Case Study on Sources:
Kleisthenes of Athens
"The Father of Democracy"

Timeline

546-510 BC		Peisistratos and sons rule as tyrants in Athens. The family of the Alkmaionidai in exile?
	527 BC	Death of Peisistratos.
	525/4 BC	Kleisthenes the Alkmaionid eponymous archon in Athens?
	514 BC	Murder of Hipparchos by Harmodios and Aristogeiton.
	510 BC	Expulsion of Hippias and remaining Peisistratid supporters.
508/7 BC		Archonship of Isagoras. Kleisthenes proposes his reforms, which are popular with/accepted by the *demos*. King Kleomenes of Sparta interferes, exiling Kleisthenes and many others, but is forced out (along with Isagoras). Kleisthenes and his supporters return to Athens and begin the institution of the proposed reforms.
487 BC		The first recorded use of ostracism, an institution attributed to Kleisthenes.

Literary Sources

The Reforms of Kleisthenes[1]

Herodotos 5.66, 69-70, 72-73, 78 (selections). Translation by A. de Sélincourt, Penguin Classics 1956 and 1994 (slightly modified).

Athens had been great before; now, her liberty won [with the expulsion of the Peisistratid tyrants], she grew greater still. The most powerful men in the city were two: Kleisthenes, a member of the Alkmaionid family – it was he, the story goes, who bribed the priestess at Delphi – and Isagoras, son of Teisander, a man of reputable family, though I do not know the origin of it….These two were rivals for power, and Kleisthenes, who was getting the worst of it, took the people [*demos*] into his party. He then changed the number of Athenian tribes from four to ten, and abolished the old names – previously the four tribes had been called after Geleon, Aigikores, Argades, and Hoples, the four sons of Ion; but now he named the new tribes after other heroes, all native Athenians except Aias, whom, though a foreigner, he admitted into the list as a neighbour and ally. I think that in taking this step he was following the example of his maternal grandfather, Kleisthenes the tyrant of Sikyon….

….Now Kleisthenes of Athens, following the lead of his grandfather and namesake Kleisthenes of Sikyon, decided, out of contempt, I imagine, for the Ionians, that his tribes should not be the same as theirs, so as soon as he had won the support of the common people [*demos*] of Athens, previously held in contempt, he renamed the tribes and increased their number, appointing ten presidents (*phylarchs*) instead of the original four, and incorporating ten local subdivisions (*demes*) in each tribe. Having once got the masses to support him, he found himself much more powerful than his rivals. Isagoras, beaten in his turn, then appealed to Kleomenes the Spartan, who had been his guest-friend during the reign of the Peisistratidai (he was indeed rumoured to have had illicit relations with Isagoras' wife). Kleomenes then first sent an order to Athens for the expulsion of

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[1] Passages highlighted in red indicate places where the primary sources disagree.

Kleisthenes, together with a large number of other Athenians, calling them the "Accursed". This was a suggestion of Isagoras; for the Alkmaionidai and their allies were held to be involved in the blood-guilt it referred to, but Isagoras and his friends were not....

....On the arrival of Kleomenes' order for the expulsion of Kleisthenes and the "Accursed", Kleisthenes himself left Athens, but his departure did not prevent Kleomenes from coming to the city with a small force of men and banishing, as accursed, seven hundred Athenian families, whose names had been given him by Isagoras. Then he attempted to abolish the Council, and transfer power to a body of three hundred supporters of Isagoras. The Council resisted, and refused to obey his orders, whereupon he, together with Isagoras and his party, occupied the Acropolis. This united the rest of Athens against them; they were blockaded in the Acropolis for two days, but, on the day after, a truce was made, and all of them who were Spartans were allowed to leave the country....The rest were put in prison by the Athenians and executed, amongst them Timesitheus of Delphi, a man of whose prowess and courage I could, if I would, tell great things.

After the execution of the prisoners, the Athenians recalled Kleisthenes and the seven hundred families which had been expelled by Kleomenes; they were well aware that they were now in a state of war with Kleomenes and Sparta, so to strengthen their position they sent representatives to Sardis, in the hope of concluding an alliance with Persia....

....Thus Athens went from strength to strength, and proved, if proof were needed, how noble a thing equality before the law [*isegoria*] is, not in one respect only, but in all; for while they were oppressed under tyrants, they had no better success in war than any of their neighbours, yet, once the yoke was flung off, they proved the finest fighters in the world. This clearly shows that, so long as they were held down by authority, they deliberately shirked their duty in the field, as slaves shirk working for their masters; but when freedom [*eleutheria*] was won, then every man amongst them was interested in his own cause.

Things to think about:

- Does Herodotos think that *isegoria* came about because of Kleisthenes' reforms, or is he referring only to the liberation from the tyrants?
- How does Herodotos characterize the results of "freedom" in the final paragraph?
- Who the heck is Timesitheus of Delphi? (Not really relevant to the question of Kleisthenes' reforms....)

[Aristotle], *Athenaion Politeia* (*The Athenian Constitution*) 20-22 (selections). Translation by P.J. Rhodes, Penguin Classics 1984 (slightly modified).

When the tyranny had been overthrown, strife [*stasis*] broke out between Isagoras son of Teisander, a friend of the tyrants, and Kleisthenes of the Alkmaionid family. As Kleisthenes was getting the worse of the party struggle, he attached the people [*demos*] to his following, by proposing to give political power to the masses. Isagoras then fell behind in power, so he called back Kleomenes the Spartan king, with whom he had a tie of hospitality, and since it appeared that the Alkmaionids were among those who were under a curse, persuaded Kleomenes to join him in driving out the accursed. Kleisthenes withdrew; and Kleomenes came with a few men and solemnly expelled seven hundred Athenian households. After doing this he tried to dissolve the Council and make Isagoras and three hundred of his friends masters of the city. However, the Council resisted and the common people gathered in force; the supporters of Kleomenes and Isagoras fled to the Acropolis; the people settled down and besieged them for two days, but on the third made a truce to release Kleomenes and all the men with him, and recalled Kleisthenes and the other exiles. Thus the people

obtained control of affairs, and Kleisthenes became leader [*hegemon*] and champion [*prostates*] of the people. The Alkmaionids bore the greatest responsibility for the expulsion of the tyrants, and had persisted in opposition to them for most of the time. Even earlier, Kedon of the Alkmaionids had attacked the tyrants, and so he too was celebrated in drinking-songs:

> *Pour to Kedon also, steward, and forget him not,*
> *If wine is to be poured to valiant men.*

For these reasons the people placed their trust in Kleisthenes. Then, as champion of the masses, in the fourth year after the overthrow of the tyrants, the archonship of Isagoras [508/7 BC], he first distributed all the citizens through ten tribes instead of the old four, wanting to mix them up so that more men should have a share in the running of the state. This is the origin of the saying "Don't judge by tribes", addressed to those who want to inquire into a man's ancestry. Next he made the Council a body of five hundred instead of four hundred, fifty from each tribe (previously there had been a hundred from each old tribe). He refused to divide the Athenians into twelve tribes, to avoid allocating them according to the already existing thirds (*trittyes*): the four tribes were divided into twelve thirds, and if he had used them he would not have succeeded in mixing up the people. He divided the land of Attica by demes into thirty parts – ten parts in the city region, ten in the coast, and ten in the inland – and he called these parts thirds (*trittyes*), and allotted three to each tribe in such a way that each tribe should have a share in all the regions. He made the men living in each deme fellow demesmen of one another, so that they should not use their fathers' names and make it obvious who were the new citizens but should be named after their demes. He instituted *demarchs*, with the same responsibilities as the old *naukraroi*; for he made the demes take the place of the *naukrariai*. He named some of the demes after their localities, and some after their founders (not all founders of the demes were known any longer). He left the clans, brotherhoods and priesthoods each to retain their traditional privileges. He appointed ten eponymous heroes for the tribes, chosen by the Delphic priestess from a pre-selected list of one hundred founding heroes.

When this had been accomplished, the constitution was much more democratic [*demotikotera*] than that of Solon. Many of Solon's laws had been consigned to oblivion by the tyranny, through not being used, and Kleisthenes enacted other new laws in his bid for popular support, among them the law about ostracism.…

Things to think about:

- Which portions of Pseudo-Aristotle's account rely on Herodotos (and therefore make no separate contribution) and which seem to be drawn from another (vanished) source?
- Pseudo-Aristotle says that the constitution was now *demotikotera*, more "*demos*-oriented". Is that necessarily the same as "more democratic"? How does it compare to Herodotos' *isegoria*?

Klei(to)demos of Athens, FGrH 323 F8: Example of a *Brill's New Jacoby* lemma

FGrH 323 F 8

Photios, Lexicon, s.v. naukraria   **Translation**

Subject: politics: constitution
Source Date: 9th century AD
Historian's Date: 4th century BC
Historical Period: 5th century BC

ναυκραρία· τὸ πρότερον οὕτως ἐκάλουν ναυκραρία καὶ ναύκραρος, ναυκραρία μὲν ὁποῖόν τι ἡ συμμορία καὶ ὁ δῆμος, ναύκραρος δὲ ὁποῖόν τι ὁ δήμαρχος, Σόλωνος οὕτως ὀνομάσαντος, ὡς καὶ Ἀριστοτέλης φησί· καὶ ἐν τοῖς Νόμοις δὲ «ἄν τις ναυκραρίας ἀμφισβητῆι» καὶ «τοὺς ναυκράρους τοὺς κατὰ τὴν ναυκραρίαν». ὕστερον δὲ ἀπὸ Κλεισθένους δῆμοί εἰσιν, καὶ δήμαρχοι ἐκλήθησαν. ἐκ τῆς Ἀριστοτέλους Πολιτείας ὃν τρόπον διέταξε τὴν πόλιν ὁ Σόλων· «φυλαὶ δὲ ἦσαν τέσσαρες καθάπερ πρότερον καὶ φυλοβασιλεῖς τέσσαρες· ἐκ δὲ τῆς φυλῆς ἑκάστης ἦσαν νενεμημέναι τριττύες μὲν τρεῖς, ναυκραρίαι δὲ δώδεκα καθ᾽ ἑκάστην». ὁ Κλείδημος ἐν τῆι τρίτηι φησὶν ὅτι Κλεισθένους δέκα φυλὰς ποιήσαντος ἀντὶ τῶν τεσσάρων, συνέβη καὶ εἰς πεντήκοντα μέρη διαταγῆναι αὐτούς, ἃ ἐκάλουν ναυκραρία<ς>, ὥσπερ νῦν εἰς τὰ ἑκατὸν μέρη διαιρεθέντα<ς> καλοῦσι συμμορίας.

Naukraria. In earlier times they used to say *naukraria* and *naukraros*. A *naukraria* was something like the *symmoria* and the deme, and a *naukraros* was something like a *dêmarchos*, when Solon named them in this way, as Aristotle says (cf. *Athenaion Politeia* 21.5). And in his laws, [it is said that] "if someone should dispute the *naukraries* ('divisions') and the *naukraroi* concerned with the *naukrary*". Later, Kleisthenes created the demes [to replace the *naukrariai*], and the *dêmarchoi* [to replace the *naukraroi*]. From the *Politeia* of Aristotle (8.3), [we learn] the way in which Solon arranged the constitution, "There were four tribes (*phylai*), as before, and four tribal leaders (*phylobasileis*); from each tribe three trittyes were divided, and twelve *naukrariai* for each one." Kleidemos says in his third book that when Kleisthenes created the ten tribes in place of four, it also came to pass that they were divided into fifty parts, which they used to call *naukraries*, just as now they call those divided into a hundred parts *symmories*.

Commentary

Jacoby understood both F 7 and F 8 as coming from "an account of Kleisthenes' organization of the state" (*FGrH* 3b Suppl., *Text*, 65), and that this section is part of a larger argument that Kleidemos was a democratic partisan whose historical writing directly opposed a more conservative tradition, as reflected by Androtion (324) and Aristotle. Photios' exceedingly brief description of the *naukraria* and *symmoria* in F 8, institutions that are only partially understood, makes this passage particularly problematic.

The *naukrariai* were an early division of the Athenian people into 48 administrative districts for the purpose of taxation and for military expenditure that may go back to the seventh century BC (Herodotos 5.71) or at least to the time of Solon in the early sixth century BC (*Athenaion Politeia* 8.3). The etymology of the term *naukraria* is commonly connected with the provision of a warship by each district for the Athenian navy by understanding the word *naukraros* as derived from *naus* ("ship") and *kras* ("head") meaning "ship's head". Such an interpretation also has the support of Pollux 8.108 and *Anecdota Graeca* 1.280.20 Bekker, both of which mention the naukrary as including the provision of ships. However, another explanation has been advanced that derives the term from *naos*

("temple") so that *naukraros* means "temple head", and a more recent suggestion derives the prefix *nau* from *nauein/naiein* ("to dwell") and sees *kraros* as an old form of *klêros* ("piece of land") so that the *naukrariai* refer to "specific pieces of inhabited land" or "settlements". For an excellent overview of the issues surrounding this vexed problem, see V. Gabrielsen, *Financing the Fleet* (Baltimore, MD 1994), 20-1, who provides much further bibliography.

The nature of the *naukraria* has also been the subject of debate with one group of scholars understanding the institution as presided over by a public official (a *prytanês*) and composed of wealthy citizens (the *naukraroi*) who supplied, kept, and commanded the ships and crew (so, e.g., S.D. Lambert, *The Phratries of Attica*[2] (Ann Arbor, MI 1998), 252-6 and Gabrielsen, *Financing the Fleet*, 20-1), and a second group who understand the *naukraria* as an essentially private enterprise disassociated from the state (as, e.g., H.T. Wallinga, "The Athenian *Naukraroi*," H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg (ed.), *Peisistratos and the Tyranny: A Reappraisal of the Evidence* (Amsterdam 2000), 131-46).

The ancient sources are also in disagreement about the *naukraria*. [Athenaion Politeia 21.5](#) (cf. [Pollux](#), s.v. *nauklaros*) seems to imply that Kleisthenes did away with the *naukrariai*, but Kleidemos says that he created fifty *naukrariai* for his new tribes as a part of his administrative reforms (these *naukrariai* are also mentioned in the quotation of a law by [Androtion](#), 324 F 36 and in descriptions of their function in [Anecdota Graeca 283.20](#) and cf. 275.20 Bekker, [Pollux 8.108](#), [Harpokration](#) s.v. *naukrarika*, [Hesychios](#) s.v. *nauklaros*, and [Photios, Lexicon](#), s.v. *nauklêros*). Gabrielsen, *Financing the Fleet*, 19-27, provides a good overview of the sources and their problems, as well as a reasonable reconstruction (as far as can be known) of the Athenian *naukraria* to the 480s, and a good discussion of this passage (22-3). Lambert, *Phratries of Attica*, 252-6, especially n. 45 (cf. 258-60), argues for a continuing tax-gathering and naval function of the *naukrariai* from pre-Kleisthenic times to its later abolition by [Themistokles](#). However, this overall interpretation of "a tidy correspondence between pre-Cleisthenic and post-Cleisthenic institutions" has been doubted by P.J. Rhodes in his review of Lambert, *Electronic Antiquity* 2 (1994) at http://scholar.lib.vt.edu.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ejournals/ElAnt/V2N4/rhodes.html). Wallinga, *Athenian Naukraroi*, 131-3, has a useful collection and translation of the ancient sources; also, for further discussion of the ancient sources, see P.J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford 1993), 151-2.

Little noticed in the discussion of Kleidemos' statements about the *naukraria* has been the influence politics may have had on his historical veracity. In an interpretation that emphasizes his political motivations, J. McInerney argues that according to Kleidemos "the *naukrariai* and demes served different functions, but were both established by Kleisthenes as subdivisions of the ten tribes": "Politicizing the Past: The *Atthis* of Kleidemos," *Cl.Ant.* 13 (1994), 32-4. For McInerney, Kleidemos did this not to diminish the earlier lawgiver, but because Kleisthenes "was regarded as more democratic than Solon" and Kleidemos wished to elevate him "to the status of founder of Athenian naval power, in the same way as Theseus before him and Themistokles after him" (33). If McInerney is correct, this complicates further our understanding of whatever Kleisthenes did or did not do with regard the *naukrariai* by calling into question Kleidemos' historical accuracy.

The system of the symmoriai was first established in 378/7 BC for the purpose of gathering taxes from property owners liable for the *eisphora* by dividing them into *symmoriai* ([Philochoros](#), 328 F 41). In 358/7, another law ([Demosthenes 47.44](#)) created a division of wealthy citizens into twenty *symmoriai* with each having sixty members for purpose of paying the *eisphora* and making

contributions for the navy (Demosthenes 14.17). Some scholars, such as D.M MacDowell, have argued that the number of *symmoriai* increased to 100 in 354: D.M. MacDowell, "The Law of Periandros about Symmories," *CQ*[2] 36 (1986), 445. Others have questioned this view, like Gabrielsen, who argued that "Demosthenes' proposal of 354 (14.17) to subdivide the existing twenty symmories into a hundred smaller parts will not do, because that proposal was probably never put into effect": *Financing the Fleet*, 22-3, and see also 190-3. Whether there were two sets of *symmoriai* or the law of 358 was a simply a reform of the earlier law is unclear. N.F. Jones, *Public Organization in Ancient Greece* (Philadelphia 1987), 306-10 and M. Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes* (Oxford 1991), 113-14, provide a further overview of what is known about this complex system of tax reform.

The *dêmarchos* was chosen annually either by lot or by election of the deme assembly, the *dêmarchos* was the presiding official in each deme, its advocate in state business, the keeper of the citizen register (the *lexiarchikon grammateion*), and he was involved in mustering men for military service (at least during the fourth century). In addition, the *dêmarchos* dealt with financial matters and may have collected the *eisphorai* prior to the reforms of 378/7: see D. Whitehead, *The Demes of Attica* (Princeton 1986), 58-62 and 121-39, for a comprehensive overview of the office and its history. In order to explain the continued existence of the *naukraria* districts alongside the new demes and their demarchs, Whitehead asserts that "the naukraries apparently continued to exist, suitably adjusted in number, but that is consonant with Kleisthenes' way of bypassing rather than abolishing old institutions" (*Demes of Attica*, 31-3).

The reference to *symmoriai* securely places the composition of Kleidemos' *Atthis* only to sometime after 378/7 BC. The inability to match up convincingly his description with what little is known about the development of system of symmories hampers consensus on a date, though sometime in the 350s is most probable; for further analysis of the arguments, see P.E. Harding, *Androtion and the Atthis* (Oxford 1994), 11-13 and R.W. Wallace, *The Areopagos Council to 307 B.C.* (Baltimore, MD 1989), 264 n. 37.

Kleisthenes' Family (the Alkmaionids) and the Peisistratid Tyranny

Herodotos 6.123:

The Alkmaionidai were men who remained in exile during the period of tyranny in Athens [546-510 BC] – and it was they who thought of the plan which deprived the Peisistratidai of their power. Indeed, in my judgement it was the Alkmaionidai much more than Harmodios and Aristogeiton [the tyrannicides] who liberated Athens; for the two latter by their murder of Hipparchos merely exasperated the remaining members of the clan, without in any way checking their despotism, while the Alkmaionidai did, in plain fact, actually bring about the liberation.…

Things to think about

- How does the claim that the Alkmaionids – including, presumably, Kleisthenes – remained in exile during the entire period of the tyranny (546-510 BC) square with the evidence suggesting that Kleisthenes may have acted as archon in 525/4 BC (see the inscription below, under "Epigraphy")?

[Aristotle] *AthPol* **16.9 and 20.4:**

Peisistratos remained in power for a long time, and when he was expelled [temporarily] he easily recovered his position. He had many supporters both among the notables and among the ordinary people; he won over the notables by his friendly dealings with them, and the people by his help for their private concerns, and he behaved honorably to both.

The Alkmaionids bore the greatest responsibility for the expulsion of the tyrants, and had persisted in opposition to them for most of the time.

Things to think about

- Could the Alkmaionidai – including Kleisthenes – have been among this group of "notables"? I.e., could they in fact have been persuaded to stay in Athens, in spite of what Herodotos says about them being in exile the entire time, and *cooperate* with the tyranny?

Epigraphy

IG I³ **1031 + supplements in** *SEG* **=** *SEG* **10.352, 21.96, 52.59, 55.72, 56.69 et al.**

Packard Humanities Institute, Searchable Greek Inscriptions:

Regions : Attica (IG I-III) : Attica
IG I³ 1031 ← IG I³ 1030bis IG I³ 1032 →

Att. — Ath.: Ag. — stoich. — c.423 bc — Hsp. 32.1963.187-208 — SEG 21.96

I	*lacuna 65 vv.*
II.c	*lacuna 2 vv.*
1	— — — — — v
	— — — — — vv
	— — — — — vv
	— — — — — v
5	— — — — —ς
5a	*lacuna 13 vv.*
b.6	[. . .]#⁷— — —
	[Κύ]φσελο[ς]
	[Τε]λεκλε— —
	[Φιλ]όμβ[ροτος] {595/4}
9a	*lacuna 41 vv.*
III.c.9b	*lacuna 2 vv.*
10	Κ— — — — —
	Φα— — — —
	Τε— — — —
	Ἐρχ[σικλείδες] {548/7}

7

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            Θεσ— — —
15          Φ[ο]ρ— — —
15a         lacuna 18 vv.
a.16        [Ὀν]ετο[ρ—(?)]
            [h]ιππίας
            [Κ]λεισθέν[ες]
            [Μ]ιλτιάδες  {524/3}
20          [Κα]λλιάδες
            [Πεισί]στρατ[ος](?)
21a         lacuna 31 vv.
c.22        [Φαίν]ιπ[πος]
            [Ἀρ]ιστ[είδες] {489/88}
23a          vacat 0.04

IV.c.23b    lacuna 65 vv.
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Example of a *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* lemma:

SEG 55 72
Athens. List of eponymous archons, 425-400 B.C.

Publication Year: 2005
Place: Greece > Attica > Athens
Type: public documents
Source Date: 425-400 BC
Related lemmata: SEG 56 69

IG I³ 1031. SEG 52 59.* C.Pébarthe, *RBPh* 83 (2005) 25-53, returns to this document, printing and transliterating the names preserved and/or restored on frgs. a and c. His treatment contains abundant modern bibliographical references and analysis of sundry chronological issues, including the archonships of Solon and Peisistratos the Younger. Pébarthe's primary aim is to establish whether, on the basis of the restoration [Κ]λεισθένες (L. 16), the famous Alkmeonid really held office under the Peisistratids in the year 525/4 B.C. Making extensive use of modern theories on orality, historiography, and individual and collective memory, Pébarthe accepts the historicity of Kleisthenes' archonship, even though he contends that the official anti-tyranny ideology that prevailed in Athens in the late 6th/early 5th cent. B.C. obliterated the memory of the Alkmeonids' connection to the tyrants.

Concordances
IG I 3, 1031; SEG 52, 59; SEG 56, 69
Index Terms
Αἴλιος; Κλεισθένης; Alkmeonids; chronology; chronology (Athens); eponymous archon; Kleisthenes; law; list of eponymous archons; literature; memory, collective; orality; Peisistratids; Peisistratos the Younger; Solon; tyranny in Athens