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The Solonian Council of 400 and the *Anarchies* in Post-Solonian Athens

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Abstract

This paper analyses the composition of Solon's Council of 400, its relationship with the four tribes, its role in the election of the archons and the periodicity of this body in relation above all to the periodic crises (*anarchies*) that occurred after the Solonian legislation until Damasias (594–582 BCE). Just as these *anarchies* took place “every four” years, so too did the penteteric or *megala Panathenaia* begin to be held “every four years” a little later (566 BCE). I suggest that this periodicity may have been related, in some way, to the quadrennial election of the Solonian Council in the month of *Hekatombaion*.

Keywords

Solon's reforms; Periodic anarchies; Boule composition; Damasias' crisis

Acknowledgements

This paper was initially intended to be a tribute to P. J. Rhodes, which, for different reasons, did not see the light of day. Nonetheless, it is dedicated to the professor, one of whose chief concerns was doubtless the history of the Athenian institutions into which he admirably enquired in several of his works, especially his excellent commentary on the Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia*. On many occasions, Professor Rhodes demonstrated a keen interest in Solon's legal reforms, as evidenced by, among other works, his chapter in the collective book *Solon of Athens* and his recent compilation, together with D. Leão, of the extant Solonian laws. His approach to Solon's laws and reforms, which has inspired many scholars, was also characterised by an encouragingly “optimistic view” that I fully share. This article should be read in conjunction with another (Valdés Guía, 2022) that explores the functionality and powers of this Council in the sixth century BCE. The current work has been carried out within the framework of the research project PID2023-146086NB-100.

Introduction

Based on an ‘optimistic view’ of Solon’s reforms, following the work of P. J. Rhodes, my intention here is to delve more deeply into the study of the Solonian Council of 400.¹ Although some authors have questioned its historicity, others have accepted its existence, considering the *Athenian Constitution* ([*Ath. Pol.*] 8.4) and Plutarch (*Sol.* 19.1).²

One of the few pieces of information on the Council of 400 appearing in the sources is that its members were selected from the four ‘ancestral’ Ionian tribes of Athens.³ As some scholars have argued, however, there are several reasons why doubt should be cast on the ‘ancestral’ character of the Ionian tribes in Athens,⁴ even though the Athenians already considered themselves to be ‘Ionians’ at the time, as can be seen in a poem by Solon.⁵

It has generally been claimed that the Solonian Council of 400 would have had a probouleutic function like that of Cleisthenes.⁶ Although that was undoubtedly the case, it likely had broader prerogatives and greater decision-making powers than the Cleisthenic *boule*, possibly also functioning as a *Heliaia*, with judicial functions similar to those of the *boule demosie* in Chios.⁷ The intention here, however, is to examine the crises occurring in Athens ‘every four years’ after Solon, deriving from the problematic election of archons during that period, according to the *Athenaion Politeia*, in which the Council of 400, comprising 100 members from each tribe, seems to have played a significant role. I explore the role that this *boule* probably played in the periodic political and institutional crises following Solon’s reforms, relating it to the quadrennial periodicity that became characteristic of the penteteric Panathenaic festival from 566 onwards. The possible relationship between the Council and the institutional anarchies that occur every four years could shed light on the inner workings of this Council and its relationship with the archonship. It could also reveal the socioeconomic characterisation of its members and the possible quota assigned to each group in its composition.

¹ Rhodes, 1981: 153–154; 2006: 254–255.

² Rejection of the existence of this council, Hignett, 1952: 92–6; Mosse, 1979; 1996; Hansen, 1989; 1991: 29–31, 49–52; Bartzoka, 2012; Bernhardt, 2022: 431–432. For the acceptance of the Solonian Council of 400, see Rhodes, 2006; Wallace, 2007: 64; Poddighe, 2014: 199–202; Loddo, 2018: 93–100; Valdés Guía, 2022. Regarding the history of the acceptance and rejection of the Solonian Council of 400, Houck, 2001.

³ Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 8.4; Plut. *Sol.* 19.1.

⁴ Four Ionian tribes in Athens before Cleisthenes: Hdt. 5.66; Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 41.2; Str. 8.7.1. According to Pollux (8.109), before acquiring their proper “Ionian” names, the “tribes”, or divisions, of Attica had borne either the names of “pre-Cleisthenic” territories of Attica or those deriving from Athenian divinities or heroes, some specifically related to certain Attic regions, Robertson, 1993: 68. Cassola (1957: 246–256) already observed that the Ionian tribes were adopted in Athens as part of a deliberate project. It appears that there were six original Ionian tribes (in Miletos and Kyzikos), not four, as noted by Piérart (1985: 172, 185–186, with n. 98). The Athenian tribal system as an imitation of that of Miletos, Parker, 1996: 17. Similarly, Roussel (1976: 214–216) suggests that the Athenian *phylai* were renamed after the Ionian model in the seventh century BCE, possibly coinciding with the division of the territory at the time of the *synoikismos*.

⁵ Sol. Fr. 4a West: πρεσβυτάτην ἔσορῶν γαῖαν [Ἰ]αονίης [trans. ‘the most ancient land of Ionia’].

⁶ Rhodes, 1981: 153–154; Santoni, 1999: 167; Wallace, 2007: 64; Poddighe, 2014: 202.

⁷ On the role of the Council of 400 and *Heliaia*, Jeffery, 1976: 93–94 and 231–232; Valdés Guía, 2022. On *boule demosie*, ML 8; Jeffery, 1961: 336–337 (575–550 BCE).

The *anarchies* After Solon's Reforms: The Institutional Crisis

Let us begin, then, with the text of the *Athenian Constitution*:

τὴν μὲν οὖν ἀποδημίαν ἐποίησατο διὰ ταύτας τὰς αἰτίας. Σόλωνος δ' ἀποδημήσαντος, ἔτι τῆς πόλεως τεταραγμένης ἐπὶ μὲν ἔτη τέτταρα διήγον ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ: τῷ δὲ πέμπτῳ μετὰ τὴν Σόλωνος ἀρχὴν οὐ κατέστησαν ἄρχοντα διὰ τὴν στάσιν, καὶ πάλιν ἔτι πέμπτῳ διὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰτίαν ἀναρχίαν ἐποίησαν. 2 μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν χρόνων Δαμασίας αἰρεθεὶς ἄρχων ἔτη δύο καὶ δύο μῆνας ἤρξεν, ἕως ἐξηλάθη βία τῆς ἀρχῆς. εἴτ' ἔδοξεν αὐτοῖς διὰ τὸ στασιάζειν ἄρχοντας ἐλέσθαι δέκα, πέντε μὲν εὐπατριδῶν, τρεῖς δὲ ἀγροίκων, δύο δὲ δημιουργῶν, καὶ οὗτοι τὸν μετὰ Δαμασίαν ἤρξαν ἐνιαυτόν.

And when he [Solon] had gone abroad, though the city was still disturbed, for four years they kept at peace; but in the fifth year after Solon's archonship, because of party strife, they did not appoint an archon, and again in the fifth year after that they enacted a suspension of the archonship for the same cause. 2 After this at the same interval of time Damasias was elected Archon, and held the post for two years and two months, until he was driven out of the office by force. Then because of the civil strife they decided to elect ten Archons, five from the nobles, three from the farmers and two from the artisans, and these held office for the year after Damasias.

Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 13.1–2 (Trans. H. Rackham)

The fact that these crises occurred in Athens “every four years” after Solon brings to mind the frequency of the Panathenaic festival in its penteteric version. During that period, however, the penteteric Panathenaia, which Hippocleides introduced in 566 BCE, had not yet been established.⁸ The Olympic Games were a quadrennial festival (penteteric), but it is improbable that the constant (and regular) political crises in Athens, following the enforcement of Solon's laws, had anything to do with the Olympic year. Nevertheless, in all likelihood, the Panathenaic festival was held “every four years. In 566 BCE, the penteteric Panathenaia acquired a periodicity that may have been inherent to Athenian political and institutional dynamics before that date, in addition to emulating the pattern of the Olympic Games.⁹ These dynamics had a decisive influence on the idea of establishing a festival “every four years”. One should recall that the Athenian political institutions were renewed at the beginning of the year, specifically at the start of Hekatombaion, the month during which the Panathenaia

⁸ Figueira, 1984: 467–469; precisely considering this passage, the author suggests the existence of quadrennial festivals in the early sixth century BCE.

⁹ The Panathenaic year did not coincide with the Olympic year, the former falling in the third year after the latter, see Shear, 2001: 8, 507ff.

were celebrated.¹⁰ Accordingly, some officials might have served annually from ‘Panathenaia to Panathenaia’¹¹ or, as Develin posits, in some cases on a quadrennial basis.¹²

In the *Constitution of the Athenians*, these four-year crises were related to the election of the archons. Nonetheless, the archons had been elected annually since the beginning of the seventh century BCE.¹³ This leads to the logical question: *Why was their election only problematic ‘every four years’?* It is essential to recall that, even in the Classical period, the *dokimasia* (scrutiny) of the archons was conducted by the Council of 500, and that, before Solon, the Council of the Areopagos had been responsible for their election.¹⁴ It seems likely that the election of archons from the four tribes was performed in close collaboration with the Council of 400, which was also organised

¹⁰ In the Classical period, the archons were elected by lot at the beginning of the month of Hekatombaion and served for a year (archontic year: κατ’ ἀρχοντα), which coincided with the festival (lunar) calendar. Nevertheless, the archontic year did not coincide with the conciliar (prytany) year in the fifth century until 407 BCE, and it is unknown when this separate bouleutic year was instituted (the conciliar or prytany calendar was established with Cleisthenes), Rhodes, 1972: 224–225; 1981: 406, 519 (with previous bibliography). According to Figueira (1984: 469), it is conceivable that, at the time of Damasias, the archons served during the Panathenaic year, being elected shortly before the festival.

¹¹ The Treasurer of Military Funds and the Controllers of the Spectacle Fund were elected ἐκ Παναθηναίων εἰς Παναθήναια, Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 43.1. For some scholars, this means annually from Panathenaia to Panathenaia, as noted by Rhodes (1972: 236–237; 1981: 517, with previous bibliography) and Figueira (1984: 468). According to the Kallias decree (*IG I³ 52A*, ll. 27–29: 433 BCE), the Treasurer of Athena and those of the other gods rendered accounts “from Panathenai(a) to Panathenaia” (ἐκ Παναθηναίων εἰς Παναθήναια); for some, this indicates that they served, after their election by lot, during the Panathenaic year (Meritt, 1964: 217). In the Classical period, the *hellenotamiai* probably also served during the Panathenaic year, Meiggs, 1972: 234; see *IG I³ 369* (*ML* 72; *OR* 160), ll. 25–28 and *IG I³ 375* (*ML* 84; *OR* 180). In *IG I³ 369*, l. 1, however, the expression “from Panathenaia to Panathenaia” (also in lines 49, 50, 55) seems to refer to a quadrennium, Marcaccini, 2015: 519–522. For a quadrennial election, see the n. 12 below. The meaning depends on the context, Shear, 2001: 6–7.

¹² For the *Athlothetai* as quadrennial officials, Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 60.1. According to Develin (1984: 137–138; 1989: 9), this was the case of the Treasurer of Military Funds and the Controllers of the Spectacle Fund (see previous note). Some inscriptions appear to confirm this quadrennial periodicity (Marcaccini, 2015: 519–521), although, according to the author, not necessarily with election in the Panathenaia. *Contra* Rhodes, 1972: 236–237; 1981: 517.

¹³ Marmor Parium *FGrHist* 329 A 32; Castor of Rhodes (*FGrHist* 250 F 4) refers to the first archon as Kreon and places him in Ol. 24, i.e. in 683/2. The date of 682/1 BCE can also be deduced from Dionysios of Halicarnassos (*Ant. Rom.* 1.71.5). In Pausanias (4.5.10; 4.13.7; 4.15.1), it is inferred that the annual archonship was established in 687/6 BCE and in Eusebius (Ol. Eusebius’ Werke VII, Berlin, 1956), in 682 BCE, see Cadoux, 1948: 88; Carlier, 2005: 127. See also Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 3.4; 8.2 (archons before Solon chosen by the Areopagos for one year), cf. Harding, 2008: 83–87.

¹⁴ Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 45.3: δοκιμάζει δὲ καὶ τοὺς βουλευτὰς τοὺς τὸν ὕστερον ἐνιαυτὸν βουλευέσοντας καὶ τοὺς ἐννέα ἀρχοντας. καὶ πρότερον μὲν ἦν ἀποδοκιμάσαι κυρία, νῦν δὲ τούτοις ἔφεσις ἐστὶν εἰς τὸ δικαστήριον. [trans. ‘(The Council) also checks the qualifications of the Councillors who are to hold office for the following year, and of the Nine Archons. And formerly it had sovereign power to reject them as disqualified, but now they have an appeal to the jury-court’], see also Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 55.2. This had previously been the prerogative of the Council of the Areopagos (Rhodes, 1981: 542). This might have been the case before Solon, but the *dokimasia* of the Councillors might have become one of the functions of the Council of 400 under the lawgiver, although it also might have been one of the prerogatives regained by the Areopagos after the Persian Wars (Arist. *Pol.* 1304a1724; Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 25), annulled by Ephialtes “who brought down the laws of Solon from the acropolis to the agora” in Anaximenes *FGrHist* 72, F 13 (= Harp. and Sud., s.v. *ho katothen nomos*). Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 35.2: καὶ τοὺς τ’ Ἐφιάλτου καὶ Ἀρχεστράτου νόμους τοὺς περὶ τῶν Ἀρεοπαγιτῶν καθεῖλον ἐξ Ἀρείου πάγου, καὶ τῶν Σόλωνος θεσμῶν ὅσοι διαμφισβητήσεις ἔσχον, καὶ τὸ κύρος ὃ ἦν ἐν τοῖς δικασταῖς κατέλυσαν [trans. By H. Rackham: ‘(...) they (the 30) removed from the Areopagos the laws of Ephialtes and Arcestratos about the Areopagites, and also such of the ordinances of Solon as were of doubtful purport, and abolished the sovereignty vested in the jury-men’], see Jones, 1987. Although one should note the recent scepticism about the credibility of ancient accounts of Ephialtes’ reforms, Zaccarini, 2018; Harris, 2019; cf. Giangiulio, 2024. For the responsibility of the Areopagos Council in the election of archons before Solon, Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 8.2.

according to the four tribes.¹⁵ Moreover, although the archons were elected annually, the members of the Council of 400 could have been renewed *every four years*, rather than annually. Therefore, those quadrennial crises would have been triggered by the conflicts arising from the election of these councillors who possessed essential powers. They were also responsible for accepting the archons through the *dokimasia*, and perhaps also for the annual procedure by which they were selected, since Solon, by ‘*klerosis ek prokriton*’ from the four tribes, according to the *Constitution of the Athenians*:

τὰς δ’ ἀρχὰς ἐποίησε κληρωτὰς ἐκ προκρίτων, οὓς ἐκάστη προκρίνει τῶν φυλῶν.
 προύκρινεν δ’ εἰς τοὺς ἐννέα ἄρχοντας ἐκάστη δέκα, καὶ τούτων ἐκλήρουν.

For the offices of state, he instituted an election by lot from candidates selected by the tribes individually through a preliminary vote. For the Nine Archons each tribe made an initial selection of ten, and the election was made from among these by lot.

Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 8.1 (Trans. H. Rackham)¹⁶

Presumably, it would have been up to the Council of 400, comprising one hundred members from each tribe, to make a preliminary selection of candidates for archonship from each tribe. The election of the archons was linked to the Council not only by the *dokimasia* but also perhaps because the Council initially elected the archons, and the candidates themselves could even be chosen from among the Council members. The passage from the *Constitution of the Athenians*, in which it is noted that in 487, when the ‘*klerosis ek prokriton*’ was reintroduced in the archonship of Telesinos, could be understood from this perspective: “[...] they elected the Nine Archons by lot, tribe by tribe (κατὰ φυλὰς), from a preliminary list of five hundred chosen by the demesmen”. It has been suggested that the figure of 500 should be substituted by that of 100, but Rhodes believed that it was a “confusion with the appointment of the *boule*”.¹⁷ Perhaps there was no such confusion, and the candidates were preselected from the 500 counsellors. Be that as it may, the election procedure and the *dokimasia* of the archons would have taken place *in the council*, thus continuing the practice by which the seventh-century Areopagos Council chose the archons.¹⁸

¹⁵ For the election of archons with Solon, Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 8.1. It is telling that the council ‘for the future’ appearing in the *Constitution of the Athenians* (Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 30.2) derived from the oligarchic reflections on the coup of 411, according to which the archons were to be elected from among the councillors by the council. For these propaganda pamphlets (constitution “for the future” and “for the present”, Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 31) elaborated in the milieu of the conspirators, see Rhodes, 1981: 386–389; Munn, 2000: 136–138; Osborne, 2010: 276–277; Shear, 2011: 20–21, 33–35, 41, 47–49; Bearzot, 2013: 69–70; Tuci, 2014: 174–179.

¹⁶ Rhodes, 1981:146–148 (with more sources). Rhodes accepts the account of the *Athenian Constitution*, despite the contradictory version appearing in the *Politics* in this regard (Arist. *Pol.* 2.1273 B 35–1274 A 3, 1274 A 16–17; III.1281 B25–34); *contra* Figueira, 1984: 472–473. However, “Prokritos” was inscribed on the François Vase, just after Solon (580 BCE), as a companion of Theseus; see note 42.

¹⁷ Rhodes, 1981: 273–374: “The number five hundred and the reference to the demes suggest confusion with the appointment of the *boule*, and this is perhaps likelier than the mere corruption of *εκατόν* {*p*} to *πεντακοσίων* (</>) (Kenyon considered both).”

¹⁸ In the oligarchic reflections on the coup of 411, the council in the constitution ‘for the future’ (Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 30.2) elects the archons from among its members. See note 15. For the election of archons by the Areopagos Council in the seventh century BCE, see note 14.

If, as the quadrennial crises suggest, the Council of 400 was elected every four years and had a quadrennial periodicity, it is conceivable that each of the four tribes held the prytany for a year. The concept of rotation in the Council is present in the constitution, ‘for the future’, in the 411 oligarchic coup. In this case, the Council also elected the magistrates.¹⁹ Furthermore, if this hypothetical rotation is accepted, it can be assumed that, during the year in which the prytany was held by one of the tribes (comprising 100 members), the most critical *archon*, namely the *eponymous archon*, would have been elected by lot from among the candidates belonging to that tribe. The office of the *eponymous archon* (the most important in Athens at the time) would have passed from one tribe to another during those four years, with each year’s election held from among the ten candidates preselected from one of the four tribes that made up the council.²⁰ The rotation of this office by tribe appears to have subsequently been the case in Athens, although there is limited information on this matter. During the Classical period, that rotation was possible because there were ten archons, ten *phylai* and ten *prytanies*.²¹ The crisis following Solon’s archonship (μετὰ τὴν Σόλωνος ἀρχὴν) occurred ‘in the fifth year’ (τῷ δὲ πέμπτῳ), after four years of calm (ἐπὶ μὲν ἔτη τέτταρα διήγον ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ) when the lawgiver had already departed from Athens (Σόλωνος δ’ ἀποδημήσαντος).²²

According to tradition, Solon established the first council.²³ For this reason, the first election of the 400 councillors for the following four years, performed by the lawgiver before his departure, would not

¹⁹ Each prytany might have been divided into two six-month periods with 50 *prytaneis* from the same tribe each semester. For a hypothesis about the division of the seventh-century Council of 300 into groups of 50, which would fit with the number of six *lexiarchoi*, see note 53. For the Council of Chios, divided into groups of 50 members, see note 7. As to the idea of a rotation in the council (or instead of four councils of 100 members) appearing in the constitution ‘for the future’, in the *Athenaion Politeia* (30), a product of the oligarchic revolution of 411 (see note 15), according to Osborne (2003: 260–261) it was “the result of serious reflection and, indeed, serious research”, which shows that “there were Athenians in 411 who were looking for a viable alternative to the existing democratic constitution”. For the rotating character also of each of the four councils in each of the federated Boiotian *poleis*, according to the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* (16.2), see Larsen, 1955: 46–47; Pascual, 2006: 38.

²⁰ The rest of the archons, however, would have been drawn by lot from among the candidates of all the tribes. This is why the conflict mainly revolved around the eponymous archon. Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 13.2: ὃ καὶ δῆλον ὅτι μεγίστην εἶχεν δύναμιν ὁ ἀρχων: φαίνονται γὰρ αἰεὶ στασιάζοντες περὶ ταύτης τῆς ἀρχῆς [trans. ‘this shows that the Archon had very great power; for we find that they were always engaging in party strife about this office.’]

²¹ Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 55.1: νῦν δὲ κληροῦσιν θεσμοθέτας μὲν ἕξ καὶ γραμματεῖα τούτοις, ἔτι δ’ ἀρχοντα καὶ βασιλέα καὶ πολέμαρχον, κατὰ μέρος ἕξ ἐκάστης φυλῆς [trans. ‘(…) but now the six Lawgivers and their clerk are elected by lot, and also the Archon, King and Warlord, from each tribe in turn (κατὰ μέρος ἕξ ἐκάστης φυλῆς)’.] Hammond, 1969: esp. 131; Rhodes, 1981: 163–164.

²² Rhodes (1981: 180) assumes “that the counting includes both terminal years (as usual with Greek ordinals)”, also in Cadoux, 1948: 93, with bibliography. However, this counting derives from the need to establish the dates (including *anarchiai*) between Solon (594/3 BCE) and Damasias (582/1 BCE), for, as Cadoux (1948: 93) points out, “[t]he first of the series of four comes after Solon’s departure ... , then Aristotle seems to insert four full years between Solon’s archonship and the first year of anarchy”. The expressions “ἐπὶ μὲν ἔτη τέτταρα” and “τῷ δὲ πέμπτῳ” would rather seem to indicate a penteteric periodicity, like that of the Panathenaia; see Figueira, 1984: 467. The *athlothetai*, who were in charge of the Grand Panathenaia, held office “for four years” (τέτταρα ἔτη), Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 60.1. For the chronological issues, see also notes 15 and 25.

²³ Plut. *Sol.* 19.1: δευτέραν προσκατένειμε βουλὴν, ἀπὸ φυλῆς ἐκάστης, τεττάρων οὓσων, ἑκατὸν ἀνδρας ἐπιλεξάμενος [trans. by B. Perrin: ‘therefore established another council besides, consisting of four hundred men, one hundred chosen from each of the four tribes’], Ellis-Stanton, 1968: 105. How these councillors were elected after Solon is unknown. The 500 councillors of the Cleisthenic boule (over 30 years of age) were elected 50 per tribe, but the demes had a role in this process. According to Rhodes (1981: 251), “[w]ithin each tribal contingent seats were allocated to individual demes in proportion to their size. It is possible that members were elected at first, but appointment by lot will have been introduced not later than the middle of the fifth century.” It is possible that the 400 members of the boule, 100 per tribe, were elected in the *phratries* assembled in the *ekklesia*; the *phratries* seem to have been the primary units for recognising citizenship at that time. That the 48 *naukrariai* (12 per tribe) also played a role cannot be ruled out either. For the election of the members of the boule according to population segments or groups with different “quotas”: see infra in text. For *naukrarias* and *naukraroi*: Faraguna, 2015: 652; see also van Wees, 2013: 44–53.

have triggered any crisis. Indeed, the crisis occurred in the fifth year, the moment when the election of the new councillors (which their predecessors in office had to approve in the *dokimasia*) and the (re-)establishment and/or continuity of the rotation of the archonship by tribe, which, together with his election, could be disputed, took place. The author of the *Constitution of the Athenians* was possibly unaware that the Solonian council was quadrennial, but was indeed conscious of the fact that the election of the archon (which in all likelihood was the remit of this council) was problematic “every four years”. On the other hand, the “failure to elect the archon” or *anarchia* would probably not have lasted the whole year, since it also seems that the following year, the archon was elected as usual without any issue.

In archaic and classical Athens, there were no further anarchies, in the sense of the office of the *archon* being left empty, than those cited by Aristotle in reference to the crisis of Damasias and that in the year of the Thirty Tyrants. However, that year there was indeed an archon, albeit one whom the Thirty Tyrants had illegally elected.²⁴ It is possible that at the beginning “of the fifth year” after Solon, there was actually a period of disputes, heated debates and even armed conflicts between the different factions when electing the new councillors and the first *archon* of the new political cycle (and perhaps when determining the turn of archons by tribe). It is possible that this process was not completed according to the appropriate schedule for electing the *archon* (and the council members) at the beginning of the month of Hekatombaion. Nevertheless, it is harder to accept that the situation of anarchy would have lasted a whole year, especially since the normal calm state of affairs was apparently fully re-established without any complications the following year. It does not seem too far-fetched to suggest that although the years of “anarchy” (two, according to Aristotle) began without an *archon*, they did not end without one. The beginning of the year would have coincided with the start of the new political cycle and the election of the new *boule*. This circumstance would have given rise to difficulties, disputes, and conflicts, particularly in the election of the archons, which might have been unduly delayed for an indeterminate and possibly variable length of time.

This proposal would also contribute to resolving the chronological problems between Solon’s archonship (594/3 BCE) and that of Damasias (582/1 BCE),²⁵ as the years of the ‘anarchy’ (two) should be understood as the first of the alleged *Boule*’s quadrennial mandates. Therefore, the first four years *after the archonship* of Solon (as specified in the *Constitution of the Athenians*: μετὰ τὴν Σόλωνος ἀρχὴν) would have been 593/2, 592/1, 591/590 and 590/589 BCE,²⁶ according to the traditional chronology.²⁷ The following cycle would have coincided with the first year of ‘anarchy’ (589/8 BCE), namely, the first year of the new four-year mandate of the *Boule*, which would have been as

²⁴ The archon was Pythodoros, Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.1. Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 35.1; Rhodes, 1981: 436–437. Anarchies in archaic and classical times were infrequent, despite Dion of Prusa’s (21.2) comments centuries later. For *anarchia*, see also Jacoby, 1902: 172, n. 15; Cadoux, 1948: 78, n. 9.

²⁵ For the difficulties in dating Solon’s archonship, see Rhodes, 1981: 120–122. For arguments in favour of the traditional date (594 BCE), Wallace, 1983. According to Cadoux (1984: 93): “The lengths of the intervals between Solon and Damasias and between Solon and Komeas were given by Aristotle in two passages (13.1.2 and 14.1)”. The archonship of Damasias at that time is also mentioned in the Marmor Parium *FGrHist* A 39, which establishes the first Pythiad “in the archonship of the second Damasias at Athens”, which fits with the existence of a first Damasias archon in seventh-century Athens, see note 37; Cadoux, 1948: 102 (with more sources). For further reflections on the dating of the archonship of Damasias, see recently Flament, 2017.

²⁶ There are references to four archons (Dropides, Eukrates, Simon and Phormion) in the years after Solon, as Cadoux (1948: 99–101) observed. However, he himself rejected the latter (Phormion) for being incompatible with his chronological reconstruction. For the chronology, see Table 1.

²⁷ For the archonship during these years and the chronological issues, see Cadoux (1948: 93–96) and Rhodes (1981: 180–183), both of which include discussion and previous bibliography.

follows: 589/8, 588/7, 587/6 and 586/5 BCE. A new political cycle commencing with another year of “anarchy” (585/4 BCE) would have got underway yet again “in the fifth year”, as follows: 585/4, 584/3, 583/2 and 582/1 BCE. Damasias would have been legally elected as *archon* at the end of this cycle (582/1 BCE),²⁸ the last year of the four-year period.

It could well be that Damasias and the prytany of his tribe, instead of favouring the election of a new council to initiate a new political cycle – given, furthermore, the disastrous previous experience – remained in power during the following year and even at the beginning of the next one, thus holding the office of *archon* for two years and two months (582/1, 581/0 and the first two months of 580/79 BCE).²⁹ Damasias would have thus prolonged the cycle in an irregular (albeit perhaps consensual or authorised)³⁰ fashion for more than four years, without electing new councillors or archons, perhaps with the support of more than one tribe. If Damasias had only held the office of *archon* for one year, the cycle would have been resumed with a new anarchy, something that did not occur, while Aristotle, for his part, does not mention any other ‘anarchy’. As the ten *archons* were in office *the year after* Damasias (τὸν μετὰ Δαμασίαν ἤρξαν ἐνιαυτόν), this was probably in 579/578 BCE, as Figueira assumes.³¹

Thenceforth, there is no further evidence of ‘periodic’ turmoil, whereby the election procedure must have been formalised, while ceasing to be so problematic, perhaps by modifying the way in which the archons were elected.³² After the 10 extraordinary archons, it can be assumed that the normal cycle of the *boule* was resumed, which would call to mind three four-year cycles up until the establishment of the penteteric Panathenaia in 566/5 BCE, which would have marked the commencement of a new four-year cycle. In Peisistratos’ first attempt at establishing a tyranny, in the archonship of Komeas,³³ the Council of 400 seems to have functioned in tandem with the assembly.³⁴

The council and the archonship were renewed at the beginning of the month of Hekatombaion, implying that the Panathenaia was a significant moment for the new government’s visibility. Nevertheless, if there were unrest and difficulty in appointing that new government (in the years of anarchy), this would have been associated with moments of crisis in which the community’s fate would have been decided on for the following four years. This was doubtless one of the reasons why, later on, in 566 BCE, the quadrennial Panathenaic festival, with contests and games (*agon gymnikos*), was established, partly to settle or transfer the armed and political conflict (of factions) to the more peaceful setting of the games.³⁵

²⁸ See note 30.

²⁹ Once again, this irregularity shows that it was not normal to serve more than one year as archon and that the office was annual, see note 13.

³⁰ The length of time between the last *anarchia* and the archonship of Damasias is expressed in terms that have puzzled most authors (μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν χρόνων), interpreted by some as “during the same period of time” and, more frequently, by others as “after the same lapse of time” (Cadoux, 1948: 94–95; Rhodes, 1981: 182). I prefer the second translation, although the peculiarity of the expression may derive from the fact that the time span is not the same (five years), since Damasias would have been legitimately elected as archon perhaps in the last year of the cycle, so to repeat ἔτει πέμπτῳ would be inaccurate (although the same time span is implied). The permanence of Damasias in the archonship has been viewed as illegal, Cadoux, 1948: 102; cf. Rhodes, 1981: 182; Figueira, 1984: 449; Flament, 2017.

³¹ Figueira, 1984: 467.

³² According to Rhodes (1982: 146, 273), sometime after Solon (with the tyranny, he suggests), the procedure changed from the drawing of lots *ek prokriton* to direct election until 487 BCE. The change might also have been introduced after the ten exceptional archons.

³³ Cadoux, 1948: 104.

³⁴ Diog. Laert. 1.58 mentions the assembly and a *boule*. Other sources for this episode: Hdt. 1.59.4–5. Solon, fr. 11 W. Arist. *Ath.* 14.1–2; Plut. *Sol.* 30.2–3; Ael. *VH* 8.16; Diod. Sic. 9.4.1–2.

³⁵ An altar of Athena Nike was erected at the time, probably linked to the Panathenaia, IG I³ 596. See Valdés Guía, 2017.

Table 1: Proposed chronology for the crisis years between Solon and the date of the establishment of penteteric Great Panathenaia (566/5 BCE)

Dates	Event
594/3	Solon's archonship
593/2–590/89	Four-year period (Council elected by Solon)
589/8–586/5	Four-year period; <i>anarchia</i> in the first year
585/4–582/1	Four-year period with <i>anarchia</i> in the first year; the cycle is interrupted by Damasias' staying in power (being the last <i>archon</i> of the cycle)
582/1–581/0 and two other months of 580/79	Damasias' archonship extended by one year and two months
579/8	Ten (10) exceptional <i>archons</i> elected
578/577–575/574	Three four-year cycles up until the establishment of the penteteric Panathenaia in 566/5 BCE
574/3–571/0	
570/69–567/6	
566/5	Penteteric Panathenaia established by Hippocleides

The Ten Archons and the Hypothetical Social Composition of the Solonian *Boule*

In light of the foregoing, the time has now come to analyse the episode of the ten archons, which may be key to understanding this Council:

εἴτ' ἔδοξεν αὐτοῖς διὰ τὸ στασιάζειν ἄρχοντας ἐλέσθαι δέκα, πέντε μὲν εὐπατριδῶν, τρεῖς δὲ ἀγροίκων, δύο δὲ δημιουργῶν, καὶ οὗτοι τὸν μετὰ Δαμασίαν ἤρξαν ἐνιαυτόν. ᾧ καὶ δῆλον ὅτι μεγίστην εἶχεν δύναμιν ὁ ἄρχων: φαίνονται γὰρ αἰεὶ στασιάζοντες περὶ ταύτης τῆς ἀρχῆς.

Then because of the civil strife they decided to elect ten Archons, five from the nobles, three from the farmers and two from the artisans, and these held office for the year after Damasias. This shows that the Archon had great power; for we find that they were always engaged in party strife over this office.

Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 13.2 (Trans. H. Rackham)

In an influential paper in this respect, Figueira observed that the ten extraordinary archons would have had to do with the opposition of one of the areas, plausibly that of the *asty*/Pedion, to Damasias' 'populism'.³⁶ Damasias is a name that appears among the archons of the seventh century BCE, and also serves as a designation related to the eastern coast of Attica.³⁷ On the other hand, some authors have proposed that these ten archons would have been the *prokritoi* of a tribe, to wit, the ten candidates chosen by lot for the office of archon.³⁸ In that case, the tribe would have been linked to the *asty*/

³⁶ Figueira, 1984.

³⁷ Damasias possibly came from the east coast of Attica, for there is news of a Naucrates, son of Damasias, from Prasiai, a place on that coast, Davies, 1971: 396; Osborne and Byrne, 1994, *s.v.* *Damasias*. Perhaps Damasias had maritime interests and was one of the *naukraros*; for *naukraries*, see note 23. Damasias opposed the Eupatridai, Figueira, 1984: 469–470. In 639/8 BCE, an archon named Damasias was appointed, according to Cadoux (1948: 90–91). Rhodes (1981: 182) posits that he might have been an Eupatrid, but this is unlikely because the Eupatridai at the time seem to have been the *aristoi* only of the *asty*/Pedion area, Figueira, 1984: 454–459; Valdés Guía, 2012; Pierrot, 2015. For an anti-tyrannical meaning of the term "Eupatridai" in the sixth century BCE, Duploy, 2003.

³⁸ Cavaignac, 1924; Wade-Géry, 1931: 79; 1958: 102; Rhodes, 1981: 183; *contra* Figueira, 1984: 472.

Pedion,³⁹ hence the name of the aristocrats forming part of it, the Eupatrids, those *aristoi* belonging to the faction of the *asty*/Pedion.⁴⁰ What indeed seems clear from the Aristotelian passage is that the “ten archons” were exceptionally elected to hold the office of eponymous archon in a crisis.⁴¹

To assume that these 10 exceptional archons were the *prokritoi* of a tribe – attested as a personal name, *Prokritos*, on the closely dated François Vase⁴² – is a very appealing hypothesis, but one with a drawback. For, although there is no reference to the census classes to which they belonged, we do know that five were Eupatrids, three *agroikoi* (farmers) and two *demiourgoi* (artisans),⁴³ which suggests that not all of them belonged to the first two census classes, a prerequisite for being legally elected as an archon.⁴⁴

However, there is a possibility that the census requirement was overridden exceptionally in the election of this “college” that substituted the *eponymous archon*.⁴⁵ However, we should accept that these ten archons were elected extraordinarily by the Council of 400, probably from a single tribe – in imitation of the 10 *prokritoi* – to contest the prolongation of the mandate of an *eponymous archon* (i.e. Damasias). These ten archons were probably supported by the *demos* of the area of the Pedion,⁴⁶ as had occurred in the time of Cylon.⁴⁷ The choice of the ten extraordinary archons from a single tribe was probably due, in part, not only to the fact that the aristocracy of this part of Attica (*asty*/Pedion) was the most powerful, but also because in the alleged new cycle of the *boule* that should have begun but had been interrupted owing the fact that Damasias continued in power, this tribe (presumably Geleontes) would have been the first to occupy the office of archon and the prytany during the first year of the quadrennial cycle. The fact of electing not one but ten archons from all walks of life stresses the need for the broadest social consensus possible when facing a crisis (*hegemones* and *demos* together). These ten archons were conceivably elected from the tribal components of the previously elected council (the one that had led to the election of Damasias) and would not be renewed until the following year (578/7 BCE) when that situation was back to normal and the mode of election (of archons and perhaps of councillors) had possibly been changed. There certainly were no more anarchies.

The representation quota (five Eupatrids, plus five *agroikoi* and *demiourgoi*) may help fathom how at least one tribe, that of the *asty*/Pedion (probably Geleontes),⁴⁸ to which most of the Eupatrids and, indeed, the citizen artisans belonged,⁴⁹ participated in the Council of 400: fifty members chosen

³⁹ For the factional struggle at the time, Valdés Guía, 2020.

⁴⁰ With respect to the Eupatridai as the *aristoi* in the *asty*/Pedion area, Anecd. Bekk., I, 2571; Fouchard, 1997: 149; Figueira, 1984: 459; Valdés Guía, 2012.

⁴¹ Rhodes, 1981: 182; Figueira, 1984: 449.

⁴² “Prokritos” inscribed on the François Vase (580 BCE), now at the National Archaeological Museum of Florence (No. 4209; Beazley archive 300000).

⁴³ For the connotations of *agroikoi* as coarse peasants and for the term “*demiourgoi*”, Figueira, 1984: 459–461.

⁴⁴ The archonship was only open to the third class, the *zeugitai*, after Ephialtes, Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 26.2; Rhodes, 1981: 330.

⁴⁵ Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 26.2: οἱ δὲ πρὸ τούτου πάντες ἐξ ἰππέων καὶ πεντακοσιομεδίωνων ἦσαν (οἱ δὲ ζευγῖται τὰς ἐγκυκλίους ἤρχον [trans. ‘All the Archons hitherto had been from the Knights and Five-hundred-measure-men, while the Teamsters held the ordinary offices, unless some provision of the laws was ignored.’])

⁴⁶ Figueira, 1984: 470.

⁴⁷ The people “as a whole” (*pandemei*), possibly those from the central part of Attica (Pedion), “flocked” (ἀεὶ συρρεόντων; Plut. *Sol.* 22) to the Acropolis to prevent tyranny, cf. Hdt. 5.71; Thuc. 1.126.

⁴⁸ The previous traditional names of this tribe (see note 75) suggest that it was located in the *asty*/Pedion.

⁴⁹ Figueira, 1984: 470. Solon promoted craftsmanship in the *polis*, Plut. *Sol.* 22.1; 24.4. For the importance of the development of craftsmanship in sixth-century Athens, Keesling, 2003; Tarditi, 2016; Makres and Scafuro, 2019; Charalambidou, forthcoming.

“*aristinden* (*kai ploutinden*)” as always for the aristocratic council of Athens⁵⁰ (in this case, called “Eupatrids”, because they were the *aristoi* of the *asty*/Pedion),⁵¹ plus fifty members of the *demos* understood as belonging to the lower classes.⁵² That they might have been divided into groups of fifty can, moreover, be inferred from the *boule demosie* in Chios.⁵³ It is known that the archons and other magistrates were elected according to the census classes. Still, it is also conceivable that the new council, if it was a revamped prolongation – with members of the *demos* – of the original council of the Areopagos which would have had 300 members chosen “*aristinden kai ploutinden*”,⁵⁴ was elected, in Solon’s time, in general following the same procedure by which the Areopagos had been elected in the past (seventh century BCE). In this connection, half of them would have been chosen “*aristinden kai ploutinden*” – which for the tribe of the *asty* implied being Eupatrids – while the other half would have been elected from among the *demos*. In the sense of the “lower classes” in general,⁵⁵ the *demos* can be defined as “*agroikoi*” throughout Attica. Still, in the case of the *asty*, they would have included, in addition to *agroikoi* (farmers), *demiourgoi* (artisans) in the proportion of 30:20, reflected in the choice of three *agroikoi* and two *demiourgoi* from among the 10 exceptional archons (Arist. [Ath. Pol.] 13.2).

This offers an idea of the profiles of the 100 members of a tribe (possibly Geleontes) from whom those ten extraordinary archons were chosen, led by the Eupatrids, but with the support of the *demos* of that central area, who maintained relations of clientelism with the *aristoi* there.⁵⁶ This reinforces the idea that Athenian citizens were not only divided into census classes (for the magistracies and, maybe, for taxation),⁵⁷ but also into “families or lineages” (“*gene*”)⁵⁸ of *aristoi*, on the one hand, and farmers and artisans, on the other. The certainly artificial theoretical reconstructions of archaic Athenian society

⁵⁰ For this council/court of 300 members composed of members chosen “*aristinden*”, Arist. [Ath. Pol.] 1. Members of the *boule* of the Areopagos were selected, according to Aristotle ([Ath. Pol.] 3.1; 3.6) *aristinden kai ploutinden*. For Draco’s law on homicide and the role of *aristoi* of each phratry, IG I³ 104, ll. 18–19. Solon must have established the *boule* of the Areopagos as a body of former archons. Hence, the tradition that attributed its creation to the lawgiver, a contradictory view, however, with the idea that this council already existed before him as attested in Plutarch (Sol. 19.4). Before Solon, it might have been a territorial council consisting of members selected *aristinden* from all over Attica after the synoikism. A discussion and bibliography about the archaic Areopagos and its prerogatives and power, Valdés Guía, 2019: 133–135. It is likely that the body of 50 or 51 members (relating to the Areopagos, according to Androtion (FGrHist 324 F 4a) and Philochoros (FGrHist 328 F 20b) formed a commission inside this larger *boule* (of the Areopagos), possibly acting as its *prytaneis*. This body or larger *boule* would have been divided into groups of 50, if the archaic number of the six *lexiarchoi* were somehow related to it. For the *lexiarchoi*, see note 53. For the 300 followers of Isagoras at the end of the fifth century BCE, there was probably an alternative aristocratic council to the one of 400 or 500, imitating the seventh-century aristocratic *boule* (the ‘primitive’ Areopagos), Arist. [Ath. Pol.] 20.3. For an aristocratic council of 300 in Elis, Thuc. 2.25; Xen. Hell. 7.4.13.

⁵¹ See note 37.

⁵² For the different meanings of *demos*, including that of the “lower classes”, Finley, 1973: 12; Hansen, 2010: 502–515. The *demos* in Solon’s times, Werlings, 2010: 223–266.

⁵³ See note 7. Also deriving from the number of *lexiarchoi* (6) plus the number of members of the Council of 300 in the seventh century BCE. Six *lexiarchoi* (Poll. 8.104) of archaic origin, van Effenterre, 1976: 13–14; Lambert, 1993: 262, n. 80; Faraguna, 1997. The council of 300 members *aristoi* (Plut. Sol. 12.2–4) would have been divided into groups of 50 (one for each *lexiarchos*), see note 50. For *lexiarchika* of a different association in the archaic period, Ismard, 2010: 95–96.

⁵⁴ See note 50; also Figueira, 1984: 455.

⁵⁵ See note 52.

⁵⁶ For the *demos* who followed their leaders in the case of Cylon, see note 47.

⁵⁷ Descat, 1990; Harris, 1995: 9–10. Regarding the census classes, Arist. [Ath. Pol.] 7.4; Valdés Guía and Gallego, 2010; Duploux, 2014; Valdés Guía, 2025.

⁵⁸ See Phot. s.v. Ἀγροικοί· γένος Ἀθηνησιν, ὃ ἀντιδιέστανον πρὸς τοὺς εὐπατρίδας. ἦν δὲ τὸ τῶν γεωργῶν· καὶ τρίτον τὸ τῶν δημιουργῶν [trans. ‘*agroikoi*: a *genos* of Athens which differed from the Eupatridae. Another was that of farmers. And that of craftsmen was third’]. See also Hsch., s.v. ἄγροῖωται. *Georgoi* and *demiourgoi* as *gennetai* in the third fragment of the *Athenian Constitution*, see below and note 68. With respect to *gene* in archaic and classical times, Lambert 1993; 1999; 2015. For a catalogue of religious *gene*, Parker, 1996: 284 ff.

appearing in the classical sources and in Plutarch⁵⁹ seem to allude to this division into “occupational classes”. This may indicate that the members of the Council of 400 were chosen from among both the *aristoi*, based on criteria of noble lineage and wealth (*aristinden kai ploutinden*), thus continuing with the election procedure of the territorial Council of the Areopagos in the seventh century BCE – viz. 300 members chosen “*aristinden*” – and those who were not *aristoi*, like the *agroikoi* (farmers) and the *demiourgoi* (artisans), defined by their occupations, belonging to that tribe of the *asty*. As most craftsmen would have lived in the city, the fifty per cent of the *demos* in each tribe in the rest of Attica would have been mostly *agroikoi*. The division of the *demos* into “*gene*” of *agroikoi* and *demiourgoi* as families or members of the *demos* with the political ability to participate in the council of state helps to understand Aristotle’s remark to the effect that, since the Cleisthenic *boule*, the *gene* could no longer be recognised, taking the tribes as a reference:

ὁθεν ἐλέχθη καὶ τὸ μὴ φυλοκρινεῖν, ἢ πρὸς τοὺς ἐξετάζειν τὰ γένη βουλευόμενους.

Don’t draw distinctions between tribes, addressed to those who want to inquire into people’s clans.

Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 21.2 (Trans. H. Rackham)

Whether or not members of the three census classes sat on this council⁶⁰ or even those of the fourth class, the *thetes*, remains a mystery. Nor is it known whether the *thetes* participated in the Council of 500 in the Classical period, for the sources are not explicit on that score, while Rhodes believed that this was not the case.⁶¹ The fact that the council might also have been the Heliaia in the sixth century BCE,⁶² suggests that *thetes* might have sat on it, albeit as a minority and with restrictions, insofar as they participated in trials.⁶³

The Council consisted of 400 members, one hundred from each of the four tribes. The *trittyes* (twelve in total, three for each tribe)⁶⁴ do not appear to have played any role in this council, for 400 cannot be divided by twelve. The *trittyes* might have done so only in military affairs. In the episode involving Isagoras at the end of the sixth century BCE,⁶⁵ both the council and the *demos* laid siege to the Acropolis; it was therefore an “armed” council. As in the episode of Peisistratos’ bodyguard, in which there is talk of a council, “arms” are mentioned.⁶⁶ The existence of an “armed council” (unequally) representing the assembly may help gain a better understanding of the episode involving Peisistratos and the disarmament of the *demos*.⁶⁷ That council might have played a role in the Panathenaic procession, in

⁵⁹ Pl. *Resp.* 369 c-376; 415 a; *Criti.* 110 c; 112 b; *Ti.* 24 a-b. Arist. *Pol.* 2.1268 a 16–20; 2.1267 b 30–33; Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] Fr. 3 (Erbse-Latte, 1965: 162); Str. 8.7.1; Dion. Hal. 2.8; Plut. *Sol.* 25; Poll. 8.111. Anecd. Bekk. I, 25; Rhodes, 1981: 71–74, 183; Figueira, 1984: 459–460. On the speculative character of the passage from Aristotle, Davies, 1996: 628; cf. Duploy, 2014, for alternative interpretations.

⁶⁰ For the census classes, see note 57.

⁶¹ Rhodes, 1972: 4–6; 1981: 251. See also Wallace, 2007: 64; Reaflaub, 2007: 43; Poddighe, 2014: 201–202. For *thetes* included in the classical council, Bicknell, 1974: 161. Regarding the classical council, Hansen, 1991: 249.

⁶² See note 7.

⁶³ Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 9.1; *Pol.* 2.1274a; Plut. *Sol.* 18.2.

⁶⁴ Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 8.3; 21.3.

⁶⁵ Hdt. 5.72.1–4 (prominence of the *boule*).

⁶⁶ See note 34.

⁶⁷ Aristotle ([*Ath. Pol.*] 15.4) mentions the *ekklesia*. Polyæn (1.21.2) alludes to “the Athenians”. For the disarmament of the people, Holladay, 1977: 52.

which hoplites and cavalymen paraded in *pompe* from the Agora towards the Acropolis, thus offering the new members of the council the chance to show themselves or their representation during the Panathenaic festival. Should there have been a version of the council as an armed *boule*, this would suggest that *thetes* did not participate in it, while accepting that the members of this census class did indeed sit on the Council of 400. It is interesting to posit the existence of a “*boule*” with 360 members, mentioned in Plato’s *Laws*, during this period of Solon’s life.⁶⁸ Plato had access to insider information on the Solonian legislation that may have served as inspiration.⁶⁹ This *boule*, appearing in the *Laws*, was divided into twelve parts, equivalent to the twelve Solonian trittyes, which, however, do not seem to have played any role in the Council of 400. It is plausible that a military version of this *boule* existed, in which the *thetes* did not participate, which hypothetically led to a reduction in its membership.⁷⁰

Conclusion

The *Boule* of 400 members was organised based on the four tribes, recently introduced in Attica, possibly even directly by Solon, for the purpose of establishing this council. This body likely had broad powers and a significant degree of autonomy, although it was coordinated with the assembly.⁷¹ It was a *boule* in which all the census classes might have been represented, although there is still insufficient evidence to corroborate this point. At any rate, that representation was unequal, which would have chimed with Solon’s ideal of *Eunomia*. The council’s division into “occupational” sectors was significant, with a criterion of lineage for the entire population, including the *demos*, organised in *gene* of “*agroikoi*” and “*demiourgoi*”, to which were added the *aristoi* who traditionally participated in the political institutions (the council and the magistracies). This body, key to Solon’s reforms, would have been renewed every four years (i.e. membership was not for life) as suggested by the political momentum following the Solonian reforms, giving each one of the tribes the opportunity to hold the prytany for a year. It was a *boule* open to the *demos* with restrictions, ensuring high participation from the elites, who were, however, a minority of the population,⁷² in line with Solon’s ideal: “The best way in which the people will follow their leaders ...”.⁷³

⁶⁸ Pl. *Leg.* 6.756 b–e: βουλὴν δὲ εἶναι μὲν τριάκοντα δωδεκάδας—ἐξήκοντα δὲ καὶ τριακόσιοι γίγνοντο ἂν πρέποντες ταῖς διανομαῖς—μέρη δὲ διανείμεντας τέτταρα κατὰ ἐνενήκοντα τὸν ἀριθμὸν τούτων, ἐξ ἑκάστου τῶν τιμημάτων φέρειν ἐνενήκοντα βουλευτάς. [trans. R.G. Bury, 1968: “The *Boulé* (or “Council”) shall consist of thirty dozen—as the number 360 is well-adapted for the sub-divisions: they shall be divided into four groups; and 90 councillors shall be voted for from each of the property-classes’]. See Piérart, 1974: 89 ff. Three hundred and sixty *gene* also in a fragment from Aristotle ([*Ath. Pol.*] fr. 3; *Lex. Patm.* s.v. *gennetai*, Erbse-Latte, 1965, 162): four tribal divisions with each tribe being divided into three parts and a total of 360 *gene*. See also Philoch. *FGrHist* 328 F 35 b (Harp. and Suda, s.v. *gennetai*); Poll. 8.111. Harp. s.v. *trittyes*.

⁶⁹ Jacoby, 1949: 20–21 (Solon’s laws in Plato). On Plato’s relations with Solon and Critias, whose family perhaps conserved the memory of the lawgiver’s reforms, as Plato (*Criti.* 113 a-b) noted (Critias suggests that Solon’s manuscripts were in the hands of his grandparents).

⁷⁰ This would imply that perhaps 10 *thetes* (sub-hoplitic population) per tribe participated in the Council of 400, viz. 10 per cent, which is a very small proportion representing the vast majority of the population. The sub-hoplite population was approximately 70 per cent at the end of the fourth century BCE (Gallego, 2016). The size of the Attic population at the beginning of the sixth century BCE is unknown, but if a reference to the mythical account of Kekrops commanding the population to cast a single stone, before calculating its size by counting them (Philoch. *FGrHist* F 95), could be related to this period, it would have been around 20,000, which is consistent with the c. 30,000 at the beginning of the fifth century BCE, Gallego, 2016: 64, n.82.

⁷¹ The *boule* as the *Heliia*, see note 7. For the coordination of the Solonian Council and Assembly, Valdés Guía, 2021.

⁷² See note 70. For the liturgical class accounting for no more than five per cent of the population in classical Athens, see Davies, 1971: xx–xxiv; Gabrielsen, 1994: 45–47, 52–53; Rhodes, 1982; Kron, 2011: 129–131.

⁷³ Sol. Fr. 6 W.

This *Boule* of 400, as with the preceding council of state, the Areopagos (composed of former archons since the time of Solon but not before him),⁷⁴ would have had a territorial scope, based on the four Ionian tribes established at the time (to enlarge the council of state from 300 to 400 members) but following the traditional territorial divisions of Attica.⁷⁵ In addition, it would have picked up from where the previous aristocratic council of state (the Areopagos) had left off before the time of the lawgiver, with 300 members, all of whom were *aristoi* and *plousioi*, but with the novelty of including the *demos* (hypothetically accounting for half of the members of this new Council, when applying the logic of the distribution of the ten archons elected after Damasias, conceivably chosen from among the members of one of the tribes sitting on this *boule*).

In short, this council would have been one of the keystones of the Solonian politics, while it is likely that a regulation on the council must have been the lawgiver's doing. Solon based his reforms on this body, together with the assembly, despite the subsequent lack of knowledge, evident in Aristotle, of its composition and inner workings, on which I have attempted to cast some light here.

⁷⁴ See note 50.

⁷⁵ Poll. 8.109: Geleontes, formerly called *Kekropis*, *Kranais* and *Dias*; Hopletes: *Autochthon*, *Atthis* and *Athenais*; Aigikoreis: *Aktaia*, *Mesogaia* and *Poseidonias*; and Argadeis: *Paralia*, *Diakris*, *Hephaistias*. See Robertson, 1993: 68 ff. The traditional division of Attica in archaic times into three regions (Pedion, Paralia, and Diacria), Soph. *TGrF* F 24. krater: Acrop. 73S; sch. Ar. *Lys.* 58; sch. Ar. *Vesp.* 1223; Andron *FGrHist* 10 F 14; Philoch. *FGrHist* 328 F 107 = Str. 9.1.5–6 (392); Phot. s.v. *Paraloi* and *Pedion*; Etym. Magn. s.v. *Diakria*; Paus. 1.5.4; Hsch. s. v. *Diakreis*. Rhodes, 1981: 73; Kearns, 1989: 115–116. For the archaic origin of the myth of Pandion's sons, Jacoby, 1949: 430–431; 1954: 430–431. For Mesogaia and the archaic Paralia, see Bultrighini, 2013. For the three territorial aristocratic factions in archaic Athens and *stasis*, see Hdt. 1.59.3; Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 13. 4–5; Plut. *Sol.* 13. For the tripartite distribution of archaic Attica, Oliver, 1950, 65 ff.

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Abstract (Spanish) | Resumen

El Concilio Soloniano de 400 y las anarquías en la Atenas post-soloniana

Este artículo analiza la composición del Consejo de los 400 de Solón, su relación con las cuatro tribus, su papel en la elección de los arcontes y la periodicidad de este órgano en relación, sobre todo, con las crisis periódicas (anarquías) que se produjeron tras la legislación soloniana hasta el arcontado de Damasias (594-582 a. C.). De igual modo que las anarquías tenían lugar «cada cuatro» años, también las Panateneas pentetéricas comenzaron a celebrarse, poco después (566 a. C.), «cada cuatro años». Sugiero que esta periodicidad de la fiesta pudo estar relacionada, de alguna modo, con la elección cuatrienal del Consejo soloniano en el mes de Hecatombeón.