

## CHAPTER 33. TYRANNY

The destructive effects of the appearance of market elements in an archaic society emerging from its tribal state has been described. The emergence of the economic as a separate sphere, with concern for livelihood a pressing problem for the individual, is a characteristic phenomenon of societies undergoing this sort of transformation. The appearance of the pauper, which so greatly troubled late medieval Europe, was largely the result of the intrusion of market elements into the internal sphere. Medieval society was an organic society essentially of the tribal type; the growth of money uses and the extension of markets and market elements beyond the purely local spheres of village and town raised the economic to a sphere of its own. In England, the confiscation of the monasteries by Henry VIII (forced by the pressures on his feudal revenues of growing monetarization) released a flood of paupers who previously had been hidden more or less in the interstices of that society. It was these changes, not sudden population growth (as the contemporaries believed), that was responsible.\*

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\* It might also be pointed out that despite the brilliant scholarship of Tawney and others, the essential mystery remains. The precise reasons for the emergence of 'the agrarian problem of the sixteenth century' are as obscure as those for the Solonic crisis. The sudden appearance of speculation on a tremendous scale and of profit as a basic drive of the aristocracy, the total disregard of the welfare of the peasantry involved in the mobilization of land for the market cannot be explained on evolutionary grounds. This was a socio-cultural transformation on the largest scale; only the intervention of the Tudors prevented the wholesale destruction of the peasantry.

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In the case at hand, the Solonic reforms had failed to create a sufficiently effective integrative force. The decay of the tribal structure had made rediprocity impossible, and the earlier attempt to reconstitute it on a neighborhood basis was inadequate. The market elements were not sufficiently developed to link up by themselves in a system which could organize the community's livelihood - even if such were culturally possible, which it was not. Redistribution, to be effective, requires political centrality as a supporting structure. The main

weakness of the Solonic reforms was their failure to develop such an effective political center. Formally, the Solonic constitution should have been an adequate basis for a working redistributive system. But the retention of supervisory power by the Areopagus effectively negated much of the democratic reform, while the aristocracy in general exercised tremendous influence through the four tribes, which elected the Council of Four Hundred.\* The result was

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\* As late as the fourth century, Aristotle suggested as the remedy for excessive democracy election of magistrates by the separate tribes rather than by the people as a whole. Politics, V, 6 (1305 a).

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neither effective democracy nor effective oligarchy, but a resumption of the pre-Solonian stasis, in which, except for a few years, it proved impossible to elect an archon. (It is from this period that our term 'anarchy' derives; the years of anarchy were those in which no archons were elected.\*\*)

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\*\* Bury, p. 180

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The ultimate solution was the creation of the classical democracy, in which the elimination of almost all tribal elements created an all-powerful state in which the state was simply identical to the ~~stasis~~ demos; the discipline of the polis was such as to make laws almost self-enforcing. The existence of such a state not only facilitated redistribution, but also permitted far greater reliance on market elements and market methods than would otherwise have been possible. In the economy of the classical polis, redistribution and exchange were integrally combined so as greatly to increase each other's ~~effectiveness~~ effectiveness.

Such a constitution was not realized until after the radical reforms of Cleisthenes in 501 B.C. It was possible to effect such a sudden transformation because of the groundwork which was laid by the extended tyranny of the Pisistratid dynasty, which ruled approximately thirty-five of the years between 561 B.C. and 510. Pisistratus preserved the Solonian reforms from the oligarchic attacks of the sixth century, and greatly extended the democratic power. Tyranny, in fact, was a prerequisite for the establishment of the classical polis economy.

While the rule of the Pisistratids is perhaps our best documented tyranny, it should not be assumed that this was simply an Athenian development. Rather,

tyranny was a general phenomenon throughout the Mediterranean world at a certain stage of politico-economic development, very much as mercantilism was in western Europe. It was everywhere a democratic movement associated with the problem of central economic and political administration. The tyrannis episode has been widely misinterpreted by modern scholars because of confusion of the early tyrannis with its later form in the classical period. The latter was a very different phenomenon, from which our meaning of the word derives; it was systematically attacked by the contemporary scholars, such as Plato and Aristotle. (The former, with his strong anti-democratic sympathies, tended to lump the two together.) Aristotle, however, carefully distinguishes between the two types and emphasizes the democratic character of the former, which should be understood primarily as extra-legal rule by a powerful individual in the interests of the populace. He points out that

"Of old, the demagogue\* was also a general, and then democracies changed into tyrannies. Most of the ancient tyrants were originally demagogues. They are not so now, but they were then." (Politics, V, 5, 1305 2)

"Tyrannies were more common formerly than now, for this reason also, that great power was placed in the hands of individuals. . . Moreover, in those days, when cities were not large, the people dwelt in the fields, busy at their work; and their chiefs, if they possessed any military talent, seized the opportunity, and winning the confidence of the masses by professing their hatred of the wealthy, they succeeded in obtaining the tyranny." (ibid)

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\* It is in the same way that our understanding of the word 'demagogue' has been perverted; historically and etymologically, the word meant simply 'leader of the people (demos)'; it was the ridicule of the anti-democratic Aristophanes, Plato and others that converted the word into a term of reproach.

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That Pisisstratus' rule, however arbitrarily obtained, was both constitutional and exercised in the interests of the populace, cannot be doubted at all. Herodotus, Thucydides, and Aristotle, all implacable opponents of tyranny, are united in almost unqualified praise of Pisisstratus' rule. Herodotus observes that Pisisstratus held the sovereignty

"without disturbing the previously existing offices or altering any of the laws. He administered the state according to the established usages, and his arrangements were wise and salutary." (I, 59)

Thucydides, with his usual brilliance, gives a clear insight into the way in which personal rule was reconciled with constitutionality.

"To use violence would have been at variance with the general character of his rule, which was not unpopular or oppressive to the many; in fact, no tyrants ever displayed greater merit than these.... The city was permitted to retain her ancient laws, but the family of Pisistratus took care that one of their own number should always be in office." (VI, 54)

The degree to which this was rule by the House of Pisistratus, not just the head himself, is indicated by the tombstone inscription of his granddaughter, which read

"This earth covers Archedice, the daughter of Hippias, a man who was great among the Hellenes of his day. Her father, her husband, her brothers and her own sons were tyrants.

Yet was not her mind lifted up to vanity." \*

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\* Thucydides, VI, 54

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Considering the brevity and conciseness of the Constitution of Athens, Aristotle lavishes praise on Pisistratus.

"His administration was far more like a constitutional government than the rule of a tyrant." (XIV, 3)

"His administration was temperate, as has been said before, and more like a constitutional government than a tyranny. Not only was he in every respect humane and mild and ready to forgive those who offended, but, in addition, he advanced money to the poorer people to help them in their labors..." (XVI, 1-2)

"And so in matters in general he burdened the people as little as possible with his government, but always cultivated peace and kept them in all quietness. Hence the tyranny of Pisistratus was often spoken of proverbially as 'the age of gold'; since later the government became much harsher, owing to the excesses of his sons. In his whole administration he was accustomed to observe the laws, without giving himself any exceptional privileges. Once he was summoned on a charge of homicide before the Areopagus, and he appeared in person to make his defence; but the prosecutor was afraid to present himself and abandoned the case. For these reasons his government continued long, and whenever he was expelled \*\* he regained his position easily. The majority alike of the upper class and of the people were in his favour; the former he won by his social intercourse with them, the latter by the assistance which he gave to their private purses, and his nature fitted him to win the hearts of both." (XVI, 7-9)

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\*\* It might be useful to give a chronology of the Pisistratid tyranny at this point. Pisistratus seized the tyranny in 561 B.C. and was expelled in 556. He regained power and was again expelled in 550/49 B.C. His second restoration occurred in 540. While he died a natural death in 528, the tyranny continued until 510.

While the Pisistratid tyranny is better documented than most, its details are far from complete. The general character of this type of tyranny, the fact that it occurs almost everywhere in the Mediterranean world in this period or at this stage of development, permits us to overcome much of lacunae surrounding the Pisistratids. Generalization of this sort is particularly justified by the conventional character of the literary treatment of ancient tyrannies; the plot and the structure of each episode is almost identical. Because of its crucial role in institutional development, tyrannies is one of the primary problems on which our new methods of institutional analysis should be presumed to throw light.

In our consideration of the problem of tyranny, we may distinguish between two major, though related problems: the origins of tyranny; and its effects and achievements.

Even the most cursory study of the various tyrannies reveals the outstanding importance of two factors in their rise: wealth (including treasure), and manpower. Oedipus rebukes Creon, in a dramatic scene in Sophocles' masterpiece, asking him

"Is it not folly, this attempt of yours, without a host of followers and friends to seek a tyranny, a thing that's gained only with hosts of followers and wealth?" (540-542)

So overwhelming is this crucial role of wealth and followers that Professor Ure made it the central theme of his Origins of Tyranny. We are indebted to this volume for much of the material of this chapter, although we totally reject his interpretation. The usefulness of the volume lies in this recognition; but Ure interprets wealth entirely in the 'modern' (1900) sense. He quite explicitly sees the tyrants as super-capitalist employers of the Carnegie or Rockefeller type, foreshadowing the benevolent industrial feudalism which so many important thinkers of that period believed would follow if only the captains of industry gained some culture and a social conscience.\* While such naiveté limits the

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\* Cf. Joseph Dorfman, Thorstein Veblen and His America. Such a fond appreciation of the erstwhile robber barons seems to be regaining favor. See, for example, a report in the New York Times, August 6, 1951, of a speech by Professor Alan Nevins forecasting "a vast change in the historical interpretation of America's industrial revolution, with the 'heroes of our material growth - the Rockefellers, Carnegies, Hills and Morgans' - receiving much more appreciative treatment." Prof. Nevins also attacked the "feminine idealism" of those historians who have deprecated the materialism of that era.

usefulness of the volume, Ure has done a tremendous job of scholarship in collecting almost all the relevant materials. And he avoids the errors of another group of modernizers, who see the tyrants as early Tammany politicians intent on graft; he points out that Pindar (whom he regards as representative of the transition from the sixth to the fifth centuries) very definitely considers wealth as the means to power, not as its reward.\*

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\* p. 10

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The integrative role of wealth in early society was discussed briefly in chapter thirty above, where it was pointed out that wealth at that period consisted largely of cattle, slaves, and treasure. The economic importance of the first two are obvious; treasure, while never converted to economic purposes directly, had tremendous indirect effects in a variety of ways. It could be translated into power through the prestige attaching to wealth, and through the reciprocal relations that could be established through the circulation of treasure among the elite circle of gods, kings, and princes. The possession of power in turn gives command over men and resources, which enhances the wealth through the semi-feudal taxation system.

The addition of a fourth form of wealth - coins - in the period we're considering must have tremendously increased the role of wealth, since treasure could now play an economic role very much more directly. The ability to coin silver and gold must also have increased the power of the one who possessed the treasure.

All of these forms of wealth played a role in the tyrant's rise to power. Moreover, command over men and resources in this period arose from still another source: the private performance of public or quasi-public activities. These will all be examined in turn.

The elite circulation of treasure continued to play an important role in the power structure of the sixth century. The classic instance concerns the noble Alcmaeonid family, which was responsible for the expulsion of the Pisistratids. Herodotus tells a fascinating story of their relationship with gods and kings,

and of the role that the circulation of treasure played in their achieving power. The Alcmeonids had fled when Pisistratus resumed power for the final time, and had made a number of futile attempts to recapture Attica. When their fortification of Lipsydrium in Attica was reduced by Pisistratus, they

"resolved to shrink from no contrivance that might bring them success; and accordingly they contracted with the Amphictyons to build the temple which now stands at Delphi, but which in those days did not exist. Having done this, they proceeded, being men of great wealth, and members of an ancient and distinguished family, to build the temple much more magnificently than the plan obliged them. Besides other improvements, instead of the coarse stone whereof by the contract the temple was to have been constructed, they made the facings of Parian marble." (V, 62)

Such an act of nobility and generosity must have won them widespread acclaim in the Hellenic world and thereby increased their power; Herodotus clearly makes this act a crucial one in their recapturing power. But their treasure was used even more directly. Herodotus continues,

"These same men, if we believe the Athenians, during their stay at Delphi, persuaded the Pythoness by a bribe to tell the Spartans, whenever any of them came to consult the oracle, either on their own private affairs or on the business of the state, that they must free Athens. So the Lacedaemonians, when they found no answer ever returned to them but this, sent at last Anchimolius, the son of Aster, at the head of an army against Athens, with orders to drive out the Pisistratidae." (V, 63)

Aristotle links the building of the temple directly to the bribing of the Pythoness; he also gives this incident central importance.

"Having failed, then, in every other method, they took the contract for rebuilding the temple at Delphi, using for that purpose the considerable wealth which they possessed, with the view of securing the help of the Lacedaemonians. The Pythia accordingly was continually enjoining on the Lacedaemonians who came to consult the oracle, that they must free Athens; till finally she succeeded in turning the Spartans in that direction..." (XIX, 4)

The simple charm of this story of reciprocity among the circle of gods, kings, and nobles, is enhanced when the origin of the Alcmeonids' 'considerable wealth' legend? is revealed. Their wealth, which was legion in the Greek world, was derived in ~~in~~ very much the same way as it was dispensed!

Now the Alcmeonidae were, even in days of yore, a family of note at Athens; but from the time of Alcmeon, and again of Megacles, they rose to special eminence. The former of these two persons, to wit Alcmeon, the son of Megacles, when Croesus the Lydian sent men from Sardis to consult the Delphic oracle, gave aid gladly to

his messengers, and assisted them to accomplish their task. Croesus, informed of Alceon's kindnesses ~~in~~ by the Lydians, who from time to time conveyed his messages to the god, sent for him to Sardis, and when he arrived, made him a present of as much gold as he should be able to carry at one time about his person. Finding that this was the gift assigned to him, Alceon took his measures, and prepared to receive it in the following way. He clothed himself in a loose tunic, which he made to bag greatly at the waist, and placing upon his feet the widest buskins that he could anywhere find, followed his guides into the treasure house. Here he fell to upon a heap of gold-dust, and in the first place packed as much as he could inside his buskins between them and his legs; after which he filled the breast of his tunic quite full of gold, and then sprinkling some among his hair, and taking some likewise in his mouth, he came forth from the treasure-house, scarcely able to drag his legs along, like anything rather than a man, with his mouth crammed full, and his bulk increased in every way. On seeing him, Croesus burst into a laugh, and not only let him have all that he had taken, but gave him presents besides of fully equal worth. Thus this house became one of great wealth; and Alceon was able to keep horses for the chariot-race, and won the prize at Olympia." (VI, 125)

The Pisistratids, being of the noblest extraction, enjoyed comparable relations with other states, although they did not enjoy the favor of Apollo. Herodotus reports that a family conference was held shortly after Pisistratus' second expulsion, at which the decision was made to attempt to regain the sovereignty.

"The first step was to obtain advances of money from such states as were under obligations to them. By these means they collected large sums from several countries, especially from the Thebans, who gave them far more than any of the rest." (I, 61)

The existence of state obligations owed to the Pisistratids clearly implies the existence of reciprocal relations between them, perhaps of prior gifts from Pisistratus to the various states. The passage is reminiscent of a scene in the Odyssey, where Athena, disguised as the mortal Mentor, excuses herself from Nestor's proffered hospitality by proclaiming

"I will go to the great-hearted Cauconians, where a debt is owed to me, in no ways new or small." (III, 357)

We know of the existence of ties of xenia, or hospitality, between the Pisistratids and the Spartans; it was for this reason that the Spartans hesitated in obeying the Delphic oracle's injunction to expel the tyrants.\*

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\* Const. Athens, XIX, 4



Pisistratus' wealth was derived from other sources as well. The family estate was in Brauron in Attica, which is near the Laurion district. Whether or not he mined silver from the Laurion mines - in fact, whether or not the mines were worked in this period - is subject to dispute among scholars, and we cannot decide the point. But there is no doubt that he acquired properties in the rich gold and silver mining district of the Mount Pangaeus region in Thrace during his long exile. Of his stay there, Aristotle merely remarks tersely "Here he acquired wealth and hired mercenaries" (XV, 2). Our knowledge of his activities there is derived from another source, however: numismatic. The Eupatrid coinages in Attica, beginning in the Solonic era, have been discussed briefly above. Some of the early coins bear emblems possibly connected with the Pisistratids, although they are equally consistent with other Houses. He began striking a new type of coin when he first seized power, the first of the famous 'Laurion owls.' (The importance of these for numismatic history is tremendous, since they were perhaps the first coins to have an emblem on both sides: the head of Athene, and the owl. The earlier coins were marked merely with some sort of punch die on the reverse side.\* Rather than stopping during his Thracian exile, his coinage activities if anything increased; and we have an almost continual record. Native workmen seem to have been used, since the workmanship is very crude. Seltman, in fact, suggests that the emblems and lettering are adaptations of the Athenian insignia to native images.

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\* We depend completely on Seltman's Athens, Its History and Coinage for this material.

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How Pisistratus acquired these properties is nowhere indicated. A reasonable assumption can be made, however, on the basis of another comparable incident described by Herodotus, which, moreover, is quite consistent with our observations on the translation of wealth into power. According to the story, the emperor Darius was anxious to repay Histiaeus, tyrant of Miletus, for having prevented the destruction of the bridge across the Hellespont. The tyrant asked for - and received - the city of Myrcinus, on the Strymon river in Thrace (this same region). The Persian general in Thrace, Megabazus, hearing that Histiaeus

was walling in the city, reproached the emperor as follows:

"What mad thing is this that thou hast done, sire, to let a Greek, a wise man and shrewd, get hold of a town in Thrace, a place too where there is abundance of timber fit for shipbuilding, and oars in plenty, and mines of silver, and about which there are many dwellers both Greek and barbarian, ready enough to take him for their chief, and day and night to do his bidding!" (V, 23)

Recall that in analyzing the crucial role of the wealth concept in archaic Greece, Thucydides remarks that

"it was by means of the great wealth which he brought from Asia into the midst of a poor people that Pelops first acquired power,"

and Pisistratus' power in Thrace becomes clearer. A man of great wealth and ingenuity apparently could readily win followers among a poorer or more backward people. In fact, the origins of the old Etruscan monarchy at Rome in the period before the Twelve Tables, generally considered to be a tyrannis episode,\* was

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\* Ure, for example, treats it as such. It is clear from all Roman sources that the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the Republic was an aristocratic measure aimed at limiting the power of the people.

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explained in this way in Roman tradition. The tyranny was established by Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, born Lucumo, the son of a Corinthian exile, Demaratus, who had settled in Tyrrhenia. Demaratus was expelled from Corinth by the Cypselid dynasty, since he headed one of the leading Corinthian noble families. According to Strabo, Demaratus

"carried with him so much wealth from his home to Tyrrhenia that not only he himself became the ruler of the city that admitted him, but his son was made king of the Romans." (VIII, 6, 20)

Lucius' sovereignty over Rome is explained in some greater detail by Livy.

Finding his way to power blocked in Tyrrhenia after his father's death (perhaps an overthrow of Demaratus' tyranny), and having inherited all his father's wealth, he

"took up his residence in Rome, chiefly from ambition and the hope that he might there achieve a station such as he found no opportunity of attaining in Tarquinii... Rome appeared to be the most suitable place; amongst a new people, where all rank was of sudden growth and founded upon worth, there would be room for a brave and strenuous man... The Romans regarded him with special interest, as a stranger and man of wealth..." (I, 34)

A main result of Pisistratus' Thracian stay, according to both Aristotle and Herodotus, was the acquisition of a considerable body of mercenaries; wealth thus gave command over manpower. Hiring mercenaries was very much a matter of elite circulation; it should not be interpreted as a labor market transaction in which men are hired individually. While Pisistratus undoubtedly had to maintain the troops, a body of mercenaries must have been hired through a gift or bribe to their particular chief or king or state; this was the crucial step. Not only mercenaries, but skilled craftsmen were hired in this way; if raw materials are included, it is a form of chieftain trade. Thus, the wood and the builders for Solomon's temple were supplied by Hiram of Tyre. The Old Testament describes the negotiations between these two monarchs in considerable detail; it was finally agreed that Hiram would furnish cypress, cedar, and builders while Solomon would give Hiram "year by year"

"twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of beaten oil." (Kings (I Kings V, 25))

As late as the end of the third century, the individual appointed to recruit mercenaries was given "a large sum in gold for bounties." \*

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\* Polybius, XV, 25

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We may perhaps infer activities of this sort by Pisistratus from the type of coins produced in Thrace. The overwhelming majority of his Thracian coins were large coins - tetradrachms (or silver staters~~XXI~~)\*\* - which throughout Athenian history were used for external trade. Coins of such a large denomination could not have been used to pay mercenaries (even assuming that they in turn could use coins for some purpose).

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\*\* Seltman, p. 56

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The allegiance of a band of followers that followed the possession of wealth is also indicated in the reports of Demaratus and Lucimo. The former, in addition to bringing his vast wealth from Corinth, was accompanied

by "a goodly supply of artisans." (Strabo, V, 2, 2). And when Lucumo left Tyrrhenia for Rome,

"he resolved to get together all his riches and remove thither, taking with him his wife and such of his friends and household as wished to go along; and those who were eager to depart with him were many." (Dionysius Halicarnassus, III, 47)

But the allegiance of a band of men was gained in another important way in this period: through the performance of public services by private persons. Antiquity knew only two types of public administration: complete bureaucratization, or contracting for every service.\* The Hellenic world, except for the tyrannic period, never deviated from its insistence on the latter. Already in the Solonian constitution mention is made of the Commissioners for Public Contracts (Poletae), the superintendents of the state prison (the Eleven), and the Colacretae,\*\* treasury officials who received the taxes and handed them over to the Treasurers.\*\*\*

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\* Rostovtzeff makes this dichotomy the central theme of his monumental Geschichte der Staatspacht in der römischen Kaiserzeit.

\*\* Their original function was to collect the pieces of meat after a sacrifice. Kenyon edition of Const. of Athens, p.11, note 6.

\*\*\* Const. Athens, VII, 3

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During the classical period, both the letting of the contracts and the fulfillment of the contracts were under the most rigid state supervision. It is unlikely that such supervision could have been exercised in the period we are considering, when even the maintenance of public order and security was farmed out.\*\*\*\* The performance of such public duties as police, tax collection,

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\*\*\*\* Perhaps the only permanent bureaucratic group in classical Athens was the police - interestingly enough, a slave group, the famous Scythian archers, who probably were organized by Pisistratus.

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and construction by private persons necessarily involved the creation of a private power sphere, since all of them require the assistance or allegiance of a group of men. The performance of certain of these services also means direct power over the citizenry in order to succeed at the task, as e.g. in police or tax

collection. Thus, apart from emergency capital assessments (generally phrased as a free gift to the state), no Roman citizen was ever taxed. To give one man or a group the power to collect taxes from a Roman citizen was incompatible with the Roman conception of citizenship. (The special status of Sicily among the provinces was signified by its exclusive privilege of having the tribute collected only by its own citizens, the Roman publicans being excluded. Collection of taxes by a fellow-citizen was at least better than being subject to a foreigner.)

The etymological origin of the Roman societas publicanorum, the corporations of tax-collectors, reveals the sociological implications of letting-out public services. In early times, a tithe was collected by volunteers. Since the tax was collected in kind, only those powerful men who could command the allegiance of a band (societas) of followers could perform the physical task involved in going around to the various fields to gather up the crops.

But whether the service was performed voluntarily or by a contractor who either paid for the privilege of collecting taxes or was paid himself to perform other tasks, the results are equally decisive: the contractor commands a considerable body of men who are more or less dependent on him. Such a force would clearly provide the means of seizing power should the opportunity present itself. That this did in fact frequently occur is quite evident from several of the stories in Polyænus' collection of the Stratagems of War.

The most explicit concerns Dinius, tyrant of the Thessalian city of Cranon. Polyænus' report stands by itself.

"Dinius the son of Telisippus, by birth a Phercean, removed to Cranon a city of Thessaly, where he supported himself by catching birds on the lakes and rivers; and there advanced himself from that low station to the sovereignty by the following devices. The Cranonians for the watch and guard of the city used to pay by agreement a certain stipend a year. Dinius took it upon stipulated terms; and for three years performed his office so diligently, that the citizens could walk out more secure in the night, than by day. His conduct in this office gained him great reputation; and to ingratiate himself still further with the people, he hired more watchmen, in order to keep everything in greater security. The collectorship of the tenths of corn being vacant, he persuaded his younger brother, who had then never held any public office, magnifying it as a very lucrative employment, to hire it. His brother, thus appointed collector, associated with him a number of young men proportionate to the different tracts

of land, from whence he was to collect the corn; and on the celebration of a festival, which is called Taenia, when the Cranonians give themselves up to banqueting and merriment, Dinias uniting to his own dependents, the watchmen, the gatherers of the corn that were connected with his brother, with this band of sober men he attacked and easily defeated those who were drunk; slew more than a thousand of the citizens, and assumed the sovereignty of Cranon." (II, 17)

Another story concerns Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum, who obtained the sovereignty in a comparable manner. When the city decided to build a new temple to Zeus, he

"undertook to superintend the work; and at a fixed sum engaged to finish it, employing the ablest workmen and supplying the best materials. The people from his occupation, which was that of a publican, supposing him a proper person for conducting the work, accordingly contracted with him for it, and paid into his hands the money. With this he hires a number of strangers, farms the prisoners, and buys a quantity of stones, timber, and iron."

Pretending that his materials had been stolen, Phalaris received permission to fortify the building site; then, when the citizens were celebrating the feast of Ceres, armed his men and seized possession of the city. (V, 1).

Polyaenus tells almost the identical story about another tyrant of the same city, Theron, who "kept privately in pay a body of the Agrigentines, ready on all occasions to obey his orders." (Theron clearly was a tax farmer.) When the construction of a new temple lagged, Theron proposed to do the work at a fixed sum and with a stipulated completion date; the people accepted and paid the sum to Theron's son, Gorgus.

"As soon as the money had passed into Theron's hands, instead of employing architects, stone-cutters, and other artificers, he converted the people's money against themselves, paid his men, formed them into a body of guards; and by their assistance possessed himself of the sovereignty of Agrigentum." (VI, 51)

The lack of an effective police system in Attica is indicated by the story of how Pisistratus first seized power. He is reported to have inflicted a wound on himself and then rushed into the Assembly, claiming that he had been attacked by his political opponents. On a motion of one of his followers, the Assembly voted him

"a band of citizens to serve as a guard, who were to carry clubs instead of spears, and to accompany him wherever he went." (Herodotus, I, 59)

With these men, he attacked the Acropolis and seized power. The mention made of the fact that his guards were armed with clubs instead of spears indicates the existence of conventionally armed police.

The relation of public services to the growth of tyranny suggests the major achievement of the tyrannis: the development of some central economic administration. This was generally done through the creation of a redistributive system. This has been expressed by Fritz Heichelheim in a passage of brilliant insight:

"The tyrants in order to give support to the peasantry and in order to develop the economic activities of the state created a relatively considerable redistributive system in kind and in money, directly to mercenaries and friends, and indirectly, through building activities and improvements, to the masses." \*

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\* Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Altertums, p. 291

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Two redistributive systems are created here, in a sense: that of the tyrant's personal oikos, and that of the state as a whole organized by him. The first maintains directly those followers on whose support he depends. All of the tyrant's forms of wealth can be used directly here: cattle, slaves, natural resources, as well as treasure mobilized through coinage. Herodotus reports that Pisistratus' power was firmly rooted after his second return,

"by the aid of a numerous body of mercenaries, and by keeping up a full exchequer, partly supplied from native sources, partly from the countries around the river Strymon." (I, 64)

The large number of mercenaries he brought with him on his return were mentioned above; but Herodotus also reports that when the Pisistratid host landed on the Attic coast near Marathon,

"they were joined by their partisans from the capital and by numbers from the country districts, who loved tyranny better than freedom." (I, 62)

How many of these were maintained directly by the Pisistratids cannot be ascertained; if any significant proportion was supported by the oikos, a major integrative effort was involved. And we have already commented on the hosts

of followers which accompanied Demaratus to Tyrrhenia and Lucumo to Rome; in the latter instance, they are expressly mentioned as belonging to Lucumo's household.

But it was in the larger redistributive sphere that the major achievements lay. It appears that in fact the two spheres were combined, the larger being run more or less as an adjunct to the tyrant's oikos. Such at least was the case with Pisistratus. Herodotus describes his revenues as partly supplied from native, partly from foreign sources, and Aristotle observes that

"his revenues were increased by the thorough cultivation of the country, since he imposed a tax of one tenth on all the produce." \*

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\* Const. Athens, XVI, 4. Thucydides reports the tax as five per cent: VI, 54.

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Through whatever sphere they passed, these revenues were redistributed so as to solve or mitigate most of the pressing economic problems. The very fact of centralization greatly increased the effectiveness of the wealth collected, as Thucydides suggests:

"No tyrants ever displayed greater merit or capacity than these. Although the tax on the produce of the soil which they exacted amounted only to five per cent, they improved and adorned the city and carried on successful wars; they were also in the habit of sacrificing in the temples." (VI, 54)

Perhaps the most important use to which their revenues were put was the large-scale extension of credit to the peasantry, undoubtedly to facilitate the conversion of small farms to olive and fig cultivation, as well as to resettle the surplus city population on the land. Pisistratus carried on a sort of synoecism-in-reverse. According to Aristotle,

"he advanced money to the poorer people to help them in their labors, so that they might be able to make their living by agriculture. In this he had two objects, first that they might not spend their time in the city but might be scattered over all the face of the country, and secondly, that being moderately well off and occupied with their own business, they might have neither the wish nor the time to attend to public affairs." (XVI, 1-3)

In connection with this program, Pisistratus instituted a system of local justices in each of the demes which he personally inspected from time to time, so that disputes could be settled promptly and without requiring a time-consuming



trip to Athens.\*

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\* Const. Athens, XVI, 5.

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Bury suggests that Pisistratus divided the abandoned estates of the Alcmeonids among the former hectemoroi; this is possible, although there is no supporting evidence. We know that the properties of the Pisistratids were sold at public auction after their expulsion,\*\* so that the same may have been done earlier. Pisistratus constructed aqueducts and cisterns near the Acropolis, as shown by archaeological remains;\*\*\* it seems possible that this was part of a larger program of improving the water supply as a means of aiding conversion to olive planting. (The olive requires more water than any other plant.)\*\*\*\*

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\*\* Herodotus, VI, 121

\*\*\* Bury, p. 193

\*\*\*\* Theophrastus, Inquiry Into Plants, II, 7, 3

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Pisistratus' concern with the peace and tranquility of the countryside suggests the possibility that he used some of his mercenaries or slaves for police duty. This may have been a general procedure of tyrants, and one of their most democratic actions, judging from a passage in Xenophon's Hiero:

"If, therefore, it should be one of the chief charges given to your mercenaries, that they are the guards of all the citizens, and are to protect them all...the citizens would feel themselves benefited by the maintenance of them.

In addition to this, your guards might very well afford security and tranquility, in a great measure, to the workmen and cattle in the fields..." (X, 4-5)

The construction of public works was one of the main avenues through which the tyrants stimulated economic activities. Pisistratus' construction of water-works has been mentioned. He improved the huge temple of Athena in connection with the Panathenaic Festival and began the construction of a great Doric temple to Zeus which wasn't finished until the era of the Roman emperor Hadrian. A new temple to Dionysius, the worship of whom was greatly extended under his rule, was also built. (reference?)

Aristotle mentions public works construction as one of the main activities of tyrants in his discussion of tyranny in the Politics, Book V. The public works of Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, were renowned throughout the ancient world;\* they included an underground aqueduct cut through the base of a hill, a harbor breakwater, and a huge temple to Hera.\*\* The tyrant Theagenes constructed an underground water conduit for Megara,\*\* while Phalaris of Agrigento, discussed above, was considered a great builder.\*\*\*\* The building achievements of Lucumo, who assumed the Roman name Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, were legion. According to Livy,

"he set to work to encircle the hitherto unfortified parts of the city with a stone wall, and he drained the lowest parts of the city, about the Forum, and the other valleys between the hills, which were too flat to carry off the flood-waters easily, by means of sewers so made as to slope down toward the Tiber." (I, 38, 6-7)

He instituted the Great Games and built a new stadium to house them, with covered seats,\*\*\*\*\* and he

"apportioned building sites about the Forum among private citizens, and erected covered walks and booths." (I, 38, 10)

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\* Aristotle, Politics, V, 11

\*\* Herodotus, III, 60; Ure, p. 76. While Herodotus does not specifically attribute these to Polycrates, Ure insists that the context makes it clear that this is what he intended.

\*\* Pausanias, I, 40

\*\*\*\* Lucian, Phalaris A, 3, quoted by Ure, p. 276

\*\*\*\*\* Dion. Hal. III, 68, 1

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Pisistratus laid the foundations for a more successful solution of the food problem. The inadequacy of Solon's measures was discussed in chapter 32 above, and the classical solution will be discussed in the following chapter. Briefly, the essence of the matter was Athen's attempts to organize the supply of grain in the Mediterranean under her political and military control, with varying success. The Black Sea region was the major source of wheat throughout the classical period, although intermittent efforts to gain control of Sicily and Egypt were made. It was under the Pisistratids that this policy, which

that this policy, which shaped Athenian history in the fifth and fourth centuries, began. The first Athenian move into the Black Sea region was made some forty years before Pisistratus' reign, when the fortress of Sigeum, on the southern shore of the Hellespont, was captured, but it was subsequently lost. Pisistratus recaptured the citadel and installed one of his sons as tyrant.

Far more important was the conquest of the Thracian Chersonese by Miltiades, who installed himself as tyrant. Athenian control thus extended to both sides of the entrance to the Hellespont. Pisistratus' purification of the island of Delos may have been an assertion of Athenian leadership of the Ionian Greeks as Bury suggests - an anticipation of the Confederacy of Delos.

Further support for the view that Pisistratus organized Athenian foreign trade on an active basis (rather than the old passive trade) comes from study of his coins. The predominance of tetra-drachms over all others during the Thracian period has already been mentioned; the same general proportion remained throughout his rule, although the Eupatrid mints stopped completely after 546. During the classical period, small and large coins were used for quite different purposes: the small coins were used almost entirely in local transactions and passed always at their face value; large coins were used almost exclusively in foreign trade, and circulated at their bullion value.\* Hence we are justified in our conclusions about Pisistratus' foreign trade activities.\*\* How foreign trade was organized is not known, although it seems possible that exports and imports were handled through Pisistratus' oikos.

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\* J. G. Milne, *Greek and Roman Coins*, passim.

For a fuller discussion of the whole question of coinage, see chapter 34 below.

\*\* Seltman concurs in this view, suggesting that the old Eupatrid coins were used for local purposes until their recall by Pisistratus' son Hippias.  
p. 61.

The coinage proportions suggest another fact of considerable importance: the unimportance of market trade within Attica. Had Pisistratus encouraged the growth of the agora, we might expect to find the owl currency issued in large quantities in denominations of drachmas, obols, and quarter-obols, but instead, these are very rare. Moreover, we find no single mention of the local market as playing any role whatsoever until it suddenly springs into the center of the picture in the middle of the fifth century. A food market had probably started to develop in the Solonian period, when Athens was thronged with an unemployed crowd. Pisistratus' resettlement program thus made the marketing habit superfluous. Instead, those who did not have their own small or large oikos were probably attached to Pisistratus' household.

Another significant achievement of Pisistratus was his substantial reduction of the power of the old aristocracy, along with marked increase in the power of the populace. This was accomplished in a variety of ways; the measure of the change he wrought is given by the fact that when the Alcmeonids returned, they came not as an aristocratic party but rather as the champion of the masses! It was the leading Alcmeonid, Cleisthenes, who more than anyone else was responsible for the establishment of a permanent democracy! (The change is reminiscent of the change in the American political climate as a result of the New Deal. The Republican Party has changed from unfaltering opposition to any government intervention to an insistence that it can administer the essentials of the New Deal more efficiently than the New Dealers.)

Not content with the voluntary exile of the Alcmeonids and their allies when he returned to power, Pisistratus took hostages from many of the remaining noble families, sending them to Naxos, where Lygdamis had installed himself as tyrant with Pisistratus' aid.\* We may assume that this served to assure good behavior on the part of those who remained.

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\* Herodotus, I, 64

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The establishment of the Dionysian Festival was an important move in the growth of the power of the populace. The worship of Dionysius was always a

popular religion, and Pisistratus' action in making it a central part of the Athenian year could only have decreased the relative power of the old aristocratic families, which had been exerted in part through their control of tribal religious rites. Perhaps most important of all, however, was the clear and inescapable fact that state power was being used in the interests of the masses - and used with great efficiency and complete integrity.

One of the most striking aspects of the various episodes describing a tyrant's rise to power is the way in which almost every one depends on some ruse in which the would-be tyrant takes advantage of an apparently mentally-deficient citizen population. It is this which gives such a conventional flavor to the various tyrant stories. Pisistratus used no less than four different schemes, in each of which the Athenians appear a collection of half-wits. He first seized power with the aid of the 'club-bearers,' granted him after he had wounded himself and blamed the wounds on his enemies.\* His return to power with the aid of Megacles was signaled by the famous scheme in which a woman 'of great stature and beauty' was dressed as Athens and led Pisistratus' procession into the city, where the populace, "struck with awe, received him with adoration."\*\* Pisistratus returned to power the final time when he attacked the Athenian army right after lunch, when the soldiers were either sleeping or playing dice.\*\*\* He secured his power

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\* C.A., XIV, 1; Herod. I, 59

\*\* C.A., XIV, 4. Herodotus calls this device "the silliest I find on record." I, 60.

\*\*\* Herodotus, I, 63

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by disarming the populace completely. He held a military review in full armor, at which he addressed the population in a very low voice. When they complained that they couldn't hear, he told them to come closer, which they did; while he spoke on and on, his men collected all the weapons and locked them up. Pisistratus thereupon

"finished the rest of his speech and then told the crowd what had happened to their arms, adding that they should not be surprised

or distressed, but should go home and take care of their private affairs, since in the future he would attend to all the business of the state.\*

Dinias and Phalaris both attacked the citizenry of Granon and Agrigentum during drunken orgies.\*\* Maendrius succeeded Polycrates as tyrant of Samos after the latter's death, despite the opposition of the leading citizens. He had been Polycrates' secretary; when he suggested himself as tyrant, he was told by the leading citizens

"As if thou wert fit to rule us, base-born and rascal as thou art!  
Think rather of accounting for the monies which thou hast fingered." \*\*\*

He thereupon called his enemies to the citadel, individually, under pretence of showing them his accounts, and put them each in irons.\*\*\*\* Miltiades, nephew of the Miltiades who had conquered the Thracian Chersonese for Athens, became tyrant of that land after his brother's death by the following ruse. He shut himself up in his house, pretending to be mourning his brother's death,

"whereupon the chief people of the Chersonese gathered themselves together from all the cities of the land, and came in a procession to the place where Miltiades was, to condole with him upon his misfortune. Miltiades commanded them to be seized and thrown into prison; after which he made himself master of the Chersonese..."\*\*\*\*\*

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\* Const. Athens, XV, 4

\*\* Polyaeus, II, 17; V, 1

\*\*\* Herod., III, 142

\*\*\*\* Ibid., III, 143

\*\*\*\*\* Herodotus, VI, 39

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The persistence of these stories, and their similarity, give credence to the belief that they were very much more of a literary tradition developed after the event, than actual fact.\*\*\*\*\* In an age which hated tyranny, as the

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\* This tradition can perhaps be compared to the persistence of the Horatio Alger tradition of immigrant rags to riches generally attributed to the American captains of industry by almost all historians. Contemporary research is revealing that this tradition is founded on something less than fact. Cf. e.g., William Miller, "American Historians and the Business Elite," Journal of Economic History, v. IX, no. 2 (November 1949).

classical period did, it may have been deemed necessary to stigmatize as idiot an era which obviously welcomed tyrants. This, of course, is purely speculative.

The centrality ~~to~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~mak~~ needed to make the Pisistratids' redistributive economy effective was established through personal, extra-constitutional means, hence could not be regarded as a permanent solution to the problem of livelihood. But without question, it did fundamentally alter the character of the Athenian state. The decaying tribe had now been replaced by a political organization expressly committed to responsibility for the livelihood of the community. The effectiveness of the Pisistratids' democratization is shown by the fact that the final and decisive step in the creation of the classic democratic polis was taken by the leader of the Alcmeonid House, Cleisthenes. This is the man whom Herodotus credits with having persuaded the Pythoness to induce the Spartans to overthrow the Pisistratids.

The overthrow of the Pisistratids\* in 510 by a Spartan army led by the Spartan king, Cleomenes, was followed by a political struggle between Cleisthenes and Isagoras, a friend of the Pisistratids, who seems to have aimed at the establishment of an oligarchy. When Cleisthenes, with popular support, became more powerful, Isagoras invited Cleomenes, who was united to him by ties of xenia, or hospitality, to return to Athens on the pretext of "driving out the pollution." (The reference was to the early curse of pollution placed on the Alcmeonids as a result of their complicity in the Cylon affair.) Cleisthenes withdrew from Athens, and Cleomenes expelled some seven hundred families/. But the Spartan attempt to establish an oligarchy of three hundred headed by Isagoras aroused both the Council and the people as a whole, who besieged the Spartan-oligarch alliance in the Acropolis, forcing their withdrawal after three days. Cleisthenes and the other exiles were recalled, and Cleisthenes "was their chief and the leader of the people.\*\*"

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\* The end of the tyranny was a popular affair, because of the change in the character of the regime. After the assassination of his brother, Hippias (Pisistratus' son) became "a distrustful and embittered man" who ruled rather harshly. Const. Athens, XIX, 1.

\*\* Const. Athens, ch. XX; cf. also Herod. V, 70-73

The Cleisthian reform of the constitution (alternatively dated 508 or 501 BC) which followed Cleisthenes' return to power, completely destroyed the old Ionian tribes as political forces, reconstituting citizenship on a completely new basis.\* His first step was to replace the four or old Ionian

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\* We follow Constitution of Athens, ch. XXI, for our analysis of the Cleisthian constitution.

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tribes with ten new tribes, named after ten heroes appointed by the Pythia out of a list of one hundred selected national heroes,

"with the object of intermixing the members of the different tribes, so that more persons might have a share in the franchise."

The membership of the ten tribes was constituted according to a complex arithmetical formula, referring to the tribe as the largest unit, the deme as the smallest, and an abstract unit called a trittys in between. Attica had since early times been divided into a large number (possibly one hundred) of local units, called demes; these have been compared to the English parish. Not until Pisistratus' establishment of local justices in each deme do we hear of the deme playing any role in political administration, the naucrary being the early local territorial unit. Cleisthenes constituted the deme as the basic unit of local administration. All men who lived in one deme at that moment were called fellow-demesmen, and citizens were thereupon called by their given name and the name of their deme in official documents and records. (The object of this reform was to prevent discrimination against new citizens - for Cleisthenes had opened the citizenship rolls to a large number - which would have been easy under the older system, in which men were known by their given name and the name of their father, thus revealing the aristocratic or common background of each individual.) Demarchs were appointed: administrative officials in charge of keeping the records of the deme, enrolling young men on the citizen roster when they reached eighteen, etc.



Each tribe consisted of three groups of demes, one from each of the three main districts of Attica: the city and environs, the coast, and the interior. These groups, thirty in all, were called trittyes. The number of demes per tritty varied from one to seven, according to their population.\* While the demes grouped in each tritty may have been contiguous, the tribe was composed of members from all parts of Attica. These artificial units, however, became the basis of the constitution. The Council was made to consist of five hundred members, fifty from each tribe; later on, juries were selected on a comparable basis, as were most magistracies.

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\* Von Fritz and Kapp, p. 164, note 50

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without detracting from Cleisthenes' genius, precedents for his reforms can be found. Herodotus, for example, claims that they were modeled after those of his grandfather and namesake, the famous tyrant of Sicyon, (V, 67), and Fustel de Coulanges has pointed to almost identical developments at Cyrene, Elis, and Sparta.\*\* The researches of Evans-Pritchard among the Nuer of northwest Africa have discovered that even among primitive, relatively unstratified tribal societies, the population may be periodically redistributed among the various tribes, with imputed relationships forming the basis of social organization.

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\*\* The Ancient City (trans. by W. Small), 10th ed., p. 378

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The effects of Cleisthenes' actions were tremendous. The old aristocratic families had exerted their influence through the tribes, where their control of religious and social rites was complete. The tribes seem to have had some ~~part~~ sort of territorial basis; the three parties of the post-Solonic period, led by noble families, were definitely territorial. Effective government thus had been blocked by tribal elements operating on a territorial basis. It was at this that the new reforms were aimed: neither tribe nor territory could henceforth play any political role! The deme was too small a unit to permit alliances among families or to invoke strong feelings of allegiance, and the tribe was composed of members from all sections of Attica; the tritty played

no role whatsoever. Since the tribe had to operate as a unit, local grouping had to be transcended. But the tribe was itself too artificial a unit to promote sentimental attachments. The only group to which a citizen could owe real allegiance and devotion - the only group which had any real meaning, in fact - was the city-state itself. For all practical purposes, it was the citizenry as a whole - the demos - which elected all officials, since the tribes had little more than an administrative function.

The democratic character of these radical changes is unquestionable. Aristotle is emphatic on this point, observing that "by these reforms the constitution became much more democratic than that of Solon" (XXII, 1), and both he and Herodotus attribute as Cleisthenes' motivation the desire to win the support of the masses. And, as mentioned above, Aristotle's remedy for excess democracy is a reversal of the Cleisthinian constitution.

"A more or less complete cure for this state of things is for the separate tribes, and not the whole people, to elect the magistrates."  
(Politics, V, 5, 1305 a)

Cleisthenes increased the power of the populace in another effective way, by establishing ostracism (XXII, 1). Within a few years, the populace realized the full power they possessed; the combined efforts of the Pisistratids and of Cleisthenes had removed any and all substantive obstacles to the full utilization of their newly increased formal prerogatives. Aristotle explains the full measure of the change in public psychology in explaining the growth of ostracism. While it was established in the first years of Cleisthenes' rule, it was not used until 488 B.C., two years after the victory at Marathon, "when the people had now gained self-confidence" (XXII, 3). Thus does Aristotle record how the conflict between the formal and substantive rights of the populace had turned full circle! The democratic city-state - the prerequisite for the unique pattern of livelihood which forms our main interest here - had now been born.

Fragments

maintain the troops, they must have been hired through a gift proffered to their particular chief or king or state; this was the crucial step. Civil war, too, was financed through the circulation of treasure. Its possession largely secured the political ascendancy of the aristocracy, be it as leaders of aristocratic, oligarchical or even of democratic parties.

#### IV The Duped Citizenry

The rise of tyrants is treated in classical literature as the stuff of comic stories. Admittedly, facts of this kind would seem to bear on the history of literature rather than on the history of tyrannis. For freaks of fashion and style do not, as a rule, offer a clue to the events of which the writer treats; insofar as they serve as evidence of political and social conditions, they throw light not so much on the period they pretend to reflect as rather on their own. Literature is a mirror of its time, even when it chooses as its subject the days of yore.

However, we plead an exception for the anecdotal handling of tyrannis. This peculiar treatment must have been solidly grounded in a condition of opinion almost contemporaneous with the events themselves and, therefore, strictly relevant to the backgrounds of the democratic régimes that followed upon the fall of tyrannis. There is then not only range of space and time over which that literary fancy prevailed, but, even more significantly, the early date of its origin. Together these rule out any purely aesthetic or artistic explanation. No mere whim of fashion could keep these stories alive from Herodotus to Polyænus, the one a pristine

historian recording of the near past, the other a sophisticated compiler of anecdotes, six centuries later. All the more so, as Herodotus himself, born within a generation of the origin of these legends, declared to be shocked by the absurdity of the proceedings that resulted in the triumph of Peisistratus and was almost ashamed to have to take them at their face value, which he nevertheless could not help doing. Obviously they were too well authenticated. This should give food for thought to those who would discount the value of the crude tyrannis comics as a source for the rise of tyrannis.

Indeed, the humorous relief that annoyed the one and exhilarated the other of our authors fits in rather well with the contentious nature of tyrannis itself. The peasant democracy of Cleisthenian Athens may well have wished to inherit the power of the tyrants, without having all too patently to recognize its descent. It is a thought-provoking fact that the popular tyrannis jokes were made not so much at the expense of the tyrant as of their alleged victims, the gullible, impractical, and stereotype-minded urban citizenry. The humor smacks of peasant gibes against townfolk, for the duped citizenry are pictured as authentic burgesses, comfortably protected by their walls, while the heroes of the revolution, the needy farmers, may have thought of themselves as sturdy rustics, thoroughly capable of emancipating themselves from urban tutelage. In effect, the two meanings of democracy - liberty and equality - readily account for the inherent ambiguity of the tyrannis. If the tyrannis was a democratic force in the one sense, its fall released the power of democracy in the other. Undeniably, the active participation of the populace in government under the Cleisthenian

version of democracy sharply contrasted with its merely passive participation under the tyrannis. This may offer a key to some of the anecdotes. We meet, for instance, a series of Schildbuerger stories where a simple-minded citizenry is tricked by hackneyed devices into helpless submission to the tyrant. The villain either pretends that his life is threatened by evil men and employs the handful of guards voted for his protection to seize the Acropolis, or quietly bides his time until the citizens are celebrating a religious festival outside the walls, and then shuts the gates upon the dazed town dwellers. His wealth, as we will see later on, though mostly originating in treasure may have been amplified by the citizenry itself, which he has defrauded on a contract.

Peisistratus is a stunning example of how to dupe the citizenry. He is credited with the use of no less than four different schemes, in each of which the Athenians appear as a collection of half-wits. He first seized power with the aid of the 'club-bearers', granted him after he had wounded himself and blamed the wounds on his enemies. <sup>20/</sup> His return to power with the aid of Megacles was signalized by the notorious scheme in which a woman "of great stature and beauty" was dressed as Athena and led Peisistratus' procession into the city, where the populace, "struck with awe, received him with adoration". Herodotus appears genuinely offended at this insult to our intelligence:

And here the device on which they hit was the silliest to be found in all history, more especially considering that the Greeks have been from very ancient times distinguished from the barbarians by superior sagacity and freedom from foolish simpleness, and remembering that the persons on whom this trick was played were not only Greeks but Athenians, who have the credit of surpassing all other Greeks in cleverness. 21/

Peisistratus, when he eventually returned for good, defeated the Athenian army by attacking it right after lunch, when the soldiers were either sleeping or playing dice. 22/ He secured his power in Athens by a gag. He held a military review in full armor, at which he addressed the population in a very low voice. When they complained that they couldn't hear, he told them to come closer, which they did; while he spoke on and on, his men collected all the weapons and locked them up. Peisistratus thereupon

finished the rest of what he had to say, told the people also what had happened to their arms; adding that they were not to be surprised or alarmed, but go home and attend to their private affairs, while he would for the future manage all the business of the state. 23/

Other tyrannis anecdotes were in the same vein.

Dinias and Phalaris attacked the citizenry of Cranon and Agrigentum respectively, during their victims' drunken orgies. 24/ Marandrius succeeded Polycrates as tyrant of Samos after the latter's death despite the opposition of the leading citizens. He had been Polycrates' secretary; when he suggested himself as tyrant, he was told by a leading citizen

As if you were fit to rule us, baseborn and rascal as you are!

Think rather of accounting for the moneys which you have fingered. 25/

He thereupon called his enemies to the citadel, individually, under pretence of showing them his accounts, and put them each in irons. 26/ Miltiades, nephew of the Miltiades who had acquired the Thracian Chersonese for Athens, became tyrant of that land after his brother's death by the following ruse. He shut himself up in his house, pretending to be mourning his brother's decease,

whereupon the chief people of the Chersonese gathered themselves together from all the cities of the land,

and came in a procession to the place where Miltiades was, to condole with him upon his misfortune. Miltiades commanded them to be seized and thrown into prison; after which he made himself master of the Chersonese..27/

#### V. The Public Utility Device

No less stereotype are the stories about some of the devices which invested the ambitious with the manpower for their coup. Yet the facts are solidly grounded in the economic conditions of the period. Public utilities, serviced by wealthy private citizens, were, it appears, the highway to success. They equipped the aspirant to kingship with the striking force required, putting him militarily into a strategic position. At the same time his civic achievements invested him with the aura of a public benefactor.

The hard facts were, that in a number of cases power was seized by a person of aristocratic extraction, who had been entrusted by the community with the provision of an important public service usually on a business basis. His armed force consisted in the personnel of the service, while their material resources served them for the coup de main. At the first glance this may sound far fetched. But we need only recall the significance of the king's oikos in the administration of the redistributive system to realize that we are here confronted with a facet of polis economy.

The Hellenic world knew two main types of central administration: either through a bureaucracy as in Ptolemaic Egypt, (and later, under the Roman Empire), or by the farming out of services as in the Greek polis (and eventually republican Rome). <sup>28/</sup> The polis, whether oligarchic or democratic, never deviated from its insistence on the latter. The tyrannis episodes formed the brief



exceptions. Before and after, public utility services were entrusted to private hands.

But whether the service was performed voluntarily, or, as later, by a contractor who either paid for the privilege of collecting the revenue farmed out to him or was paid under contract to have the tasks performed: the contractor commanded a considerable body of men who were more or less dependent upon him. Such a force would provide the means of seizing power should an opportunity offer. That this did in fact frequently occur is evident from several of the stories in Polyseus' collection of the Stratagems of War.

The most explicit instance concerned Dinias, tyrant of the Thessalian city of Cranon. The treasure feature is here altogether absent. Polyseus' report is somewhat lengthy, but it speaks for itself:

Dinias the son of Telisippus, by birth a Phercean, removed to Cranon, a city of Thessaly, where he supported himself by catching birds on the lakes and rivers; and there advanced himself from that low station to the sovereignty by the following devices. The Cranonians for the watch and guard of the city used to pay by agreement a certain stipend a year. Dinias took it upon stipulated terms; and for three years performed his office so diligently, that the citizens could walk out more secure in the night, than by day. His conduct in this office gained him great reputation; and to ingratiate himself still further with the people, he hired more watchmen, in order to keep everything in greater security. The collectorship of the tenths of corn being vacant, he persuaded his younger brother, who had then never held any public office, magnifying it as a very lucrative employment, to hire it. His brother, thus appointed collector, associated with him a number of young men proportionate to the different tracts of land, from whence he was to collect the corn; and on the celebration of a festival, which is called Taenia, when the Cranonians give themselves up to banqueting and merriment, Dinias uniting to his own dependents, the watchmen, the gatherers of corn that were connected with his brother, with this band of sober men he attacked and easily defeated those who were

drunk; slew more than a thousand of the citizens, and assumed the sovereignty of Cranon. 29/

Another story concerns Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum, who obtained the sovereignty in a comparable manner. When the city decided to build a new temple to Zeus, he

undertook to superintend the work; and at a fixed sum engaged to finish it, employing the ablest workmen and supplying the best materials. The people from his occupation, which was that of a publican, supposing him a proper person for conducting the work, accordingly contracted with him for it, and paid into his hands the money. With this he hires a number of strangers, farms the prisoners, and buys a quantity of stones, timber, and iron. 30/

Pretending that his materials had been stolen, Phalaris received permission to fortify the building site; then, when the citizens were celebrating the feast of Ceres, armed his men and seized possession of the city.

Polysenus tells almost the identical story about another tyrant of the same city, Theron, who "keep privately in pay a body of the Agrigentines, ready on all occasions to obey his orders." Theron clearly was a tax farmer. When the construction of a new temple lagged, he proposed to do the work at a fixed sum and with a stipulated completion date; the people accepted and paid the sum to Theron's son Gorgus.

As soon as the money had passed into Theron's hands, instead of employing architects, stone-cutters, and other artificers, he converted the people's money against themselves, paid his men, formed them into a body of guards; and by their assistance possessed himself of the sovereignty of Agrigentum. 31/

## VI. Athens under Peisistratus

These by no means very exceptional cases foreshadow the

Hesiods poem ~~echoed~~ <sup>echoed</sup> the effects of the presence of market elements in a society emerging from its tribal state. Concern for livelihood as an acute problem of individual existence is inseparable from this kind of transition from blood tie to neighborhood organization, from ~~the~~ <sup>type</sup> tribal to ~~the~~ <sup>type</sup> peasant type of society. Whether commonalty of pasture or ~~land~~ <sup>protected</sup> land - clanship ~~protected~~ <sup>protected</sup> the individual family from starvation as long as the community as a whole ~~was able to~~ <sup>was able to keep famine away.</sup> ~~was able to~~ <sup>fought off</sup> ~~was able to~~ <sup>was able to keep famine away.</sup> But with the loosening of those bonds, the vicissitudes of weather and war threw the individual back on his resources, while the disintegrating effects of ~~foreign~~ <sup>trading,</sup> ~~trade~~ <sup>from outside</sup> pressure were no longer met through communal forms of barter. Social classes now make their appearance whose struggle for ascendancy and privilege take on a political form. But whatever the outcome of the often issueless struggles, the community as a whole ~~is only more and more helpless.~~ <sup>(put itself increasingly defenceless against the danger of)</sup> ~~both in regard to~~ <sup>paralyzed in face of</sup> foreign penetration and the need for ~~tribal~~ <sup>domestic</sup> organization. For the aristocratic monarchy of tribal times has long given way to the rule of territorial princes or other ~~semi-feudal lords,~~ <sup>masters</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>a</sup> leaderless oligarchy, incapable of producing those organs of central power that are required for an orderly adjudication of the rival ~~claims~~ <sup>in</sup> of the emergent classes.

In this condition of affairs the elements of passive trade which permeate the defenseless community from foreign parts; the novel money uses attaching to coins, especially to small coins; the incipient formation of markets, ~~in~~ <sup>whether within</sup> ports of trade or in city-state centres, or in connection with temple sacrifices, ~~however much exchanges~~ <sup>were</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>restricted to set rates,</sup> all these ~~are~~ <sup>merely</sup> serve as levers of power, depressing ~~the~~ <sup>free men to a state of</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>subject</sup> ~~required~~ <sup>helotage,</sup> status of some and enhancing that of ~~others~~ <sup>others</sup> to ~~that of~~ <sup>over</sup> masters of life and death. And out of this welter of unfamiliar forms of despair a cry ~~arises~~ <sup>arose</sup> for order of a hitherto unknown kind, which is called justice, and is acclaimed as the true justification of monarchy. ~~and it is~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>virtue</sup> ~~virtue~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> this title to ~~rule~~ <sup>rule</sup> rulership that the new non-tribal monarchy called tyrannis became the great ~~institution~~ <sup>instrument</sup> of progress and prosperity during a short period of classical antiquity.

that bastion of the oligarchy

~~Remain~~  
weakness of the Solonic reforms was their failure to develop such an effective ~~and~~  
~~of effective administration~~  
political center. Formally, the Solonic constitution should have been an  
adequate basis for a working redistributive system. But the ~~retention~~ <sup>areopagus, that bastion</sup> of  
oligarchy, retained its ~~of which~~  
supervisory power ~~by the areopagus~~ effectively negated much of the democratic ~~advance~~  
reform, while the aristocracy in general exercised ~~tremendous~~ <sup>its</sup> influence through  
the four tribes, which elected the Council of Four Hundred.\* The result was

\* As late as the fourth century, Aristotle suggested as the remedy for excessive  
democracy election of magistrates by the separate tribes rather than by the  
people as a whole. Politics, V, 6 (1305 a).

neither effective democracy nor effective oligarchy, but ~~resumption of the~~ <sup>something like the</sup>  
pre-Solonian stasis, in which, except for a few years, it proved impossible  
to elect an archon. ~~It is from this period that our term 'anarchy' derives;~~ <sup>incidentally</sup>  
the years ~~of anarchy were those~~ in which no archons were elected.\*\*)

\*\* Bury, p. 180

eventual

as we know

III.

<sup>institutional</sup>  
The ultimate solution was the creation of the classical democracy, in which  
the elimination of ~~almost all~~ tribal elements created an all-powerful state, <sup>in itself</sup>  
~~which the state was simply~~ identical <sup>with</sup> to the ~~demos~~ <sup>spontaneous</sup> demos; the discipline of the  
polis was such as to make laws almost self-enforcing. <sup>indeed</sup> The existence of such a  
state not only facilitated redistribution, but also permitted far greater reliance  
on market elements and market methods than would otherwise have been possible.  
In the economy of the classical polis, redistribution and exchange were integrally  
combined so as greatly to increase each other's ~~effective~~ effectiveness.

<sup>as embodied in the reforms</sup>  
~~But such~~ <sup>(actually set up)</sup> a constitution was not ~~realized~~ <sup>shift in political power</sup> until after the radical reforms of  
Cleisthenes in 501 B.C. It was possible to effect such a ~~staggered~~ transformation  
because of <sup>long rule</sup> the groundwork which was laid by the ~~extended~~ tyranny of the Pisistratids  
~~dynasty~~, which <sup>covered</sup> ~~lasted~~ approximately thirty-five <sup>years of the period</sup>  
between 561 B.C. and 510. Pisistratus <sup>covered</sup> preserved the Solonian reforms from the oligarchic attacks of  
the sixth century, and greatly extended <sup>moreover</sup> the democratic power. <sup>That is</sup> ~~tyranny~~  
<sup>(in fact)</sup> was a prerequisite <sup>of</sup> the establishment of the classical polis ~~economy~~.

While the rule of the Pisistratids is perhaps our best documented <sup>and</sup> tyranny,  
it should not be assumed that this was simply an Athenian development. Rather,

The organization of large scale works was dependent upon the elite circulation of treasure. It was, as we saw, embedded in the basic social system of the archaic communities with their background of kinship and clientage. Its mechanism and functioning clarifying much of the obscurity attaching to the concrete details of economy of the early Greek (or for that matter, Roman) kinds. Incidentally, it throws light on some significant features of the transition from tribal society to the early state.

Let us recapitulate the main items among the non-economic sources of accumulated treasure and its circulation on patently non-economic lines. In the attempt to distinguish these movements of treasure from those that are distinctively economic - such as protection, transportation, and public works - the peculiar manner in which treasure serves as a link between the closely intertwined strands of the political and the economic, which became apparent.

Let us restrict our survey to the movements of treasure for which the Alcmeonids and the Peisistratids were responsible, while keeping an eye on the actual performance of some economic tasks as the restoration of the temple of Apollo at Delphi and the providing of the public services of Athens. True to our semantics, we unhesitatingly acknowledge as economic all cumulative efforts of labor that result in city walls, fortifications, roads, canals and ports, the construction of temples, <sup>the</sup> quarrying of the marble or ruddle, the shipping of stone, or the craftman's skill in embellishing those public structures. Beyond this the activities of lower administration and policing should be mentioned; the surveying of land, its assessment for tithes, the collecting of taxes, whether market, port or road tolls, the minting of coins - anything that directly contributes to the achievement of the physical means of human want

satisfaction.

The Alcmeonids trace their family treasure to political services rendered to the kings of Lydia, in peddling their influence with the oracle of Delphi. The Lydian interests may be measured by the exorbitant value of the gifts offered to the temple of Apollo by Croesus according to the records collected by Herodotus. Nowhere, to our knowledge, was the habit of reciprocal gift giving as strongly rooted as in the Hellenic world. But one-sided gifts also played a very great part in the international system. Their specification as subsidies, tribute, ransom, wooing gifts, bride price, dowry, blood-money, fines, offerings to the gods, payments to the arbitzators helps to remove them from the category of free gifts, an institution the very ex~~i~~stence of which seems doubtful. Maybe Alcous has conceived of such a rare exception, when he suggests that Odysseus should be honored with an ~~extraordinary~~ <sup>extraordinary</sup> amount of gold - a complete tripod from each one of the princes - although no political or commercial advantage is involved, nor is any reciprocation even tentively offered by the beneficiary. In the circumstances, the gift would be a voluntary one. Accordingly, the king proves his rare moral judgement and-one feels - intellectual originality by suggesting himself that all of this extraordinary givt should be put as a tax on the commoners, who should thus be made to defray the cost. Apart from this case, unreciprocated gifts are actually dues, with the single exception of bribes - a most ambiguous category, at the best. A one-sided gift may appear as <sup>a</sup>bribe, if the receiver is not supposed to accept it on account of some conflict of loyalties. In exchange for treasure, <sup>such high values as</sup> freedom, honor, power, influence, prestige, high connection, and salvation are acquired. The services that <sup>seem naturally to</sup> flow from such <sup>possessions</sup> positions are the chief form of economic wealth. Thus treasure <sup>was a former had</sup> which itself is wealth was the capacity of securing all other forms of wealth.

satisfaction.

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For a successful bid the would-be tyrant required disposal over wealth and manpower.

Creon in the tragedy Oedipus Rex is challenged:

Is it not folly, this attempt of yours, without a host  
of followers and friends to seek a tyranny, a thing  
that's gained only with hosts of followers and wealth?  
(540-542)

Command over men and resources arose typically from the possession of treasure and from the undertaking of public services of an economic character. We will deal with them separately in the first part of this Chapter, in the second part of which we will continue the story of the Attican polis under the Peisistratids. It should be noted however, that they will be adduced more than once for an illustration of those specific features in the rise of the tyrannis: treasure and public utilities.

Treasure was a form of wealth of a distinctive nature. It consisted mainly in precious metals formed into tripods and bowls of a conventional shape. Its possession exalted the owner investing him with might. For the owning of treasure involved direct access to the gods and their oracles; to neighbouring rulers, chiefs and local potentates; to all and everything that tribute and bribe, ransom, blood-money and fines, dowry and brideprice could buy; decisive leadership over the commoners for war and labour; the hiring of mercenaries, the disposal over craftsmen, artists and songsters. Treasure was a portable form of power. Its effects were seemingly direct and immediate, even though they could be rationalized as the long-range consequences of economic power. The distinction, however, meant but little in a world where services were almost the only form of economic resources, and disposal over services was organized through the traditional relationships of kinship, clientage or feudal dependence. Besides treasure there were also other forms of wealth, more distinctively economic, as land, cattle and slaves. The interdependence between their economic and political effects was as a rule too close to be worthy of fruitful analysis. One of the



Columbia University  
in the City of New York  
[NEW YORK 27, N. Y.]  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

Mascads:  
"Tyranms"