

# **Law, money, and the transformation of Athens in the sixth century B.C.E.**

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## ABSTRACT

In this thesis I propose a new paradigm to explain the transformation of Athens during the sixth century B.C.E. I argue that economic change continually promoted sub-elite groups who became sufficiently strong to demand a share of legal and political rights. The pace of change increased during the century as trade, commerce, and silver mining monetised the economy and brought Athens into broader contact with the outside world. Politicians responded in accordance with circumstances and their own interests. Solon, Peisistratos and Kleisthenes were particularly important because their experiences abroad and personalities led them to try novel solutions. The end of the century saw the collective rise in prosperity of a large proportion of the population, notably farmers, manufacturers, traders and miners. Leaders among these people worked with officials who had been increasingly involved in administering Attica during the tyranny. They used their organisational skills and detailed local knowledge to design and implement the democratic changes under Kleisthenes.

Central to my theory is a re-evaluation of Solon and the ancient attribution to him of a comprehensive ‘code’ of laws. I demonstrate that laws were written in response to need over time, and only reinscribed on numbered *axones* at the end of the fifth century. I argue against the claim that weights were used as *de facto* coinage in Solonian legislation, and suggest a requantification of the system of weights and measures. In my view, coinage was introduced by Peisistratos with a suite of denominations for internal use in Attica. Exploitation and export of newly-accessed silver was the reason for the subsequent change of type to ‘owls’, not democracy. Silver mining also helped foster an embryonic market economy with significant social and economic consequences. These insights allow me to provide a new reading of key political events with a focus on identifying the groups and people involved.

## **DECLARATION**

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “Law, money, and the transformation of Athens in the sixth century B.C.E.” has not previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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## NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION AND DATES

Any work dealing extensively with Greek texts faces intractable problems of consistency in transliteration, especially when the material ranges from the Archaic to late Byzantine periods. I have chosen to adopt a policy which I trust is acceptable for a reader familiar with the types of source material used.

Greek words are usually transliterated throughout the text itself except where they appear in a quotation of a secondary work, or it is important to the argument to have the text, in which case it is also translated (by me if not otherwise indicated). In the case of most Greek words, I have transliterated as closely as possible, thus *kurbis* not *kyrbis*. Greek names and titles fall into two categories. The most familiar ones are given in their common form to avoid confusion, so Thucydides rather than *Thoukudidēs*, Galen rather than Galenos or Galenus, Acropolis not Akropolis, Archon not Arkhon.<sup>1</sup> All others are accurately transliterated except that I have succumbed to using ‘y’ for upsilon rather than ‘u’ yielding Aiskhylos and Phrynikhos. However, for the sources used in the appendix in Part 6.3 (only), I have followed the format provided in the Oxford Classical Dictionary 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1996 *xxix* – *liv* to make it easier for those texts to be independently consulted and checked.

All dates are B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) unless otherwise stated.

## ABBREVIATIONS

I have used standard abbreviations in classical citations as contained in the Oxford Classical Dictionary 3<sup>rd</sup> ed 1996 *xxix* – *liv*. The following abbreviations commonly appear in the text:

<i>APF</i>	Davies 1971
<i>Ath. Pol.</i>	<i>Athenaion Politeia</i> .
F	Fragment
<i>FGrH</i>	Jacoby 1923-58.

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<sup>1</sup> I regret some slight inconsistencies in the articles published early in my candidature.

IG II <sup>2</sup>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae II. Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno posteriores</i> , (2nd edn. 1913-40).
IG III <sup>3</sup>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae III</i> , (3rd edn. 1994).
LSJ	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , Oxford, (with a revised suppl. 1996).
Martina	Martina 1968 (in Part 6.3.3 only).
Rusch.	Ruschenbusch 1966 (in Part 6.3.3 only).
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecae</i> .
Stroud	Stroud 1979 (in Part 6.3.3 only).
West	West 1998.