly have been anything else but one of Dracon's. That remains true, although his extant law on manslaughter was mild and progressive, showing that even for

unpremeditated murder the penalty was only exile. This law is the beginning of the end of the long history at Athens of blood-vengeance and private punishment, although the consent of the family or phratry was still needed for the return of the exiled killer. Deliberate murder was still a matter in which the family took a decisive part, though probably only after the state authority had spoken.<sup>17</sup> The formal constitution ascribed to Dracon in *AP* 4 is unhistorical.<sup>18</sup>

We have so far noted the outbreaks and effects of unrest rather than its causes. These were the economic and social conditions in which a large part of the people were living; their specific character, however, is highly disputed.<sup>19</sup> In general, the lower classes were in a sorry plight; what their situation exactly was depends on some facts which cannot be regarded as clearly established. One thing we now know is that down to Solon, money economy hardly began to exert any influence at Athens. It was a question of land and its produce. Aristotle (*AP* 2) tells us that 'the poor with their wives and children were in servitude to the rich', 'that all the land was in the hands of the few', and Plutarch (*Sol.* 13, 4) says, 'the whole demos was in debt to the rich'. These are exaggerated and generalizing statements, obviously based on Solon's poems, which only speak of those who needed his help; they leave out the bulk of the free peasantry which must have existed, though we do not hear of them. We know, after all, of two groups which will have consisted chiefly of the free yeomen class, the hoplites and the orgeones; to a large extent they will have been the same people, the *zeugitai* (see below, p. 65). What we do not know for certain is whether their farms were alienable, as the estates of the nobles most decisively were not. Solon seems to have given a law to prevent the unlimited accumulation of land (*Arist. pol.* 1266b, 16), and that may partly have been directed against the usurpation of public land by the wealthy; but that alone would not explain the urgency of the social situation. We must assume that the rich could actually buy out a farmer; their farms will therefore have been alienable. For Hesiod (*Erga* 336 ff.) it depends on piety and the blessing of the gods whether one can buy another *kleros* or somebody else one's own; the Boeotia of Hesiod cannot provide a definite proof for Attica, though it may strengthen our argument. Obviously land freshly put under cultiva-

tion would be free, but it remains doubtful what happened when a farm was regarded as a family *kleros*.<sup>19a</sup>

Even if we accept the view that farms outside the noble family estates could be sold, it still remains an open question whether at Athens the family estate could be divided among several sons. Analogies again from other regions (e.g. Hesiod's Boeotia or the law of Gortyn) are inconclusive; but the fact that the plight of the peasantry was so widespread, and also that Athens did not send out colonies (but see p. 401, note 25), makes it likely that there was no bar to dividing the ordinary lot, except that it may frequently have been too small for further division. Thus the number of very small farms would increase and make it more likely that so many peasants fell into debt. It is also possible that some farms stood on public land and that the nobles usurped parts of it and forced the smallholders into service or expelled them. Even at their worst, however, conditions in that country of limited size somehow managed to avoid the extremes. There never were *latifundia* as in Italy, and the means of improving the social and economic situation proved to be comparatively simple.

Yet a man of wisdom and courage was needed. In a famous poem in iambs (24), Solon renders, as it were, account of what he has done. The first thing is that he freed the land from the *horoi* which 'were erected in many places'. Mother Earth herself will be witness 'before the tribunal of Time' that she who had been 'in servitude before, was now free'. The *horoi* were pillars or stones, neither purely boundary nor mortgage stones, but set up to show that a particular piece of land and its crop were under a pledge. It is likely that there was a kind of class-war going on, when noble landowners forced peasants into dependence and into serving as labourers on their estates. Or a farmer in need of corn or seed or anything else would ask a wealthier neighbour for help. He would borrow with the intention to pay back in kind, or the loan may have been only fictive. Anyway, as a security, the creditor got hold of the land. What name we give to the form of contract by which a debtor gave his land, or part of it, to a creditor is of little importance. It is, at any rate, the situation to which Aristotle refers.<sup>20</sup> Solon, in the following verses, goes on to mention three different groups of people; the last were those who were in servitude in Attica. They

must have been the same as those on whose land the *horoi* were erected. From other sources we know that they were called *hektemorioi* ('sixth parters'); they could also, though probably later when the meaning of *hektemorioi* was no longer clear, be called *pelatai* (clients?) or *thetes* which was the general name of the landless. They were unable to repay the loans they had accepted or provide sufficient labour, and were forced to pay one-sixth of their produce to the creditor.<sup>21</sup> The *horos* made it clear that the debtor, his family, and his land were in the power of the creditor, as long as the pledge was not redeemed, and that the land could not be claimed or sold by himself or any relative of his. As Solon implies, it was the lack of freedom which weighed most upon the *hectemorii*, but in their state of poverty the rate of payment was often a heavy burden. Moreover, there must have been increasing economic pressure because of the growth of the population. Like everywhere else, at Athens too the signs of land-hunger became evident, and that frequently caused grazing land to be turned into poor arable land, with the danger of soil erosion.<sup>22</sup>

There were other forms of oppression which Solon mentions. Before the line on the *hectemorii*, he speaks of those 'many who, lawfully or not,<sup>23</sup> had been sold abroad', and others who had fled from Attica because of debts and 'had even forgotten their Attic speech - so widely had they been wandering' (and, we may add, for such a long period). We learn that it was possible to sell a man into slavery for debt. Aristotle maintains that loans were on the security of the persons of the debtor and his family. Sale into slavery was the ultimate consequence of that rule. It also meant that less people had to be fed at home, though it is unlikely that this fact influenced the deportation of enslaved peasants. Moreover, there were foreign slaves in increasing numbers, who were part of the property of the wealthy.

The distinction made by Solon between those at home and those abroad is at the same time a distinction (as stressed by Plutarch, *Sol.* 13) between the *hectemorii*, that is to say, free peasants in financial bondage, and those who either had become slaves abroad or had fled Attica in order not to be enslaved. The two groups were not men of different origin or even different social status, who for that reason would have been treated differently. Rather, they repre-

mented two different phases in the treatment of the debtors, a milder one and a more severe one; the second stage would probably be reached if and when one of the *hectemorii* was unable to pay his sixth. That is the explanation which Aristotle gives in his rather confused chapter (*AP* 2). It is probably not more than a guess, but it makes sense.<sup>24</sup>

We may still ask what caused the state of affairs in which a great many people had fallen into dependence. A few bad harvests or some hostile raids from neighbouring areas might be bad enough, but could hardly account for such deep and widespread distress among the farmers. We shall discuss Solon's reform of weights and measures. Coins - though only staters, i.e. two drachma pieces - had perhaps by then been introduced in Corinth and Aegina, though even that is not certain, and most trading was still on a barter basis or dealt with money weights and not with coins. Even so, economic competition generally increased, and it did influence the Athenian market as well. This must have made life more difficult for the Attic farmers, while the larger landowners who chiefly grew olive trees and vines could easily exchange their produce against imported corn or even luxury goods. When a peasant tried to get help from a wealthy neighbour, it was quite common, as Solon expressly states (fr. 3, 7 ff.), for the rich to make the most unfair use of their opportunities. Solon reproaches them for 'avarice and arrogance' (4, 4), thus condemning on moral grounds what, he knows, was at the same time a grave social danger. The opening-up of overseas trade routes and the need for cutting down home consumption may even have made the sale abroad of slaves a really profitable, if contemptible, form of business, while it also reduced the number of the poor.

The general situation therefore was that the rule of an oligarchy of noble and wealthy landowners had become so oppressive that a revolution did not seem far away. It was the situation which in so many Greek states led to the rise of a tyrant. The Athenians, after the lesson of Cylon's attempt, behaved once again with remarkable political wisdom. The lower classes would naturally applaud anybody who was going to help them. They were not only the really poor (*hectemorii* and many of the *thetes*) but also farmers who as non-Eupatrids were excluded from holding office. The wealthy,

on the other hand, must have realized that any intervention would mean losses for them, but that a revolution would be worse. The number of the hectemorii will have greatly increased at the end of the century, and differences among various noble clans may have strengthened the wish for a peaceful settlement. It was also a question of maintaining the military strength of Athens, which suffered by the decline of the free peasantry. An additional reason will have been that in the late seventh century wealth from other sources than land began to play a considerable part. The men who sailed the seas, although a small minority in an overwhelmingly agricultural society, must have been some of the most energetic and ambitious people from both the nobles and the non-nobles. With the wealth thus acquired, and used if possible to buy land, those not belonging to the nobility gained a higher social status. The old social barriers were beginning to break down. All classes of the people had the greatest interest in achieving a peaceful solution to the troubles within the community, and were prepared to accept the decision of a mediator.

### 3 · Solon: *Seisachtheia* and *Constitution*

What was it that made Solon a possible and, as it seems, the only possible candidate for the role of mediator? Born in the early thirties of the seventh century, he was neither too young nor too old. He belonged to a clan of highest nobility, but was – if we may trust Plutarch (2), who most likely made an obvious conclusion from some of Solon's verse – a man of moderate means. Probably a younger son, he did not inherit the ancestral estate and was engaged in trade; he had travelled a good deal and therefore might have a better understanding of economic affairs in general than most of his fellow noblemen. However, these qualities would hardly have sufficed to single Solon out for the great task of putting the state in order. It seems that he became known to his fellow citizens by his actions in the war which had been going on for a long time between Athens and Megara for the possession of Salamis. It may have helped to alleviate the situation of the poor farmers, when the island of Salamis was added to the available land.<sup>25</sup> The stories told later

about the capture of the town of Salamis and Solon's part in it are mainly invention; the only reliable source is the few fragments of an elegy (2) in which Solon exhorted the citizens to fight for the land and not to be among the *Salaminiaphetai*, the betrayers of Salamis.<sup>26</sup> It seems certain that soon after the public appearance of Solon reciting his elegy, the island was conquered or reconquered, possibly under his leadership. The war with Megara, however, did not end till eventually Sparta was asked to arbitrate between the two states and gave Salamis to Athens – a clear indication of Sparta's acknowledged leadership in Greece.

A public recital in the agora was the most effective, if not indeed the only, means for a man to spread his views and to become known among the people. Solon, 'using the ordered song of verse instead of mere speech' (2, 2), wrote, and undoubtedly recited, other poems which must have carried even greater weight than the Salamis elegy to induce the Athenians to make him their political mediator (*diallaktês*), poems which in general terms expressed Solon's views on gods and men, on wealth and poverty, on right and wrong, on the punishment of evil-doers by divine justice. These and other subjects are the themes of his first elegy, in which he really speaks of his 'mission' as a poet, and produces a kind of moral and serious programme for the life of men.<sup>27</sup> In a language more poetical than that of most of his other extant poetry, and with deep religious fervour, he warns his fellow men not to rely on wealth and power but to fear fate's punishment. Even closer to the point is the elegy called *Eunomia* (fr. 3), which shows his deep concern for the fate of his beloved Athens. The state is threatened by the people themselves, especially by the unjust aims of the leaders and the rich. He foretells servitude and civil war, he speaks of the poor sold abroad into slavery. 'Bad order' (*dysnomia*) brings evil to the polis, while 'good order' (*eunomia*) saves the state from ruin, 'straightens crooked judgments', and 'stops the works of factional strife'. We must assume that the nobles played a decisive part in electing Solon. Economic reasons will have played their part. The rich (like Solon himself) frequently traded their own produce abroad, but that was no longer sufficient, and they were in need of traders and potters for their oil export. The epoch of the exclusive rule of the narrow-minded landowners was coming to an end, and the wealthy class must have

realized that the danger of revolt and possibly tyranny was so great that any alternative was preferable. Here was the man who told them the bitter truth, and therefore had the confidence of the lower classes, the man who dared reverse the usual concepts of class description, calling many of the rich 'bad', and claiming that the poor were 'good' (4, 9).<sup>28</sup> What chiefly angered the lower classes was no longer as in Hesiod's Boeotia the crooked judgements by the squires but their ill-gotten wealth.<sup>29</sup> It must have been clear, at the same time, that Solon had no radical views. He was the man who knew the answer to, and the way out of, the dangerous distress. As Tyrtæus in Sparta spoke of *eunomia* in an hour of crisis, so did Solon – though they did not mean the same thing – and the whole people responded. Whether Solon was an outstanding poet or not, he was a real 'maker' (*poiëtes*), a creator, and the moral passion of his poetry as well as his general moderation carried conviction as the expression of a just and determined man, and of a statesman at that. As he says himself, he did his work thanks to his power (*kratos*), bringing into harmony both force and justice.<sup>30</sup> Most remarkable at the same time was the kind of piety which ruled his mind and actions. In all his poetry we find nothing of mythology or of theological discussion; he had a simple belief in the final justice of the gods and in the particular protection of his beloved Athens by Pallas Athena (esp. fr. 3). He was able to fill the position which archaic and to some extent even classical Greece offered to the poet and that meant fulfilling the task of guiding the people.

Solon was elected archon for the year 594–593 and was given full power.<sup>31</sup> The foremost thing to do was to free the debtors and their land. He did this by cancelling all debts, and this was called *seisachtheia*, the 'shaking-off of burdens'. It certainly was a radical measure, but the loss for the creditors did not touch the substance of their wealth. At the same time he forbade for the future all loans on the security of the person (*epi sômasi*) so that never again could a man, or his wife and family, be enslaved for debt. It is possible that he cancelled thereby a law of Dracon's. A law like this, with its effects reaching into the future, was a kind of *habeas corpus* act, rare if not unique in the Greek world. It must also have included any cases of selling citizens into slavery for reasons other than debt. When the stones on the land were removed, and 'Mother Earth

made free', the creditor lost his hold on the debtor, and the master on his dependent labourer, obviously without any recompense. The *hectemorii* disappeared, and we never hear of them again.<sup>31a</sup>

This act of liberation must have been comparatively easy, compared with the task of bringing back to Athens those who were enslaved abroad. We do not know how Solon was able to buy them free from their owners. Did their former master know where they were? Could those who had sold them be forced to pay for their liberation? Or was public money used, and if so, where did it come from? It is not impossible that the reform of measures and coinage, about which we shall have more to say, provided some means for state business. Solon could not sell the land of exiled opponents, as other reformers often did, though there may have been a few farms the owners of which could no longer be traced. Those who had voluntarily exiled themselves in order to find a livelihood elsewhere will have gladly returned as soon as they heard of the *seisachtheia*. The free peasantry of Attica was thus fully restored, though Solon did not provide the means the liberated people would need to start their new lives, and we may also ask whether it was possible fully to restore the land to the previous owners. What he did was to improve the general economic situation by banning all export of natural produce except oil of which there must have been plenty. Thus, he prevented precious corn from going abroad, and helped those who were better off, but had lost some of their wealth. He also tried to strengthen non-agricultural activities, and to foster trade and manufacture by various measures such as his reform of weights and measures (see p. 73), and the creation of a new marketplace.<sup>32</sup> Some of the former peasants who returned from exile will have taken up other professions; there may even have been a more widespread move from the rural areas to the city.

The economic reforms were followed by a remoulding of the constitution on a new economic basis. Even before Solon the introduction of the new military tactics which we have mentioned several times had led to a new division of the people. According to their military position they were divided into horsemen or knights (*hippeis*), the yoke-men (*zeugitai*), and the *thetes*, that is to say, cavalry, phalanx of hoplites, and men without military duties.<sup>33</sup> The three groups had an economic and social significance as well



since the keeping of a horse and the providing of heavy armour required certain economic standards. The new groups to some extent replaced the ancient division into eupatrids, geomori, and demiurgi, though only to some extent. The old division survived, not least because it was based on ancient cult communities; besides, the natural pride of the nobles in their ancestry prevented the eupatrids from disappearing. In order to deprive them of their constitutional monopoly, Solon used the military division on a purely economic basis as the framework of constitutional qualifications. He found it, however, necessary to put a first 'class' above the *hippeis*, the *pentakosiomedimnoi*, the 'men of 500 bushels'. Aristotle (*AP* 7) explains that the four 'classes' were distinguished according to the return from their property of 500, 300, 200, and less than 200 bushels, respectively. For several reasons this is a most unlikely scheme, and it will be advisable to take for granted only the nature of the *pentakosiomedimnoi*, as their name is self-explanatory. They were the cream of the *hippeis*; they would naturally serve in the cavalry. In using the four property groups for his work on the constitution, Solon clearly intended to base his constitutional reform on the facts of Athenian agrarian economy. Landed property and its income, not birth, was to be the basic principle. Whether that would mean a considerable change in the composition of the governing class is another question.

Was it possible, however, to find out the exact, or even the average, number of measures yielded by the crop, especially as production must have fluctuated from year to year? Even if that could be done, what would it mean, since it was not possible to count liquid produce in *medimnoi*, still less the possession of cattle, sheep, and goats, to say nothing of the income from trade?<sup>34</sup> A solution might be that *medimnos* was the symbol for pre-coinage valuation, just as in Homer and even in Dracon's laws (*Poll.* 9, 61) it was the ox;<sup>35</sup> but that is purely hypothetical, and there is no other evidence for it. Thus it seems better to try to explain the matter without the help of such a theory. All we can say is that an estate of comparatively large size, whether mainly corn-growing land or vineyards and olive groves, or partly even grazing ground for cattle, would be regarded as producing 500 *medimnoi*, without any serious attempt at counting. Social connexions and public opinion would probably

settle the point safely enough. The exact limits for the other classes are therefore likely to be pure invention, though it is just possible that a grading took place very much on the same general lines as the selection of the *pentakosiomedimnoi*. The three less wealthy groups would be respectively those rich enough to serve in the cavalry, those able to equip themselves with a hoplite's armour and to leave their farms during a campaign or during training, and finally, those below these standards. Aristotle tells us that Solon's classes had existed before him. This is certainly true of the military division. If the name of the *pentakosiomedimnoi* was in earlier use, it could only have been as a kind of nickname for the most wealthy. What was completely new was that Solon used the four groups as a basis for constitutional rights, and that the military divisions as well as the *pentakosiomedimnoi* – the latter for the first time officially recognized – served on account of their economic standing.

Any constitution in which the rights of citizenship, and in particular the qualification for high office, were graded according to economic standards was no longer fully aristocratic.<sup>36</sup> Neither was it democratic, as was the view of fourth-century Greeks who regarded Solon as the father of Athenian democracy. Any reform would and could only be based on traditions which went far back, but were still alive. Solon's constitutional and social work was possible only as the continuation of the aristocratic state and society of the past, but it went far beyond that. If it can be said that democracy was, as it were, the goal of the Athenian political development, it means that it could be approached only step by step. Solon, with no idea of democracy in his mind, was predestined by his whole nature to advance slowly, without making too much of a break. The principle of his constitution was not as revolutionary as it might look, but it certainly opened the way for more social changes. It can best be explained as the necessary political result of the change in military structure, which itself resulted from the changing economic capability of the citizens. Athens had reached the stage of the 'hoplite polis', though the hoplites had by no means yet equal rights with the upper class. When in the later fifth century the oligarchs relied on the notion of those 'able to provide their arms', they were looking back to Solon's timocracy.<sup>37</sup>

Solon did more than create a timocracy, even in the constitutional

field. He cleared the way by proclaiming a law of amnesty (see below, p. 70); he then granted the citizens new political rights. He almost certainly opened the *ecclesia* to the *thetes*, who thus for the first time had a share in public affairs. In this, as in other constitutional changes, our knowledge is restricted by the fact that the evidence, above all *AP*, is strongly influenced by later events, and it is not always possible to arrive at the original facts. High offices were reserved for the two upper classes, though archons and treasurers were elected from the *pentakosiomedimnoi* only.<sup>38</sup> All officials were elected by the *ecclesia*; according to *AP* 8, 1, the archons were chosen by lot from forty previously selected men, ten from each *phyle*, an assertion in conflict with Aristotle's own views elsewhere, and difficult to combine with later constitutional developments. The problem is not yet finally solved.<sup>39</sup> The *Areopagus* was filled by the *ex-archons*, and thus became a council of the wealthy rather than the old and noble. This method of recruiting the members of the *Areopagus* was probably first introduced by Solon, though it is not quite impossible that it existed before under different conditions. The rich and the noble were, as has been said before, to a large extent the same people, and any change in the composition of the *Areopagus* can have been only slow. The prestige and power of that body remained strong. Solon will have defined more strictly its rights of jurisdiction and general supervision; in particular, all cases of premeditated homicide were now judged by the *Areopagus*, while *Dracon* had left all capital jurisdiction to another early court, the *ἑφῆται*. According to *AP* 8, 4, Solon also granted the *Areopagus* the power to retaliate against any attempt at destroying the constitution.<sup>40</sup> To what extent the archons and treasurers, or as to that, any other officials, depended on the advice of the council is obscure; in general, an increase in the power of magistrates, especially the first archon, and a slow decrease in that of the *Areopagus*, are likely. In one short reference Aristotle (*AP* 8, 4) mentions the creation by Solon of a new council of the 400, one hundred from each *phyle*. Plutarch (*Sol.* 19, 1) repeats this and adds that it acted (as the *Cleisthenic* council of the year 507) as a 'probuleutic' body, before anything was put to the assembly. A similar 'democratic' council existed in Chios towards the middle of the sixth century. Plutarch speaks of two Athenian councils as

the two anchors on which the polis was safely riding. There is, however, no record of anything the council of the 400 did or could have done, and doubts about its very existence are not without justification.<sup>41</sup> Any decision largely depends on whether we believe that Solon wanted to break the power of the *Areopagus*, or only slightly to limit it. Athenian history before *Cleisthenes* shows no sign of a second council; the one which resisted *Cleisthenes* (Hdt. 5, 72, 2, s.p. 87) was most likely the *Areopagus*. There were opportunities to speak of the council if it had existed, and thus the *argumentum e silentio* has some force.

*Areopagus*, *ecclesia*, and magistrates in Solon's constitution, taken as a whole, kept their previous positions, though some restrictions were laid down. The decisive difference was in their composition, which had largely changed. Aristotle (*AP* 9, 1) describes three elements as 'the most democratic' in this constitution; above all, the law forbidding loans on personal security, secondly, the right of any citizen to claim redress for anybody who had been wronged, and thirdly, 'the right of transfer to the court'. From his own knowledge of the fourth century Aristotle anachronistically adds, 'When the people are masters of the judicial vote, they become masters of the state.' The first item refers, of course, to the *seisachtheia* (see p. 64). Of the two others we might say that in general they aimed at a stronger legal protection of the citizens against arbitrary, or at least authoritarian, treatment by magistrates. It is practically certain that the word *epheisis*, which in the fourth century meant an appeal from one court to a higher one, was in Solon's time simply the transfer from the single judge, before any verdict of his, to the people's court.<sup>42</sup> The latter received the name *heliaia*, which is another word for assembly. It is possible, though not very likely, that it was merely the *ecclesia* acting as a court. Perhaps the court will have been elected by lot from the *ecclesia*; no other details are known about the 'people in court'. But the famous, almost revolutionary basis of the judicial system was that any citizen could now raise a charge when anybody – whether free or slave, whether man, woman, or child (*Dem.* 21, 47) – had been wronged by an unlawful action. 'Anybody's wrong was everybody's business.'<sup>43</sup> The state and, with its help, the individual citizen took over where so far it had been for the family to act, or for the noble society as a united

whole. Freedom and responsibility of the citizen went hand in hand. This was a revolutionary reform.

Solon was a man of the middle road. That will have been a trend of his nature, but it was also the result of a reasoned approach to politics rather than an *a priori* principle. Solon learnt the wisdom that 'in great things it is hard to please everybody' (fr. 5, 11). He proudly claimed (5, 1 ff.): 'To the demos I have given such honour as is sufficient, neither taking away nor granting them more. For those who had power and were great in riches, I equally cared that they should suffer nothing wrong. Thus I stood, holding my strong shield over both, and I did not allow either side to prevail against justice.' Such verse (and there is more in a similar vein) confirms that he believed himself to have succeeded in his work of mediation. He had probably started it by issuing an amnesty law (Plut. 19, 4) by which all who had lost their citizenship (the *atimoi*) were given it back, except those condemned for major crimes by one of the ancient courts.<sup>44</sup> After his legislation, stories were told which show that neither side was satisfied, and also that he refused to follow the advice of some of his friends to become a tyrant; he had enough insight and irony to see himself through the eyes of one of those friends (fr. 23). He had the conviction of his own mission, and he remained faithful to his aims and principles. His constitution was never put down in writing as one coherent concept; but the ecclesia must have accepted certain special laws. It needed, however, more than merely economic and constitutional measures. Social peace largely depended on reasonable laws, and a jurisdiction bound to them. Dracon's work had to be repeated and improved, that is to say, new laws had to be given which would be in harmony with the spirit of Solon's whole work. That could only last, if at all, if it were built upon a new code of written laws. As Solon tells us himself (24, 18), 'Laws I wrote, alike for nobleman and commoner, awarding straight justice to everybody.' The word 'I wrote' (*egrapsa*) is clearly stressed, but the reference to nobleman and commoners is even more important. Solon's concern was the whole people.

#### 4 · Solon's Legislation

The orators of the fourth century quote a large number of laws which they attribute to Solon. It is generally accepted that only some of them are really Solonian, while others belong to later times, though early as seen from the fourth century. 'Solon's laws' at that time largely meant traditional laws, *corpus iuris Atheniensium*. Like Dracon's they were called *thesmoi*, as rules 'set' by an acknowledged authority, whether divine or human, and usually written down; they were contrasted with the later political laws, the *nomoi*. Once again we have to face the fact of a tradition distorted or at least exaggerated; the early history of Athenian law is greatly obscured. What happened to the written code of Solon's laws in the many vicissitudes of Athenian history during the sixth and fifth centuries is quite unknown. In 410-409, and continued in 403, after two oligarchic revolutions, a revision of the extant laws was carried out. Dracon's law of homicide was renewed. The rest of the laws were regarded as 'Solonian', or at least called so because of the authority of his name; many of these laws undoubtedly were Solonian, and Aristotle most likely still read some of them.<sup>45</sup>

It is unlikely that Solon's code of law included much about the constitution, which was probably settled by popular decrees; it is certain that the *seisachtheia* was not mentioned in the laws, as it was a unique measure not to be repeated, and other matters were simply part of customary law and did not need to be freshly formulated. These matters, especially the duties of the magistrates, have to a great extent been included in the previous section, although it is not possible to single out certain laws, quite apart from the fact that we do not know their wording. The Greeks at that time, and still later on, did not distinguish between constitution and laws, not even between public and private law. Moreover, Solon did not arrange his laws according to their subject matter but rather after the magistrates responsible for their observance. It must have been easy to add new laws to the extant ones since, at any rate, a very mixed lot was assembled under the title of one office, e.g. that of the first archon, and therefore on the same tablet. Solon's laws were originally published on wooden slabs, called *kyrbeis* or *axones*, probably shaped like prisms and revolving round (vertical?) axes so that they

could be easily read without taking up too much space. It seems that they survived, however precariously, the sacking of 480.<sup>46</sup>

The greatest number of laws likely to be Solonian is concerned with family law. This may be partly due to the fact that most of the cases dealt with by the orators belonged to that sphere. It is, however, probably quite true that Solon regarded as one of his most urgent tasks the establishment or re-establishment of what was the very foundation of Athenian society, the permanence of the family. It is typical of him that he gave various rules to bind both parents and children, thus, as in politics, taking the middle line. Of great importance was his law on heiresses (*epikleroi*), who, especially when orphaned, were protected in order to continue the existence of the family (*AP* 9, 2. 56, 6. *Plut.* 20). Therefore the heiress did not enter her husband's family but was to produce the legitimate male heir to her father's family. A similar purpose was served by Solon's law on adoption, allowing under certain conditions a man without legitimate male offspring to adopt a man and thus make him his heir. This law chiefly concerned the upper class; it was to prevent a family from dying out, as is said in one speech (*Dem.* 43, 11. 76) 'that the *oikoi* be not made destitute (of heirs)'. The law was at the same time a first small step towards freeing the individual property from the clan. It was still far from being private property, especially as the adopted son could only leave the estate to his actual son, not again to an adopted man.<sup>47</sup> Marriage, naturally most important in this context, was generally to be protected, adultery and unchastity of women were severely punished; so were, though less severely, violation, procuring, and the prostitution of boys. There was a definitely moral trend in Solon's legislation, for instance, in the strict rules to control women and boys, and the law against exaggerated display at funerals, laws about slander and calumny, and others concerned with private life. In criminal law Solon retained Dracon's laws on homicide.<sup>48</sup> Theft was heavily punished when committed in the dark or from a public place such as market or harbour, or if the value of the stolen goods exceeded fifty drachmas,<sup>49</sup> a law which showed a discrimination understandable under the conditions of non-existing public security. Solon took the trouble of regulating such things as the water supply of each farm, or the distance between trees and beehives; he knew that for the small farmer these could

be questions of economic survival. Olive oil was plentiful, and Solon, as mentioned before, made it the one agricultural product that could be exported; he strictly forbade the export of corn, which the larger landowners had probably practised. In exchange for the export of oil – and of the fine pottery that went with it – barley and wheat, both badly needed, could be imported. Thus, the owners of large olive groves, the traders, the potters, no less than the poor in town and country, would all benefit from his measures. In particular, he favoured the development of crafts; it is reported that he made it an offence if a father did not see to it that his sons learned some kind of craft.

With the last laws mentioned we are again in the field of economics. Even before Athens acquired a money economy, trade grew rapidly, and with it agriculture began slowly to change over from farming merely for livelihood to commercial farming, that is to say, to working for export. Athenian Black Figure vases of the early sixth century have been found in the West as well as the Black Sea area, confirming the growth of Athenian trade. Solon, for some time a trader himself, understood the importance, for a poor country such as Attica, of trade, and therefore of manufacture and good craftsmanship. He also made it easier for foreign craftsmen to settle at Athens and even to become citizens; surely this chance must have attracted many, and it will have substantially contributed to the swift rise of art and craft at Athens.

Aristotle (*AP* 10) mentions also that Solon after his legislation caused 'the enlargement of measures, weights, and the coinage. Under him the measures became larger than those of Pheidon, and the mina, which formerly had a weight of seventy drachmas, was increased to a hundred. The old type of money (*charaktēr*) was the didrachmon. As weights for the coinage he made sixty-three minae equal to the talent, and the three minae were apportioned to the stater and the other weights.'<sup>50</sup> The law behind these enigmatic sentences has been a matter of debate even before Aristotle, and ever since the *AP* was recovered. The Pheidonian measures and weights had nothing to do with coinage, and Pheidon cannot have been responsible for the coins of Aegina, even if it had been part of his realm. Aegina, however, could have been the one state in the Greek motherland, apart from Corinth, which at Solon's time

had issued coins, though it is now believed that coins were not introduced from Asia Minor before c. 575.<sup>51</sup> Recent discussion, on the other hand, suggests that the earlier standard which Solon changed was not Aeginetan but Euboean, i.e. Chalcidian. According to this theory, Solon – or some later man whose work was then called Solonian – introduced a new weight of 100 compared with the old 70.<sup>52</sup> If the primary purpose of coinage was for the use of governments rather than private traders, it nevertheless fostered overseas trade more than anything else. The change of standards would make Athens adopt the standard of another trading country, but in the long run, the Attic, i.e. the new Solonian, standard, and with it Athenian trade, conquered the Mediterranean world in both the east and the west. It is clear that Solon, by fighting the trade competition of places such as Corinth, Aegina, Megara, and perhaps Chalcis, prepared the way for the prosperity of sixth- and fifth-century Athens.

The whole tenor of Solon's legislation (and here we include the measures treated in the previous section), of which no survey could be complete, is one of moderate conservatism. We would not expect anything else from a man such as he. Any revolutionary measures like the *seisachtheia* would be compensated by the adherence to traditional ways wherever possible. Behind this mild conservatism there was, however, a great mind and a strong will. In many ways a typical product of his time, he stood high above the politics of the day by his absolute integrity, the clarity of his intellect, and the passionate fervour of his ethics. He bound the community as a whole to its laws, that is to say, he founded the state on justice. He made the people its executant, and secured the personal freedom as well as the political responsibility of every citizen. Although he did not and could not use the expression, he was the first deliberately to proclaim 'freedom under the law', the rule of what was to be called the 'King Nomos'.<sup>53</sup> Even so, justice and freedom did not include equality among the citizens, neither economically nor politically. Solon believed in a divine justice that would always put matters right in the end, and in man's duty to justify the justice of the gods; but he was aware of the need of rational action in order to create social solidarity.<sup>54</sup> Many of his laws did little else than put customary rules under the state's authority, but he succeeded in

creating an atmosphere of legality. It could perhaps be said that, under the leading lights of piety and justice, Solon (with others) finally changed the Homeric set of values, modernized the ethics of the aristocrats, which they had partly forgotten themselves, and adapted them so that they could serve as guidance for the whole people.<sup>55</sup> He was enough of a traditionalist not to become a revolutionary, though too much of a reformer not to change the face and indeed the very nature of state and society. He had a strong sense of the possible, and at the same time a deep feeling for that balance between freedom and responsibility, which was to be the principle in all further developments of the state.<sup>56</sup> He never imagined a democratic form of constitution, but his *eunomia* implied the rule of *dike*, of justice. While his work in practically all its aspects remained, as it were, unfinished, he paved the way into the future, and made it possible for Peisistratus and Cleisthenes to continue and to improve his work, so that eventually it did lead to democracy, with its ideal of a state of law, liberty, and equality.

Solon had outgrown the bonds of aristocracy of which his younger contemporary Theognis of Megara was a fervent champion. His verses reflect the traditional life and education of the aristocrats, with their emotional centre in paederasty, that is to say, love between man and boy, and their outlets in resentment and hatred of an emerging and different world. It is significant that, and how, Theognis varied some of Solon's verses to suit his own ideas.

It need hardly be stressed that all this was true only as far as the citizens were concerned. Women and slaves never had any standing in the polis, though foreigners at Athens acquired an improved status, and a chance of becoming citizens. Slavery had been with the Greeks, just as with all early peoples, mainly as a natural result of warfare, after the initial stage, when an enemy was killed and no prisoners were taken, had largely passed. At Athens, so far, slaves played no important economic part, though the newly discovered silver mines at Laurium, essential for the new coinage, were always worked by slaves – if not exclusively, at least mainly.<sup>57</sup> The need for giving legal status to the slaves hardly occurred to Solon. When later they were granted some power to make business agreements, this was possible only when they were employed by someone not their master, or when they eventually had an independent

business of their own. As far as we know, this did not happen before the late fifth century, after a lengthy process of development that cannot be traced here. The decline, on the other hand, of the position of women since Homeric times is remarkable. From Hesiod onwards there was a great deal of misogynic poetry, while the great figures of Penelope or Nausicaa, or of the Phaeacian queen Arete, or the overwhelming if evil part played by Helena or Clytaemnestra, survived in Greek myth and memory. There are indications that the Greeks in pre-historic times lived in a matriarchal society; its remnants can still be traced in epic poetry. The great change must have happened by the time of the invasions, during or after the Mycenaean age. When the polis arose, in the eighth century, Greek society was completely dominated by masculine standards; if Sappho somehow seems to indicate an exception, it is the exception that proves the rule. At the same time, the greater freedom of women in Sparta remains remarkable. Such matters must not be forgotten, when we come to deal with the further development of democracy, though they should not be judged by standards and views of later times.<sup>58</sup>

## IV THE SIXTH CENTURY

*Athenian City*

### 1. Tyrannis at Athens

Even during his term of office Solon had met with criticism and hostility. Refusing to become a tyrant, as some of his supporters suggested, he tried to safeguard his work by imposing an oath on the archons of each year to maintain his legislation (*AP* 7, 1. Hdt. 1, 29). He himself went travelling abroad – for ten years, we are told.<sup>1</sup> His hope that the Athenians would settle down and give his constitution and legislation a period of trial was soon to be disappointed, though the freedom of the peasantry was never again endangered. After a few years of calm, political and social issues combined to start civil strife again. Though it is a mistake to say that Solon achieved nothing, his attempt at creating a peaceful society had certainly failed. The office of first archon provided the position of power on which the struggle turned, which shows that individual noblemen were fighting against the very principles of Solon's constitution. The assembly had not yet gained the strength to impose its own decisions, and we do not hear of any political activity by the Areopagus. The little we know of these years comes from *AP*, and it does not allow us to fill the gaps between the few events mentioned.<sup>2</sup> Probably in 590–589 no archons were elected,<sup>3</sup> and the same happened in 586–585. This can only mean that there were riots which made elections impossible. A few years later, most likely in 583–581, one Damasias was archon and remained in office for two years and two months, until he was expelled by force. This was clearly an attempt to seize supreme power, using the archonship as a spring-board for tyranny. Resistance to Damasias would have come mainly from the aristocracy, as is confirmed by the peculiar events which followed, though their general meaning is much disputed. Aristotle tells us (*AP* 13, 2) that for one year after

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