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I

HANS VAN WEES

'*STASIS*, DESTROYER OF MEN' MASS, ELITE, POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND SECURITY IN ARCHAIC GREECE

The ultimate threat to an ancient Greek city was annihilation by an external enemy — the massacre of its men, enslavement of its women and children, and demolition of its buildings. This was a real enough possibility, but it did not happen very often. The most acute threat came instead from internal conflict, which could do almost as much damage as war and haunted the imagination of ancient authors. In Hesiod's nightmare vision of the future of mankind (*Works & Days* 189-201), the human race would end up as:

> Enforcers of strong-arm justice — one will annihilate the other's city.
> No favour will be returned to the oath-abider, the righteous,
> the good man, but rather the doer of harm and the man of *hybris*
> people will honour. Fists will uphold justice and respect.
> The bad man will harm the better person,
> to whom he will speak crooked words, to which he will swear.
> Shrill, spiteful envy (*zêlos*), its face full of hate,
> will beset the whole of wretched mankind.
> And then, their fair skin wrapped in white robes,
> from the wide roads of the earth towards Olympus
> they will go to join the tribe of immortals and leave mankind —
> Respect (*aidos*) and Righteous Indignation (*nemesis*). Miserable suffering will remain
> for us mortals, and there will be no protection against harm.

"No protection against harm" (*kakou alkê*): there will be no security of life or property or status in a world where violence settles everything. The annihilation of cities is mentioned at the start as the most extreme consequence of such attitudes, but violence and deceit, and the lack of trust and restraint, will pervade all of social and political life.

A few generations later, Theognis of Megara wrote as if Hesiod's worst fears had become reality. At any moment, he predicted, his city could fall prey to "civil conflicts, internecine murder, and monarchs" (51-52). The place had been taken over by a crowd of savage rustics, who "deceive one another while laughing in each other's faces" (59): "trust does not feature in their actions, but they love tricks, deceptions and intrigues, like men who can no longer save themselves" (*andres mêketi sôizomenoi*, 66-68). The poet himself and his friends were forced to adopt the same attitudes: "it does not suit us to be in any way like men who can save themselves, Cyrnus, but like a city which will be utterly sacked" (235-236). Sixth-century Megarians were "like men beyond rescue", according to Theognis, because they were engaged in a brutal struggle for wealth and status from which they could not hope to emerge safely; as a result they pursued their self-interest regardless of any moral restraint.

Later, and more famously, Thucydides diagnosed the same problem in the ferocious civil wars tearing apart Corcyra and numerous other Greek cities in his own time:

> "There was no one who could stop it, no word to be trusted, no oath to be feared. Given that there was no hope of security (*es to anelpiston tou bebaiou*), in calculating their actions everyone who gained the upper hand took care to avoid harm instead of being able to trust others" (3.83.2).

Thucydides was clearly wrong to insist that this was a new phenomenon, spreading across Greece from 427 BC onwards (3.82.1, 84.1, 85.1), for Theognis and Hesiod had seen the same erosion of trust and crumbling of internal security in the archaic city.

This paper will argue that the Greeks had good reason to be so deeply insecure about social bonds, so permanently afraid that society was in danger of collapse. Rivalry for wealth and status did indeed quickly turn violent and dragged not only a small politically active elite but large sections of the community into bloody civil conflicts which might genuinely threaten the security, and indeed existence, of a city. Historical developments of the archaic period, in particular, can in large part be understood as driven by such conflicts and by attempts to contain them in order to create greater social and political 'steadiness' (*asphaleia*), 'stability' (*bebaiotês*) and 'security' (*sôtêria*).

The self-destructive city in early Greek literature

"The love of wealth will destroy Sparta, but nothing else", said a proverb which apparently started life as a line in an archaic poem purporting to quote a Delphic oracle.[1] The idea of an indestructible city endangered only by private greed and aggression is also found in Solon:

> "Our city will never be destroyed by the fate of Zeus and the will of blessed immortal gods ... but the townsmen themselves want to destroy this great city in their foolishness, persuaded by money, and unjust is the mind of the leaders of the people who will soon suffer much misery as a result of their great *hybris*" (fr. 4.1-8 West).

Theognis predicted doom for Megara with reminders of famous cities which had been destroyed in the past, but whereas other traditions reported that these were all sacked by external enemies, he insisted that it was the result of their own

[1] DIOD. 7.12.5 (=TYRTAEUS fr. 3 Bergk), and cf. GERBER 1999, 43, but omitted by other editors and probably to be attributed to another seventh-century poet: see H. VAN WEES, "Tyrtaeus' *Eunomia*: nothing to do with the Great Rhetra", in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, ed. by S. HODKINSON and A. POWELL (London 1999), 3-4.

hybris.[2] Elsewhere, he sighed that "everything lies in ruin and amongst the crows, yet we cannot blame any of the blessed immortal gods, Cyrnus, but it is the violence and low gains and *hybris* of *men* which has cast us down from great prosperity into a state of misery" (833-836). The message of all these poets is clear: internal conflict, not enemy attack, is the greatest threat to a city, and not even divine protection can save a city from itself.[3]

The obsession with internal conflict goes back to Homer. Christoph Ulf identified "the prevention of internal strife as part of the 'political' agenda of the Homeric epics", as the title of his article put it;[4] one might go even further and argue that the prevention of strife is a theme which fundamentally shapes both epics. The *Iliad* is famously not a poem about the Trojan War and the *Odyssey* not a poem about the voyages of Odysseus, because the poems concentrate on episodes which illustrate the causes and disastrous consequences of internal conflict, and in the *Iliad* also the consequences of poor leadership. Achilles' exclamation —

> "If only strife (*eris*) would vanish from among gods and men — and anger, which drives even a man of sense to act brutally, and which, much sweeter than honey seeping down spreads in men's hearts like smoke" (18.107-110; cf. 9.254-258) —

sums up much of what the *Iliad* is about. Not only do the experiences of Achilles teach him a lesson about the consequences of

[2] THEOGNIS 1103-1104 (Magnesia — sacked by Cimmerians; Colophon and Smyrna — sacked by Lydians); the same point about Magnesia is made in *Theognidea* 603-604. In 541-542, the mythical destruction of the Centaurs on account of hybris — gain by external enemies — is held up as a mirror to the Megarians; see further N. FISHER, "*Hybris*, revenge and *stasis* in the Greek city-states", in *War and Violence in Ancient Greece*, ed. by H. VAN WEES (London and Swansea 2000), 97-101.

[3] Cf. E. FLAIG, "Gewalt als präsente und als diskursive Obsession in der griechischen Klassik", in *Gewalt und Ästhetik*, hrsg. von B. SEIDENSTICKER und M. VÖHLER (Berlin and New York 2006), 29-56.

[4] Chr. ULF, "Die Abwehr von internem Streit als Teil des 'politischen' Programms der homerischen Epen", in *Grazer Beiträge* 17 (1990), 1-25.

excessive anger and about the need to feel pity, but Agamemnon spends much of the poem recovering from his initial act of aggression by proving himself a leader who will listen to the views of his peers and his people. Hector's story follows the opposite arc: his unwillingness to take advice turns out to be his undoing.[5] The *Odyssey* compresses the hero's fabulous adventures into a flashback narrative which takes up only a sixth of the poem, and devotes the rest to an exploration of how a young man learns to assert himself against his rivals, and of how an entire family joins forces to defend itself with bravery and cunning, ultimately avenging itself on all its enemies and restoring harmony to the city. The final confrontation between the hero and the families of his defeated rivals is not tacked on, as many readers have imagined, but a vital part of this story of revenge.

Similarly, Hesiod's *Works & Days* is not really a poem about agriculture. As the opening lines show, it is a poem about competition (*eris*), almost half of which is devoted to warnings against the 'bad' kind of competition "which promotes harmful war and conflict" (14), before it moves on to show how to engage in the 'good' kind of competition "which is much better for men" (19) in making them devote their energies to productive work instead.[6] Communities are not yet destroying themselves, according to Hesiod, although life will indeed degenerate to this point one day, but even now cities are at risk of being destroyed by the gods through famine, plague or war, as punishment for the injustice of their leaders, the 'lords' (238-247). Typically, however, the world of the gods themselves described in Hesiod's *Theogony* — as in Homer's *Iliad* — is also beset by conflict, violence and deceit. This poem's *pièce de résistance* is a detailed account of the battle between two

[5] On Hector, see J.M. REDFIELD, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad* (Chicago 1975/Durham 1994); on Achilles and Agamemnon, H. VAN WEES, *The World of Achilles* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

[6] H. VAN WEES, "The economy", in *A Companion to Archaic Greece*, ed. by K.A. RAAFLAUB and H. VAN WEES (London and New York 2008), ch. 23; cf. A.T. EDWARDS, *Hesiod's Ascra* (Berkeley and London 2004).

generations of gods, the Titans against Zeus and his allies (617-735), just the sort of thing which men liked reciting at rowdy drinking parties, according to one disapproving late archaic intellectual (Xenophanes fr.1.13-24). Perhaps most remarkable is Hesiod's assumption that the gods will regularly commit perjury in their quarrels, and, if caught, suffer the penalty of a nine-year coma followed by a nine-year exile (775-806).

The themes of lyric poetry are more varied, but enough of Alcaeus' poems were devoted to contemporary civil conflict for them to have formed a body of work known as *Stasiotika* (Strabo 13.2.3, p.617). The surviving fragments are full of metaphors of ships being wrecked in storms to represent the violent turmoil of the community (frr. 6, 73, 208, 249, 306i), and plain references to bloody violence, "mutual-harm-inflicting citizens" (*allellokakon politan*, 130b.7), the misery of exile, the joy of seeing rivals die (fr. 332), changing alliances and broken oaths. "That fat man ... recklessly trampled on the oaths" (fr. 129.21-23), he seethes, and plots his revenge: "now we must all ... rush and jump on Pittacus from behind" (fr. 306g.3-6).

The same themes recur many times over in Theognis and the Theognid corpus. Not only is there much agonising about the security of the city, as we have seen, but the single most prominent theme is the utter impossibility of trusting anyone at all, despite the crucial importance of having reliable friends. In two particularly telling passages Theognis advises Cyrnus that he should *pretend* to be everyone's friend, but in practice look out only for himself — precisely the kind of behaviour which he elsewhere blames for the collapse of society.

> "Do not make any of these townsmen your friend from the heart, son of Polypaus, not for any reason, but in what you say give the impression of being a friend to all, while in matters of importance you join with no one" (61-65).

> "Cyrnus, take a subtle attitude to all friends, adopting the temperament of each. You must have the temperament of the wily octopus, which appears to the eye like whatever rock it hovers around. Attach yourself to this rock now, turn a different colour next. Intelligence is better than inflexibility" (213-218; 1071-1074).

The poems are again full of references to the joys of revenge, not least when it is achieved by deception: "Talk nicely to your enemy, but when he falls into your hands, make him pay without making excuses" (363-364).[7] In a society like this, it is not surprising that other poets were driven to sing the praises of 'good order' (*eunomia*), a concept which in the circumstances must have meant above all an end to open conflict and violence.[8]

Herodotus is yet another source fascinated by internal conflict. Although his avowed interest is in 'amazing deeds' and he certainly gives the conquests and customs of the Persians and other non-Greeks their due, his account of Greek history before the Persian Wars concentrates on internal division, *stasis* and tyranny at the expense of what might have been a more 'glorious' history of expansion and development. The Messenian and Lelantine wars, Pheidon's campaigns in the Peloponnese, Athens' conquests of Salamis and Sigeum — all are alluded to, but no more than that. The reforms of Lycurgus and Solon barely get a mention: they make way for detailed accounts of *stasis* in Athens, and in-fighting between the royal dynasties at Sparta. The Ionian revolt, which could have been portrayed as a heroic struggle for freedom is portrayed as the result of self-interested political manoeuvrings, and disastrously collapses almost as soon as it has begun. Even Herodotus' Persians worry enough about political stability to engage in a lengthy constitutional debate before settling on monarchy.[9]

[7] On stasis in archaic poetry, see N. FISHER, *art.cit.* (n.2), 90-103; on Theognis, see also H. VAN WEES, "Megara's Mafiosi", in *Alternatives to Athens*, ed. by R. BROCK and S. HODKINSON (Oxford 2000).

[8] See TYRTAEUS frr. 1-4, with H. VAN WEES, "Tyrtaeus' *Eunomia*", in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, ed. by S. HODKINSON and A. POWELL (London 1999), 1-41; and SOLON fr. 4, with E. IRWIN, *Solon and Early Greek Poetry* (Cambridge 2005), 85-198.

[9] HDT. 3.80-82; see further N. FISHER, *art.cit.* (n.2), 103-6; H. VAN WEES, "Herodotus and the past", in *Brill's Companion to Herodotus*, ed. by E. BAKKER *et al.* (Boston [etc.] 2002), 337-43.

With Thucydides and Xenophon, as apparently in the work of their contemporaries, historical coverage is more equally divided between wars and civil wars; but for these authors war was in some ways not so much a matter of international relations as a form of civil strife at a higher level, which destroyed the unity and undermined the strength of the Greeks just as *stasis* ruined individual cities.[10] Civil conflict and war remained, of course, a much-analysed topic: the surviving book of Aeneas Tacticus' military manual is all about pre-empting internal dissension and treason, rather than dealing with the enemy, and Plato and Aristotle devoted large parts of their political works to the study of how achieve political security, *soteria*.[11]

The anatomy of political violence in early Greece

Just how unstable was the archaic Greek city? What level and kind of violence do the sources imply when they speak of *stasis*, 'internecine war', and the like? And what proportion of people in a community would have been affected by such conflict? In the wake of Thucydides' powerful account of the civil war in Corcyra, scholars have often emphasized the pervasiveness and ferocity of internal conflict from the late fifth century onwards, while assuming that such conflict was less frequent and less intense before then. Our evidence for the earlier fifth century, however, such as Pindar's songs and Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, quoted below (p. 19), show clearly enough that internal violence was already a major problem, and, as Simon Hornblower has pointed out, it is merely because our evidence for this period

[10] See J.J. PRICE, *Thucydides and Internal War* (Cambridge 2001); A. LINTOTT, "Civil strife and human nature in Thucydides", in *Literary Responses to Civil Discord*, ed. by J.H. MOLYNEUX (Nottingham 1993), 25-35; and J. DILLERY, *Xenophon and the History of his Times* (London and New York 1995), esp. 27-38.

[11] This is a central concern in Plato's *Laws* and *Republic*, and in Aristotle's *Politics*, esp. Book V; cf. M. SCHOFIELD, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Chicago 1999).

is so limited that we are left with the false impression of a less strife-ridden age.[12] The same is true when we go back still further. The evidence for internal conflict in the archaic city is dominated by later stories about the monarchical rule of 'tyrants', full of colourfully outrageous crimes allegedly perpetrated by such men but with very little information about the nature or causes of the political struggles which brought them to power. The superficial impression is that the main forms of internal violence besetting archaic cities were different in kind from their classical counterparts.[13] A closer look, however, reveals a fuller and less skewed picture of archaic civil strife as similar to classical *stasis* in every respect. Archaic political conflicts could and did turn into civil wars as bloody as anything the classical period had to offer: they were neither more restrained in their violence nor more restricted to a small politically active elite.

The level of violence is admittedly hard to gauge from the archaic evidence. The atrocities attributed to tyrants may owe as much to the fevered imagination of later story-tellers as to historical fact, and there may be rhetorical exaggeration in the graphic images of *stasis* conjured up by contemporary poets. It has even been doubted that *stasis* necessarily entailed violent conflict at all: Andrew Lintott's classic study *Violence, Civil Strife and Revolution in the Classical City*, for instance, argued that the word also denoted non-violent opposition, "a position taken in politics" (34).[14] The

[12] S. HORNBLOWER, *The Greek World 479-323 BC* (London ³2002), 184-7; ID., *Thucydides and Pindar* (Oxford 2004), 76-8; contra e.g. M.M. AUSTIN, in *Cambridge Ancient History* VI² (1994), 528-35. H.-J. GEHRKE, *Stasis* (München 1985) discusses all classical *staseis*, except in Athens, Sparta and Magna Grecia.

[13] Thus G.E.M. DE STE CROIX, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (London 1981), 278-300, and A. LINTOTT, *Violence, Civil Strife and Revolution in the Classical City 750-330 B.C.* (Baltimore and London 1982), treat the classical period as characterised by *stasis* and the archaic period as characterised by tyranny; while H.-J. GEHRKE (*op.cit.* n.12) and other studies of *stasis* exclude the archaic period altogether. Note also the common distinction between the 'old' form of tyranny in the archaic period and the 'new' tyrants which emerge in the course of classical *stasis*.

[14] A. LINTOTT, *op.cit.*, 75-6, specifically argued that Herodotus' references to *stasis* in Athens in the 560s (1.59.3; 1.61.2), and in 508 (5.66.2) meant simple political rivalry and that things turned violent only later.

earliest contexts in which the word *stasis* appears, however, present it as a dangerous aberration rather than as routine political rivalry in assemblies, councils or courts. Solon calls it 'a public evil' and predicts that "*stasis* within the tribe and sleeping war ... will destroy the lovely youth of many men" (fr. 4.19-20; cf. 4.37ff.). In the Theognid corpus, *stasis* has the epithet 'destroyer of men' (*laophthoros*, 781; cf. 1081-1082). Theognis himself, as noted above, fears that his city will fall prey to "*staseis*, internecine murder of men, and monarchs" (51-52; cf. 78), a formulation which we find echoed and amplified in the classical period, most notably in the words attributed to Darius by Herodotus:

> "In an oligarchy, powerful private feuds are likely to arise among the many who strive for public excellence, for when each man wants to be the leader and to win the battle of opinions they end up in great feuds with one another, which will produce *staseis*, and these *staseis* will bring murder, and murder will bring a return to monarchy" (3.82.3).

Still stronger evidence for the integral role of violence in archaic *stasis* is a law attributed to Solon which decrees that "whoever does not put his weapons on one side or another when the city is engaged in *stasis* will be without rights and have no share in the city". The purpose of this law is evidently to act as a deterrent: it prevents a gradual escalation of violence by threatening an instant leap into all-out civil war. But such a deterrent would be unnecessary and indeed counterproductive if *stasis* did not entail at least a low-level use of force.[15] It is therefore safe to say that the word *stasis* does imply a violent

[15] SOLON F 38 Ruschenbusch: *Ath.Pol.* 8.5; also PLUT. *Sol.* 20.1; *De sera numinis vindicta* 4, 550 C; *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* 32, 823 F; CIC. *Att.* 10.1.2; GELL. 2.12.1; see e.g. A. MAFFI, "De la loi de Solon à la loi d'Ilion ou comment défendre la démocratie", in *La Violence dans les mondes grec et romain*, éd. par J.-M. BERTRAND (Paris 2005), 137-61; S. FORSDYKE, *Exile, Ostracism and Democracy* (Princeton 2005), 98-9 (although I will argue below against her view that this law was a century ahead of its time); cf. H. VAN WEES, "Tyrants, oligarchs and citizen militias", in *Army and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. by A. CHANIOTIS and P. DUCREY (Stuttgart 2002), 82.

form of conflict (or a group engaged in such conflict).[16] What kinds of force might be involved we shall investigate below.

What proportion of a city's inhabitants might be drawn into civil strife is also hard to gauge. Whereas classical sources often speak of 'the people' pitted against the forces of oligarchy, evidence for the archaic period tends to concentrate on fighting between factions within the ruling elite. Scholars are accordingly inclined to see archaic *stasis* as a small-scale elite phenomenon without the popular involvement which marks the political life and civil wars of the classical age. This is a central tenet of Sara Forsdyke's important book *Exile, Ostracism and Democracy* (2005), for instance, and of several recent studies arguing that archaic tyranny was the result of rivalry within the elite, without intervention by the wider community.[17] A careful analysis of the evidence, however, suggests that the contrast between archaic and classical *stasis* is largely an illusion created by the different emphases of our sources: classical civil wars were in fact largely fought by elite factions with various kinds of external support, even if one side usually claimed to fight in the name of the people;[18] and the community at large could and did play an active role in archaic civil conflict on occasion, perhaps no more or less often than it did later. As we shall see, a whole range of forms of 'popular' violence is attested, and this added much to the general climate of political instability.

Elite violence: murders, expulsions and coups

The murders (*phonoi*) which Theognis and Herodotus associate with *stasis* often took the form of covert assassinations of

[16] More on this point in the discussion recorded at the end of this chapter.

[17] So esp. G. ANDERSON, "Before *turannoi* were tyrants", in *ClAnt* 24 (2005), 173-222; G.L. CAWKWELL, "Early Greek tyranny and the people", in *CQ* 45 (1995), 73-86; contra e.g. G.E.M. DE STE CROIX, *op.cit.* (n.13), 278-83; A. ANDREWES, *The Greek Tyrants* (London 1956), esp. 34-8.

[18] H. VAN WEES, *art.cit.* (n.15), esp. 77-82; in my brief treatment of archaic political conflict here (*ibid.* 81), I went too far in playing down the role of the people in political strife during this period.

prominent individuals. In 561 BC, Peisistratus' political rivals tried to kill him in an ambush as he was driving his mule cart through the countryside (or so he alleged). He subsequently travelled everywhere with a bodyguard of 50 men armed with clubs who would have been little use in full-scale civil war but offered effective protection against the further assassination attempts which were evidently expected (Herodotus 1.59). Such tactics are attested already in the *Odyssey*: Telemachus' rivals decide to kill him when he becomes too much of a threat, and resort to an ambush despite vastly outnumbering him.[19] Most killings in the archaic age are attributed to tyrants who are said to have secured their monarchical power by a policy of "murdering the most prominent of their townsmen" (Hdt. 5.92.*eta*). One might imagine that such killings would take the form of public arrests and executions, with or without show trials, but in a rare illustration of how it was actually done, we hear that Hippias had Cimon killed in an ambush "by some men, at night" (6.103.3; cf. 6.39). The story that Peisistratus, while in power, was accused of murder and defended himself in court (*Ath.Pol.* 16.8) also points to covert killing rather than pseudo-legal execution.

Conversely, of course, many monarchical rulers and some of their relatives were assassinated by disgruntled subjects, most famously Hippias' brother Hipparchus in 514 by Harmodius and Aristogeiton. This murder, like that of Arcesilaus III of Cyrene at about the same time, is said to have taken place in broad daylight in a busy public place, rather than in secret. The open assassination of rulers continues in the classical period, and, as Werner Riess has pointed out, its public nature is symbolically significant, advertising it a legitimate act of tyrannicide.[20]

[19] *Od.* 4.660-674, 842-847; 16.363-406; cf. the killing of a powerful rival in a rural ambush at *Od.* 13.259-270.

[20] Hipparchus: HDT. 5.55-62; THUC. 6.54-58; *Ath.Pol.* 18.2-6. Arcesilaus III of Cyrene (and Alazeir of Barca): HDT. 4.164.4. Cf. e.g. the last king of the Bacchiads (NICOL.DAM. *FGrH* 90 F 57.6), Lycophron of Corcyra (HDT. 3.53), Periander of Ambracia (ARIST. *Pol.* 5, 10, 1311 a 32-b 2) and Demoteles of

Each of these killings seems to occur in isolation, but given the anecdotal nature of our evidence it is unlikely that we get the full picture. It is therefore perfectly possible that some archaic struggles for prestige and power took the form of a concerted murder campaign, of the kind which took place in Athens in 411 BC. Then, a number of elite 'clubs', working in secret, used a gang of "a hundred and twenty lads, whom they employed if some muscle was needed" (Thucydides 8.69.4), in particular to kill "in some suitable manner" their political opponents (8.65.2, 66.2, 70.2).[21] The description of the violence in Thucydides is very brief and matter-of-fact, as if this was par for the course in civil conflict, and only one of the victims is deemed significant enough to be named. Three generations later, *Athenaion Politeia* (29-33) skipped the violence altogether when relating these events. The relatively few archaic murder victims whose stories were preserved in oral tradition must have formed the tip of an iceberg.

Expulsions were a common alternative to murders.[22] When Peisistratus' rivals joined forces against him for the first time, "they drove him out", which apparently meant that they forced him to retire to his estates in eastern Attica. When they did so again some years later, we are told, a frightened Peisistratus "left the country altogether" and went to Eretria.[23] The fragments of

Samos (PLUT. *Aetia Graeca* 57, 303 E). Analysis of classical assassinations: W. RIESS, "How tyrants and dynasts die", in *Terror et Pavor. Violenza, intimidazione, clandestinità nel mondo antico*, a cura di G. URSO (Pisa 2006), 65-88; cf. H.-J. GEHRKE, *op.cit.* (n.12), esp. 235.

[21] At the same time, the ostracised popular leader Hyperbolus was murdered in Samos (THUC. 8.73.3). For the mechanics of this coup, see C. BEARZOT, "Atene nel 411 e nel 404. Tecniche del colpo di stato", in *Terror et Pavor* (*cit.* n.20 above), 21-54; H. VAN WEES, *art.cit.* (n.15), 77-81.

[22] See above all S. FORSDYKE, *op.cit.* (n.15).

[23] First exile: HDT. 1.60.1; *Ath.Pol.* 14.3; second exile: HDT 1.61.2; *Ath.Pol.* 15.1. Since he "left the country altogether" in his second exile, he presumably did not do so during the first; hence his return involved a simple chariot ride back to the city. Even after the second exile, he was able to return as far as eastern Attica without meeting any opposition (1.62.2). See G. ANDERSON, *The Athenian Experiment* (Ann Arbor 2003), 30-4.

Alcaeus imply a similar story: the poet was more than once driven out when a former ally joined forces with his rivals, and on at least one occasion apparently retreated to a rural estate rather than fleeing to another city.[24] Two distinct types of expulsion are implied. In one, the weaker party spontaneously leaves the country to avoid being killed. In the other, the stronger party apparently dictates terms: leave the city, if not the country, or face further violence. The best example of the latter is the expulsion of the Alcmeonid faction by Isagoras in 508.[25] A century earlier, the same faction had suffered exile of yet another type, imposed by a public court as punishment for offences alleged by political rivals.[26] Tyrants are often said to have expelled many men, presumably by all three methods and perhaps still others (see below).

The corollary of murder and expulsion was confiscation of property. Telemachus' rivals intend to share out his property among them if their ambush succeeds (*Od.* 16.384-385) and a similar fate befell Theognis: "other men possess my property after seizing it by force; I am the dog who crossed the ravine during the winter floods, and shook off everything". The latter phrase must be an animal fable-style reference to making a dangerous escape in order to shake off one's pursuers, at the cost of losing everything one owns (346-348; cf. 1197-1202). Again, confiscation is one of the forms of violence associated with tyrants in particular. Loss of property provoked emotions hardly less powerful than loss of life. Theognis reserves his most furious verses for those who have seized his wealth: "Zeus, let me inflict pain in return for pain ... Let me drink their dark blood!" (344, 349). The story that Peisistratus' most virulent enemy, Callias, was the only man in Athens who 'dared' buy

[24] ALCAEUS fr. 130b L.-P. describes the poet as confined to a "rustic" (*agroikos*) life "in remote countryside" (*eschatia*), excluded from political meetings in the city; alternatively, this may be a rhetorically exaggerated picture of his exile in the nearby city of Pyrrha: fr. 114.

[25] HDT. 5.70-72; *Ath.Pol.* 20.2-3.

[26] *Ath.Pol.* 1; PLUT. *Sol.* 12. See J. SEIBERT, *Die politischen Flüchtlinge und Verbannten in der griechischen Geschichte* (Darmstadt 1979); S. FORSDYKE, *op.cit.* (n.15), 7-11.

the tyrant's confiscated property well illustrates the fear that victims might seek violent retaliation (Hdt. 6.121).

Not surprisingly, when a whole faction had been driven out, or the number of families individually expelled reached critical mass, the exiles often counter-attacked by raiding the countryside from a position near or just across the border, or even a staging a 'return' by directly attacking the city, usually with the help of foreign allies. The Athenian exiles who fortified Leipsydrion in 514 must initially have confined themselves to raids (*Ath.Pol.* 19.3), until they won the support of Spartan armies and could mount direct attacks on Athens in 512 and 510. The exiles from Cyrene who "took refuge in the great private fortification of Aglomachus" a decade or so earlier (Hdt. 4.164.2) may have had similar plans, as did exiles from Aegina who around 490 used Sounion as a base for raids on their former home (Hdt. 6.90).

A full-scale armed 'return' of exiles with the aid of foreign allies is first attested around 600 BC in the poems of Alcaeus. His evocation of a "great hall" filled with arms and armour which "we have been unable to forget from the moment we embarked upon this deed" (fr. 140 Voigt) surely alludes to the intended invasion of Mytilene which ended with his defeat in a "battle at the bridge" (test. 9c). Elsewhere, he mentions a large amount of gold ("2,000 staters") donated by "the Lydians", then the dominant power in the region, to help his faction return "to our sacred city" (fr. 69; cf. 306a). From the mid-sixth century the Persians took over the Lydians' role and became the foreign ally of choice for eastern Greek exiles: Pheretime, former queen of Cyrene, for instance, called on Persia to regain control of Barca (Hdt 4.165-167). At about the same time, Sparta became the dominant power on the Greek mainland and in the Aegean, and frequently sent out large armies to restore exiles, which became the basis of the Spartans' later reputation as selfless fighters against the evils of tyranny.[27]

[27] Apart from the invasions of Athens in 512 and 510, Herodotus mentions their failed attempt to restore exiles to Samos in 525 (3.54) and Plutarch adds a long list of tyrants deposed elsewhere (*De Herodoti malignitate* 21, 859 D).

Still other exiles managed to raise private armies: Peisistratus called upon everyone "who owed him a favour" as well as "volunteers" and paid for their services; Arcesilaus III promised a redistribution of land for the benefit of anyone who helped him re-establish himself as king of Cyrene.[28]

The prevailing ethic of revenge meant that returning exiles could be expected to treat their enemies brutally, and Herodotus pointedly relates stories of excessive revenge which was punished, and of notable restraint which was rewarded. Arcesilaus and his mother came to a bad end on account of atrocities committed on their return from exile: he had ignored oracular warnings and burnt some of his enemies alive; she had had her enemies' heads and their wives' severed breasts impaled on the city wall (4.163-164, 202-205). Peisistratus, by contrast, secured his position by "devising a very wise plan" after his victory in the battle of Pallene and proclaiming to his fleeing opponents that there would be no further repercussions (1.63).

A final form of elite violence was the *coup d'état* by which one faction, going beyond merely weakening their rivals and gaining relative dominance, openly sought to exclude its rivals from exercising power in the city at all. This usually meant making the faction leader 'monarch' or 'tyrant', but could instead take the form of establishing the whole faction as a closed oligarchy. The stories we have about such events suggest that they often involved relatively little violence and were achieved by a token show of strength, such as the occupation of an acropolis by a small group of armed men. Peisistratus managed this feat with the aid of fifty men armed only with clubs (Hdt. 1.59; *Ath.Pol.* 14.1); Polycrates needed a mere fifteen hoplites in Samos (Hdt. 3.120). Peisistratus' second coup is described as a wholly non-violent occasion involving his return to the city in a chariot accompanied by a tall woman impersonating the goddess Athena (Hdt. 1.60; *Ath.Pol.* 14.4). It seems a reasonable assumption, however, that the chariot was also accompanied by

[28] Peisistratus: HDT. 1.61-63; *Ath.Pol.* 15.1-2, 17.4. Arcesilaus: HDT. 4.163.

a large crowd of armed supporters — Peisistratus' own and those of his new ally Megacles — and that the appearance of 'Athena' served only to project an image of legitimacy which made it easier for the outnumbered elite opposition to decide not to offer resistance. In general, it is likely that *coups d'état* of this sort were staged only as a symbolic affirmation of an already existing *de facto* political dominance, which was itself surely based not least on the ability to muster more physical force than one's rivals, if necessary.[29]

Other coups, by contrast, did involve armed violence: Cylon's occupation of the Athenian acropolis involved not only his personal friends but troops sent by his father-in-law, Theagenes of Megara, and was fiercely resisted, resulting as it did in a massacre of Cylon's supporters which accordingly to later tradition was both in breach of an oath and sacrilegious. When in 508 Isagoras surrounded the Athenian Council with an armed force brought by his personal friend Cleomenes of Sparta and told them to stand down, he too met strong resistance, and the result was the capture and execution of 300 of his followers.[30] Little is heard of internal coups — as opposed to attacks by returning exiles — which aimed to depose a ruling tyrant or oligarchy, except that they tended to involve at least the assassination of leading men.[31]

In short, elite rivalry for honour and wealth created great insecurity in the archaic city. The currency of low-level elite

[29] But G. ANDERSON, *art.cit.* (n.17), goes too far in arguing that 'tyranny' was purely a position of *de facto* superiority over one's rivals: if so, Solon could not meaningfully have said that he refused to make himself tyrant (frs. 32-34). Symbolism of Peisistratus' procession with 'Athena' beside him: see J. BLOK, "Phye's procession", in *Peisistratos and the Tyranny*, ed. by H. SANCISI-WEERDENBURG (Amsterdam 2000), 17-48.

[30] Cylon: HDT. 5.71; THUC. 1.126.3-12; PLUT. *Sol.* 12.1-9; PAUS. 1.28.1; 7.25.3. Isagoras: HDT. 5.72; *Ath.Pol.* 20.2-4 (which, contra Herodotus, implicitly denies that anyone was executed — surely the author was here influenced by the fourth-century image of the Athenian people as exceptionally forgiving, inspired by the amnesty of 403 BC). For the role of the people in both coups, see below.

[31] See references cited above, n.20.

stasis was the covert killing of opponents, in the manner of mafia rivalries during which key players disappear or are found dead rather than openly executed. If a faction was successful enough at this level in killing and expelling rivals and confiscating their property, it might stage an overt coup and reinforce its position with further violence. Further escalation occurred when foreign allies were brought in to support one side or the other, just as Thucydides noted was happening in his own time, when the easy availability of Athenian and Spartan support led to increasingly bloody civil conflict (3.82.1). The massacres of the supporters of Cylon and Isagoras and of the opponents of Arcesilaus and Pheretima, or again the enslavement of 300 boys from elite families, sent to Lydia to be castrated in revenge for a coup against the tyrant of Corcyra (Hdt. 3.48, 53), show that archaic *stasis* could be a life-and-death struggle as ferocious as any classical civil war. As Alcaeus put it, recalling a pact between his own faction and that of Pittacus against the faction of Myrsilus: "once we swore ... that we would either die and lie wrapped in earth, killed by the men who then attacked us, or that we would kill them instead" (fr. 129.14-19; cf. 6.1-14).

During Alcaeus' lifetime, his city was in an almost permanent state of violent conflict, with a bewildering number of factions and tyrants passing review in the fragments of his poetry, and the sheer number of tyrants of which we hear — even if we know no more than their names — implies turbulent histories for many other cities. In Athens, a generation of *stasis* followed the massacre of Cylon's followers until the Alcmeonids were expelled, c. 600 BC; from 590 to 580, there was violent rivalry for the highest political offices; from about 570 to 546 the three-way factional struggle which saw Peisistratus take power three times raged; from 514 to 506 violent *stasis* reigned again, and an armed return of exiled factions with Spartan or Persian backing continued to be a threat until 490 BC. Intense internal conflict resurfaced in the 480s, and again in the late 470s, stopping just short of violence

thanks to frequent use of ostracism (see below). From 462 to 457, another political crisis saw the assassination of Ephialtes — at night, by an unknown killer, perhaps a hired outsider — as well as the ostracism of Cimon, a plot to betray Athens to Sparta, and Aeschylus' appeal in *Eumenides* for an end to civil war:

> "Hurl into my territories no bloodstained whetstones, punches in the guts of young men, which drive them mad with fury not fuelled by wine. Do not instil into my townsmen internecine war and mutual aggression, as if transplanting the heart of fighting-cocks. Let there be war abroad, in abundance, in which a fearsome passion for glory prevails, I say, but no cock-fighting at home" (858-866).
>
> "I pray that *stasis*, insatiable in its appetite for harm, will never raise its roar in this city, and that the dust will not suck up the dark blood of citizens as it greedily demands from the city compensation for murders committed in blind anger, but that the people will repay favours with favours in a spirit of shared friendship — and that they will hate with a single mind" (976-986).[32]

Across almost two centuries, elite *stasis* in Athens was apparently interrupted only to deal with other crises, such as popular revolt (see below) and external war, except for a period of about 30 years during the tyranny of Peisistratus and his sons — which must have been one reason why this period came to be regarded as a 'Golden Age' (*Ath.Pol.* 16.7). We do not have the evidence to compare the frequency of archaic *stasis* with classical statistics,[33] but can hardly doubt that it was equally endemic, as well as equally violent.

[32] Discussed by e.g. S. FORSDYKE, *op.cit.* (n.15), 167-8; K.A. RAAFLAUB, "The breakthrough of *demokratia* in mid-fifth-century Athens", in *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece*, ed. by K.A. RAAFLAUB, J. OBER and R. WALLACE (Berkeley 2007), 115-17; E. FLAIG, *art.cit.* (n.3), 47-51. Ephialtes' murder: ANTIPHON 5.68; *Ath.Pol.* 25.4; DIOD. 11.77.6; PLUT. *Per.* 10.7-8. Plot: THUC. 1.107.4; THEOPOMPUS *FGrH* 115 F 88; PLUT. *Cim.* 17.4-8.

[33] H.-J. GEHRKE, *op.cit.* (n.12), 254-61.

Popular violence 1: mobilisations

So long as *stasis* remained confined to the political elite, it would probably not involve more than 5% of citizens. Cleisthenes' faction is said to have included 700 households, while his rival Isagoras had 300 supporters: assuming a citizen body of 30,000 men at the time, these 1,000 or so men would have amounted to about 3%.[34] The involvement of 'the people' at large could therefore radically change the balance of power and the nature of the conflict, leading to violence on a much larger scale. Despite our sources' focus on the elite, we can see clearly enough that in the archaic as in the classical age the wider community took an active interest in political life and from time to time asserted itself in collective acts of violence.

We catch a remarkable glimpse of a politically active community in the *Odyssey*, when Antinous, one of the leading villains, proposes a second attempt on the life of Telemachus immediately after the first has failed:

> "We must act before he summons the Greeks to an assembly, for I do not think that he will let things lie, but he will be furious and he will stand up and tell everyone, because we plotted sheer murder for him but failed. They will not approve when they hear about these misdeeds. They may do something bad and drive us out of our country, and we may end up in other people's territory. Before that happens, let us seize him far from the city, on a farm or on the road" (*Od.* 16.376-384).

Antinous casually assumes that the community will collectively intervene in elite rivalry of this kind, if the general feeling is that one party deserves their help, and that the people

[34] Size of factions: HDT. 5.72.1; *Ath.Pol.* 20.3. 30,000 citizens in 500 BC: HDT. 5.97.2; this is not in itself a reliable figure, of course, but given a citizen population of c. 60,000 by 431 BC (e.g. M.H. HANSEN, *Three Studies in Athenian Demography* [København 1988]), the number in 508 BC could not have been much lower; cf. H. VAN WEES, *Greek Warfare. Myths and Realities* (London 2004), 243.

are capable of mustering enough organised violence to drive a large part of the local elite into exile.

This is a far cry from the usual picture of assemblies in Homer, where a few leading men do all the talking and decision-making. 'The people' (*demos* or *laos*) make their views known through cheering, heckling or stony silence, but otherwise seem to remain 'spectators', as Hesiod describes farmers who "waste their time" hanging around in courts and assemblies rather than working *(Op.* 28-34). Antinous' comments, however, reveal that the image of a passive community is merely an epic convention which allows the heroes to shine.

Even before the rivalry between Telemachus and his enemies turned violent, the take-over of Telemachus' house by these unwanted guests is regarded as something about which the community should be told, and against which it could be expected to take action — despite the situation being "not a public matter but my own problem" according to the victim himself (*Od.* 2.44-45). The plot of the *Odyssey* does not allow anything to come of this, of course, which makes it all the more significant that the possibility of popular intervention keeps being raised. For Homer's audience the failure of the community to involve itself in the conflict was an anomaly which needed explaining.[35]

Solon's law on *stasis* thus did not introduce a new concept of communal responsibility in civil strife but merely added a legal obligation — specifically on those citizens who owned arms and armour (*ta hopla*) — to the moral pressure on the community to play the active part which Homer already expected it to play. Nor was there anything unusual about Peisistratus'

[35] Telemachus is told to inform the assembled people of his predicament (*Od.* 1.271-273, 372-375), and when he does so, the people are reproached for their inactivity (2.229-241). Later, Telemachus is twice asked "Tell me, do you let yourself be oppressed without resistance, or do the people of the land hate you?" (3.214-215; 16.95-96), implying that if the people liked him, he only needed to ask and they would help him punish his enemies.

behaviour when he escaped an ambush (staged or otherwise) and drove straight into the town square where he displayed the wounds which he himself and his mules had sustained and "asked the people to provide some kind of protection for him". If anything, one might argue that the people fell rather short of moral and legal expectations by taking no direct action against the alleged assassins but merely agreeing to assign Peisistratus a bodyguard. The sources state firmly that the assembly agreed to detail "selected citizens" to ensure his safety.[36] This account has been denounced as anachronistic, but without adequate grounds: already in Homer's world one can propose to a public gathering that "we should select the best 52 young men in the community" (*kata demon*) to complete a special mission (*Od.* 8.34-36).[37]

When elite *stasis* escalated into open fighting, in the form of an armed return of exiles or an internal coup, the whole community would mobilise in resistance. The best contemporary evidence for this emerges from the poems of Alcaeus, which allude to the people of Mytilene uniting against his faction. "They set up low-born Pittacus as *tyrannos* of that meek and ill-fated city, greatly praising him all together", the poet sneered (fr. 348), and Aristotle explained that this referred to the Mytileneans appointing Pittacus their leader, under the title *aisymnetes*, for the duration of the fight against the returning exiles (*Pol.* 3,14, 1285 a 34-b 1). Although the quotation is on its own not cast-iron proof of popular involvement — "they, all together" could conceivably refer to a coalition of other elite factions rather than the whole community — we do have other evidence suggesting that Pittacus was a popular, rather than merely factional, leader. Aristotle's pic-

[36] HDT. 1.59.5; *Ath.Pol.* 14.1; they did not just allow him to appear in public with his own armed supporters.

[37] Contra e.g. S. FORSDYKE, *op.cit.* (n.15), 108-11. The language of *Ath.Pol.* may well be anachronistic, but the substance need not be. Cf. Telemachus' appeal: "Come, give me a ship and 20 companions" (*Od.* 2.212).

ture of a general mobilisation of the people under Pittacus against returning exiles and their foreign backers is thus perfectly plausible.[38]

We have little reason to be sceptical, therefore, of the tradition reported by Herodotus, Thucydides and later sources that no fewer than three such general mobilisations during *stasis* occurred in archaic Athens. The first took place when Cylon seized the acropolis c. 630 BC. Since this coup was remembered for the final sacrilegious massacre of Cylon's forces which left the Alcmeonids 'cursed' and 'polluted' for the next two centuries, one might have expected classical sources to present this as an episode of purely factional violence. Yet they all say that resistance to the coup was led by Athens' magistrates, and was thus a public matter. Thucydides states explicitly what the other accounts surely imply, namely that these magistrates led the people "in a general levy" (*pandemei*, 1.126.7).[39] A similar story was told about Peisistratus' return from exile in 546, backed by many foreign troops: no Alcmeonid or other elite bravery and leadership is mentioned; the only resistance comes from a belated "general levy" (*panstratiai*, Hdt. 1.62.3), ingloriously defeated in a surprise attack on their camp.

These precedents put in perspective the much-discussed third mobilisation of 'the people', against the attempted coup by Isagoras in 508 BC. In different versions of the story, the people gathered to offer resistance either when they heard that Isagoras' men and their Spartan allies were trying to force the Council to

[38] So e.g. S. FORSDYKE, *op.cit.* (n.15), 44-5; D. PAGE, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford 1955), 238-9. Contra G. ANDERSON, *art.cit.* (n.17), 198, who suggests that the allusion is to "some kind of public process whereby his fellow townsmen ... hailed him by common consent as *primus inter pares*".

[39] Cf. HDT. 5.71; PLUT. *Sol.* 12: the magistrates strike a deal with Cylon's men; the Alcmeonids kill them. S. FORSDYKE, *op.cit.* (n.15), 81-2; F.J. FROST, "The Athenian Military before Cleisthenes", in *Historia* 33 (1984), 286-7, argue that there was no general mobilisation. Different versions give different names to the magistrates but all agree that public officials were in charge. I hope to show elsewhere that Herodotus rightly called the officials in charge "*prytaneis* of the *naukraroi*", but wrongly guessed that these were the supreme magistrates when in fact they were commanders of the general levy, subordinate to the polemarch.

stand down (*Ath.Pol.* 20.3-4) or else a little later when Isagoras' forces occupied the acropolis (Hdt. 5.72). Given that the main elite opposition — the entire Alcmeonid faction — had already left the country, only popular opposition would have been left and the historical truth of this mobilisation of the people, unlike that of the earlier events, has accordingly never been questioned. Indeed, it has been hailed as a breakthrough, an 'epistemic shift', in the history of democracy, because the people collectively intervened violently in politics without elite leadership to drive them on.[40] Yet the situation in 508 was not fundamentally different from what had happened earlier. The Alcmeonids may have been absent, but the Council and the magistrates were still in post and could have called for a general mobilisation. Conversely, our sources do not indicate that in the earlier episodes elite leadership played any role beyond magistrates ordering the people to mobilise. As far as the tradition goes, the pattern is the same on all three occasions: faced with a *coup d'état*, a general levy of the people gathers to offer resistance. The only difference is that in 508 they were lucky enough to get Isagoras to surrender in a mere two days, which was about as long as a general levy of mostly poor and unpaid citizens could afford to stay mobilised, whereas they had suffered instant defeat by Peisistratus, and they had been forced to disperse again to their farms when Cylon managed to resist for more than a few days.[41]

One could of course argue that our sources anachronistically projected back into the archaic age the typical reaction of a community to a coup in classical Greece. Yet the lack of any

[40] See esp. three papers by J. OBER: "The Athenian Revolution of 508/7 BCE", in *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece*, ed. by C. DOUGHERTY and L. KURKE (Cambridge 1993), 215-32; "Revolution matters: democracy as demotic action", in *Democracy 2500?*, ed. by I. MORRIS and K. RAAFLAUB (Dubuque 1998), 67-85; and " 'I besieged that man': democracy's revolutionary start", in *Origins of Democracy in Ancient Greece* (*op.cit.* n.32), 83-104; endorsed by e.g. S. FORSDYKE, *op.cit.* (n.15), 139-42; and (too hastily) H. VAN WEES, *art.cit.* (n.15), 82.

[41] Two days: HDT. 5.72.2; *Ath.Pol.* 20.3. Dispersal after "some time": THUC. 1.126.8.

incentive to classical authors to insert 'the people' into the inglorious stories of resistance to Cylon and Peisistratus at all, strongly suggests that popular mobilisation was enshrined in archaic oral tradition, while the evidence for popular mobilisation in archaic Mytilene shows that such a thing was indeed possible. We are left with no reason to doubt that it did occur.

Popular violence 2: lynch-mobs and uprisings

The more remarkable event of the year 508 happened earlier, when Cleisthenes found himself "defeated in *stasis*" — i.e. when Isagoras had managed to kill, wound or scare into leaving the country so many of his supporters that Cleisthenes had no hope of striking back successfully — and decided to "bring over the people to his side", "make the people his friends" (Hdt. 5.66.2; *Ath.Pol.* 20.1). In itself, this need have involved no more than the sort of appeal for popular protection made in the same circumstances by Peisistratus,[42] and available to Telemachus. The difference, however, lies in the basis of his appeal. Apart from the justice of his case, Telemachus relied on the people's gratitude to his father who had been a perfect ruler, and Peisistratus on his own popularity as a successful general.[43] Cleisthenes, by contrast, relied on a promise of political reform. This makes best sense if he was not, as *Athenaion Politeia* claims, already a popular politician (20.4-21.1), but if the people had been, in Herodotus' words, "previously pushed aside" by his faction (5.69.2), and were unlikely to offer him the protection which they had given others — unless they received something in return.

The interest in political reform which the people of Athens turn out to have in the late sixth century does not arrive out of

[42] So rightly S. FORSDYKE, *op.cit.* (n.15), 135-9.

[43] Telemachus: *Od.* 2.64-67 (justice), 230-241; 5.8-12 (father). Peisistratus: HDT. 1.59; *Ath.Pol.* 14.1.

the blue, but has parallels and precedents in earlier and contemporary occasions on which the community at large did not confine itself to intervening in elite rivalry but violently asserted its own interests in the face of elite opposition.

A colourful early example may again be found in the *Odyssey*. We are told that Odysseus once had to intervene to stop a mob lynching Eupeithes, one of the leading men in Ithaca:

> "Do you not know that he fled in fear of the people [*demos*]? For they were very angry with him because he had joined Taphian raiders and brought grief to the Thesprotians, who were on friendly terms with us. They wanted to kill him and rip his heart out and devour his great, abundant estate, but Odysseus held them back..." (*Od.* 16.424-430).

The Ithacans, then, attempted to lynch a man of the highest status, against the wishes of their king, because they were outraged at his participation in a raid which might endanger good relations with their neighbours. They intended to confiscate his property into the bargain (cf. *Il.* 18.300-302). One could hardly imagine a more violent way for the people to defend their own interests — here presumably above all a concern not to be exposed to retaliatory raids. Late archaic parallels are the story of the mob in Mytilene which in 499 stoned to death the deposed tyrant Coes, and of the Athenian councillors and bystanders who stoned one of their number for proposing to let the assembly vote on conditional surrender to the Persians — after which the women of Athens rounded up the man's wife and children and stoned them, too.[44]

Several archaic sources actually complain when the community, in their opinion, does not do enough to punish bad behaviour by their leaders. In Homer, Hector says that "the Trojans are great cowards" for failing to make his brother Paris "wear a

[44] HDT. 5.38 (Mytilene); 9.5 (Athens; cf. 5.87); a later example is THUC. 5.60.6; see D. OGDEN, *The Crooked Kings of Ancient Greece* (London 1997), 98-103.

stone tunic" — a blackly humorous euphemism for killing him by stoning — "on account of all the harm that you have done" by dragging the city into a war (*Il.* 3.56-57). When Alcaeus, who presents himself as a champion of "the people" (*damos*, fr. 129.20), calls the city "meek" (*acholos*, "lacking in anger", fr. 348, cited above) for supporting Pittacus, it is evidently because he feels that they should not tolerate what he regards as the misrule of this man, whom he describes as "devouring the city" (frr. 129.23-24; 70.7) and — therefore — as "worthy of stoning" (fr. 298.1-5; cf. 68.3). Similar sentiments may be found in the Theognid corpus, when the poet loses patience with the people's willingness to tolerate a 'bad' regime, and exclaims:

> "Stamp on the empty-headed people [*demos*], hit them with a sharp stick and put them under a heavy yoke, for among all mankind upon whom the sun looks down you will not find a people [*demos*] who love their masters [*despotai*] so much" (847-850).

The notion that the community *ought* to assert itself against unjust or otherwise unacceptable behaviour by the elite, if necessary through collective violence, is thus attested very early.

As well as occasional outbursts against individuals, we encounter extended popular uprisings in archaic Greece. The best-attested instance is the conflict which erupted in Attica around 600 BC: "the people rose up against the notables; the *stasis* was fierce and they kept each other under attack for a long time" (*Ath.Pol.* 5.2). The surviving fragments of Solon's poems show that this fourth-century summary is perfectly accurate. Solon describes the conflict as waged between "the people" (*demos*) and "those who had power and were admired for their wealth" (fr. 5.1, 3) or "those who are superior and have greater force" (fr. 37.1, 4); the latter are also referred to as "the leaders of the people" (fr. 4.7; cf. 6.1). The people explicitly include "many of the poor" (*penichroi*) who are deeply in debt and sold into slavery (fr. 4.23-25). Solon claims that anyone other than he "would not have restrained the people, and would not have stopped until he had churned up the milk and skimmed off the

fat" (fr. 37.6-8). This presumably refers to popular demands for confiscation and redistribution of land, which he prides himself on resisting: "some came for plunder; they hoped for wealth ... but it did not please me ... that the lower classes [*kakoi*] should have the same share as the upper classes [*esthloi*] in the fat soil of the fatherland" (fr. 34.1, 7-9). Solon also prides himself on putting an end to enslavement for debt and other forms of 'slavery', and on writing down laws "equally for the lower-class man [*kakos*] and the upper-class man [*agathos*], creating straight justice for everyone" (fr. 36.18-20). All this required some degree of "force" (*bie*, 36.16), but he again insists that no one else could have "restrained the people: for if I had been prepared to do what their opponents wanted at the time, or again what the other side had in mind for these opponents, this city would have been bereft of many men" (fr. 36.20-25).

For all the scholarly debate about the nature of the Solonian crisis, Solon himself thus clearly thought that the *stasis* primarily involved a conflict between on the one hand the very poorest elements in society, who alone would have demanded a redistribution of land and would have been most at risk of enslavement for debt, and on the other hand a rich and powerful elite. He was sure that the people were fully prepared to kill the elite and seize their land, and indeed that they expected him not to confine himself to "smooth talking" (fr. 34.3) and acting as "reconciler" (*diallaktes*, *Ath.Pol.* 5.2), as he was appointed to do, but to use their support to make himself tyrant of Athens "by force" and redistribute the land (fr. 34.7-9; cf. frr. 32; 33). In other words, Athens saw a period of rioting by the agricultural poor, which was severe and sustained enough to lead to political action and legislation, and was widely expected to result in an actual *coup d'état* by a popular leader who would go on to enact more radical reform.[45]

[45] B. LAVELLE, *Fame, Money, and Power* (Ann Arbor 2005), 73-6, well analyses the political situation under Solon (cf. H. VAN WEES, "Mass and Elite in Solon's Athens", in *Solon of Athens*, ed. by J.H. BLOK and A. LARDINOIS

Later sources provide numerous accounts of both *ad hoc* agricultural riots and popular movements with a political dimension, which can, as ever, be dismissed as anachronistic inventions, but which in the light of the evidence of Solon deserve to be considered seriously.

Archaic Miletus suffered two generations of severe *stasis* which resulted in "a terrible destruction of households", according to Herodotus (5.28-29). Still later sources speak of a conflict between factions called *Ploutis*, "the Rich", and *Cheiromacha*, which probably means "fist-fighters" (Plut. *Aetia Graeca* 32, 298 C), or alternatively between the rich who lived in great luxury and "the common people, whom they called Gergithes" (Athen. 12.523f-524a = Heraclides Ponticus fr. 50). The latter story says that the people temporarily drove the elite out of town and seized the children of the rich to have them trampled to death by oxen on the threshing floor — before being subjected to equally horrific violence in turn when the rich regained control. This manner of execution suggests an agricultural mob, while the name "fist-fighters" and a reference to the Gergithes as "unwarlike" suggest that they were unarmed and thus among the very poor. The composite picture points to agricultural labourers violently taking over the farms on which they toiled. This explains Herodotus' emphasis on the damage done to estates as well as his story that the dispute was settled by a committee of arbitrators who handed over power to those few whose farms remained well-cultivated, i.e. moderate men who had treated their labourers well enough to avoid a workforce rebellion.[46]

[Leiden and Boston 2006], 351-89). He is surely wrong, however, to use this as an argument against the historicity of the three-way factional conflict which is said to have taken place in subsequent decades: it is simply the case that elite political divisions came to the fore (again) when popular unrest subsided.

[46] A detailed discussion of this material in V. GORMAN, *Miletos, the Ornament of Ionia* (Ann Arbor 2001), 101-21, which argues for a (possible) seventh-century date, but dismisses the evidence from Heraclides and does not explain the events.

Late archaic parallels may be the expulsion of "the stout ones" (*pacheis*, i.e. the rich elite) from Naxos "by the people" (Hdt. 5.30) around 500 BC, and the occasion in 485 when "the so-called *gamoroi* ['land-owners'] in Syracuse were driven out by the people and their own slaves, who were called Kyllyrioi". The unusual collaboration between the people and native serfs, and the lack of any resistance when the rich returned with an army from Gela behind them, point to a spontaneous riot by an exploited agricutural population (Hdt. 7.155).[47]

An Athens-style uprising with institutional consequences took place in early sixth-century Megara. "The poor came to the houses of the rich and demanded to be lavishly wined and dined; if they did not get want they wanted they treated them all with violence and *hybris*". There were also notorious incidents in which crowds plundered a temple and drowned a group of sacred envoys and their families *en route* to Delphi, by pushing their wagons into a lake or marsh.[48] It has been attractively suggested that some of these episodes were connected with festivals and rituals which allowed the poor relative freedom of action, and which at times of social tension might get out of hand and take a violent turn. Alternatively, the demand for food and drink may have been an attempt to restore conventional patron-client relations which had increasingly been denied the poor, while the temple treasures and sacred embassy may have been attacked as much-resented forms of elite display of wealth.[49] Additionally,

[47] I have argued in "Conquerors and serfs", in *Helots and Their Masters in Laconia and Messenia*, ed. by S.E. ALCOCK and N. LURAGHI (Cambridge, Mass. 2003), 33-80, that the late archaic period also saw a number of serf populations elsewhere rebelling and regaining their independence.

[48] PLUT. *Aetia Graeca* 18, 295 CD; 59, 304 EF. The slaughter of 'the livestock of the rich' which had earlier made the tyrant Theagenes popular (ARIST. *Pol.* 5,5, 1305 a 24-5) presumably also involved mob action.

[49] Festival connection: S. FORSDYKE, "Revelry and Riot in Archaic Megara", in *JHS* 125 (2005), 73-92; ID., *op.cit.* (n.15), 54-6; cf. D. OGDEN, *op.cit.* (n.44), 98-9, for stoning and scape-goat rituals. Patronage: H. VAN WEES, "The Mafia of Early Greece", in *Organised Crime in Antiquity*, ed. by K. HOPWOOD (London 1999), 34-5; P. MILLETT, *Lending and Borrowing in Ancient Athens* (Cambridge 1991), 48-9.

the people are said to have driven out many members of the elite and confiscated their properties (Arist. *Pol.* 5,5, 1304 b 35-40; cf. 4,15, 1300 a 18-19). But apart from doing deeds of *ad hoc* violence, the Megarians "finally enacted a decree (*dogma*) that they should get back the interest which they had given to their creditors, and they called this 'Return-interest' " (*palintokia*, Plut. *Aetia Graeca* 18, 295 D). This implies a formal political decision and a measure at least as radical as Solon's cancellation of debt. Aristotle accordingly labelled Megara's regime at this time, like Athens' after Solon, a 'democracy'.[50] Whatever that meant in practice, and however the decree was enacted, the tradition implies that popular discontent led to political reform.[51]

Elsewhere, events took a turn which they might also have taken in Athens if Solon had not refused to exploit popular discontent to the full. In the years around 490, a prominent Aeginetan called Nicodromus sought revenge on "the stout ones" (*pacheis*, again) who had once driven him into exile, and staged a coup with the support of "the people", as well as an Athenian army. He failed, however, because his allies arrived a day late, and fled while the forces of the elite captured no fewer than 700 "men of the people", all of whom they executed, even the one who escaped to seek asylum at a temple (Hdt. 6.88-91). A little earlier, Aristodemus of Cumae had followed a similar trajectory with greater success, starting as a leading member of the ruling oligarchy, then putting himself forward as leader of the people against an oppressive regime, and finally having himself appointed to enact a programme of land redistribution and debt cancellation, before being driven out by the returning

[50] ARIST. *Pol.* 5,5, 1304 b 35-40; *Po.* 3, 1448 a 31-33; cf. PLUT. *Aetia Graeca* 17, 295 C; Solon's 'democracy': esp. *Ath.Pol.* 41.2.

[51] S. FORSDYKE, *op.cit.* (n.15), 54-6, and *art.cit.* (n.49), is rightly sceptical of Aristotle and Plutarch's hostile spin on all this and of their notion that it represented 'radical' democracy; given the parallels with Solon, however, we have no reason to deny the possibility of some institutional change and popular involvement in Megara.

oligarchs.[52] Another generation earlier, around 540, Lygdamis, a member of an oligarchic regime in Naxos, led "the masses" in resistance against their "unjust" treatment by his peers; he was later supported in this fight by troops sent by Peisistratus and made himself tyrant of Naxos. He drove many into exile, only to be driven out in turn when the elite returned with the help of a Spartan army.[53] And Lygdamis is only one of several men who are said to have made themselves tyrant with popular support, rather than merely the backing of an elite faction.[54]

Again, the evidence for events in Miletus, Syracuse, Megara, Naxos, Cumae and Aegina, and for 'popular' tyrannies in Athens, Corinth and elsewhere, all comes from authors who may well be guilty of anachronism — even Herodotus, although he was born within only a few years of events in Syracuse and Aegina. Yet their stories contain unique details which show that they derived from traditions which were not purely generic fictions, and, much more importantly, they contain nothing that according to contemporary evidence did not either happen or was at least a real possibility in Athens around 600 BC. And some of the things 'the people' are said to have done — killing or exiling members of the elite and confiscating their property — were already perfectly conceivable for Homer, another century earlier.

Whenever we can tell, 'the people' in these stories, as in Solon's poems, include the lowest economic strata. This is evident from their demands for debt cancellation and land

[52] DION.HAL. 7.3-12; PLUT. *Mulierum virtutes, Xenocrite,* 261 E-262 D; DIOD. 7.10; cf. A. LINTOTT, *op.cit.* (n.13), 65-6 ("the best example we have of a tyrant who brought about a social revolution"). Other possible parallels are 'the people' overthrowing the narrow oligarchy of the Basilidae in Erythrae (ARIST. *Pol.* 5,6, 1305 b 19-22) and the late sixth-century overthrow of the oligarchy of the *hippeis* in Eretria by one of their leading members (5,6, 1306 a 35-36; PLUT. *Amatorius* 17, 760 EF).

[53] ARIST. *Pol.* 5,6, 1305 a 37-42; cf. *Ath.Pol.* 15.3; [ARIST.] *Oec.* 2.2.2, 1346 b 7-13; HDT. 1.64; PLUT. *De Herodoti malignitate* 21, 859 D.

[54] In general, ARIST. *Pol.* 5,10, 1310 b 9-31. Peisistratus: *Ath.Pol.* 13.4, 16. Cypselus: NICOL.DAM. *FGrH* 90 F 57. The validity of these stories is rejected by G. ANDERSON, *art.cit.* (n.17), 194-8, and G. CAWKWELL, *art.cit.* (n.17).

redistribution in Athens, Megara and Cumae, their demands for food and drink in Megara, their unarmed, peasant type of violence in Miletus, and their collaboration with serfs in Syracuse. Their poverty would not prevent such men from joining mobs throwing stones at hated members of the elite, nor would it prevent them from serving as stone-throwers in general levies resisting a coup, at least for a couple of days. They could not, of course, afford to spend much time in assemblies and courts, but on the other hand there was nothing to stop them attending occasionally when temporarily unemployed or briefly at leisure. When our sources speak of the actions or views of the *demos*, therefore, they mean the whole population, not just 'the entire elite', or only a 'middle class' of hoplite farmers, if such a thing existed.[55]

The political interests of the lowest economic strata must have been limited. They could not possibly have aspired to hold political office until the introduction of pay for office in mid-fifth-century Athens — a true turning point for democracy, as Kurt Raaflaub has argued.[56] Solon's reform of the property-classes and the Council, for instance, cannot have affected them at all, and he accordingly makes no mention of it in his poems when he defends himself against popular criticism. Politics at this level would have been for the 15% or less of citizens who could afford to live lives of leisure, not the 85% who toiled as smallholders, sharecroppers or hired labourers.[57] But this is not to say that the latter had no political interests at all. They would suffer along with everyone else if inept military leadership caused great losses or provoked retaliation. And if they endured economic hardships and humiliation, they might well look beyond rioting against their immediate greedy

[55] Which it did not: see H. VAN WEES, *art.cit.* (n.45), and ID., in *War as a Cultural and Social Force*, ed. by L. HANNESTAD and T. BEKKER-NIELSEN (Copenhagen 2001).

[56] *Art.cit.* (n.32); and "Power in the Hands of the People", in *Democracy 2500?* (*op.cit.* n.40), 31-66.

[57] For the estimated proportions, see H. VAN WEES, *art.cit.* (n.45), 360-7.

employers or aggressive neighbours and think about changing the political regime which allowed or encouraged these conditions.

They might support a *coup d'état* by a public figure who had a reputation for treating his workers, debtors and poor citizens generally with moderation, and who promised to stop the abuses perpetrated by his peers. The oracle which described Cypselus as "a boulder which will crush monarchic men and bring justice to Corinth" (Hdt. 5.92.*eta*) would have appealed to them. Equally, they might be interested in legal and other institutional reforms which offered hope of limiting oppression. Among the achievements which Solon listed in his own defence was writing down laws which ensured justice for all classes alike (fr. 36.18-20, cited above). For *Athenaion Politeia*, the 'most democratic' features of Solon's reforms, after the law forbidding enslavement for debt, were two major changes to the judicial system: the introduction of third-party litigation and of appeal to a popular court (9.1), both surely designed to give the common man a better chance of defending himself in court against the depredations of the elite. Not coincidentally, the only institutional reform attributed to Peisistratus is the establishment of local judges, which along with his personal intervention in disputes reduced the scope for abuse of power by local magnates (*Ath.Pol.* 16.5).

Cleisthenes' offer of 'power' to the people, in exchange for protection against Isagoras, continued this pattern. Precisely what his reforms entailed remains disputed, but it seems clear enough that the emphasis lay on changing power relations on the local level of the demes. Whatever it meant for the political elite, this would have appealed to even the poorest citizen as holding out the promise that the power of local elites would be further reduced and abuses of power curtailed. This would surely be enough to win them over to Cleisthenes' side, especially since in return they were only asked to play the role which the people traditionally played in elite rivalry anyway. No radical new behaviour by the people of Athens, then, nor a

fundamentally new approach to politics by Cleisthenes, but an example of how the community's long-established habit of intervening in elite *stasis* and its equally old habit of asserting its own interests, violently if necessary, could combine to produce political change.[58]

In sum, archaic civil conflict was not only endemic and violent but could spread far beyond the political elite to embroil the whole community, in much the same way as classical *stasis* sometimes did. Hence throughout the archaic age efforts were made to reduce social and political tensions, restrict the use of violence, and achieve some measure of internal security.

The search for security

Many institutional developments of the seventh and sixth centuries BC — not least the gradual and limited development of democracy — can be understood as part of an ongoing drive by Greek communities to create greater political stability.

The 'disarmament' of the community, as one might call it, is one significant, but rarely discussed, trend. In Homer's world, men carry swords at all times and often spears as well, but in classical Athens the weapons of choice in private fights and brawls were merely fists, sharp potsherds and blunt sticks. The change was brought about in part by legislation: across Sicily and Southern Italy many Greek cities enacted laws, attributed to archaic lawgivers, which banned citizens from carrying weapons in meetings of council or assembly, or even from carrying them in the *agora* at any time. The Spartans went one better and banned even the carrying of staffs in assembly, which was normal practice in Athens. 'Fashion' also helped this process of internal pacification. Iconographic evidence reveals ever-greater display of wealth by means of elaborate dress from

[58] By contrast the *substance* of Cleisthenes' reforms was indeed radically innovative: see below.

c. 650 onwards, and a corresponding decline in the display of weapons. The assignation of a bodyguard of club-bearers to Peisistratus shows that by the mid-sixth century swords and spears were no longer routinely carried in Athens and that a conscious effort was made to conduct internal conflict without resorting to weapons of war.[59]

Much better-known is of course the 'codification', or at least writing down, of laws regulating procedures for dispute settlement, above all for disputes arising from murder and property rights. The minute detail of the procedures laid down in Draco's homicide law is matched by, for example, the meticulous definition of property boundaries and rights of access to sources of water in Solon's laws. Inheritance laws were prominent everywhere, in order to avoid not only grievances between rival heirs but also the sort of resentment which Hesiod's *Works and Days* vents against the elite judges who handled such inevitably fraught cases.

Then there are the laws regulating the power of, and access to, political office. These are best understood as aiming to minimise elite *stasis* by limiting the amount of formal power and attendant prestige which any single individual could acquire and thus sharing out 'the honours' (*timai*) as widely as possible among the elite. This is true even of Solon's reform of office-holding, which has widely been seen as extending office-holding rights to a previously excluded 'middle class', represented by the property-class of the so-called *zeugitai*. As Lin Foxhall has shown, the *zeugitai* were in fact wealthy men who belonged to the leisured elite. Solon's reforms in this respect therefore served, not to bring the masses into politics, but to reallocate political privileges amongst the elite, and in particular to stop

[59] See H. VAN WEES, "Greeks bearing arms", in *Archaic Greece*, ed. by N. FISHER and H. VAN WEES (London 1998), 333-78. Cf. S.-G. GRÖSCHEL, *Waffenbesitz und Waffeneinsatz bei den Griechen* (Frankfurt 1989), which focuses on the alleged wholesale disarmament of citizens by tyrants — one aspect of later traditions about tyranny which in my view *is* anachronistic (it is notably not attested in Herodotus or Thucydides).

sections of the political elite from trying to monopolise power by claiming hereditary rights to office as "*eupatridae*".[60] Attempts to break out of the limitations imposed by such constitutional law often took the form of tyranny, and indeed one might argue that the concept of the *tyrannos* emerged precisely when and because constitutional limitations to elite power were first being formulated. This in turn gave rise to further attempts to control such ambition by legislation, as in the Athenian law against tyranny (*Ath.Pol.* 16.10) and Solon's *stasis* law.

Alongside such efforts to contain elite *stasis* we find much legislation designed to prevent popular resentment and rioting by limiting economic exploitation and verbal or physical abuse of the poor. In part, this involved direct measures such as Solon's *seisachtheia* and the Megarian *palintokia* which removed major grievances, at least in the short term. Notable indirect measures included sumptuary legislation, which tried to take away the main incentive for exploitation of the poor by forbidding the rich to engage in conspicuous consumption, and Solon's ban on the export of all agricultural products except olive oil, which tried to achieve a similar effect by depriving the rich of the most profitable outlets for their produce. And, as mentioned already, major changes were made to the legal system in Athens to give the poor a better chance of finding legal redress for injustices suffered at the hands of the elite: Solon's popular court of appeal; Peisistratus' local judges; and the so-called law of *hybris*, the remarkable wording of which illustrates the principle of third-party prosecution:

> "If anyone commits *hybris* against another, be it a child or a woman or a man, be it a free person or a slave, or if he does anything illegal against any of these, let any Athenian who has the right to do so bring a prosecution before the Thesmothetai ..." (Dem. 21.47)

[60] L. FOXHALL, "A view from the top", in *The Development of the 'Polis' in Archaic Greece*, ed. by L.G. MITCHELL and P. RHODES (London 1997), 113-36. For this interpretation of Solon's office-holding reforms, see H. VAN WEES, *art.cit.* (n. 45), 367-81.

The message could not be clearer: the whole population of Athens, even the slaves, deserved legal protection against any kind of harm and violence, especially of the humiliating kind which the rich and powerful typically inflicted on the poor and weak.[61]

Most significant for the political development of Greece was the greater power which gradually accrued to popular assemblies, and the formal recognition of their sovereignty. As we have noted, it is a mistake to picture early Greek assemblies as wholly powerless, no more than a token audience for elite decision-making. This image is based on their representation in Homer, which reflects elite wishful thinking rather than contemporary reality, and is corrected elsewhere in the epics by references to forceful self-assertion by the community. When Homer's heroes allocate booty or land or prize shares of food and drink, they are often said to do so on behalf of 'the people', and some sort of passive popular sovereignty is implied. Still, this is some way from full and formal popular sovereignty and majority voting of the kind encountered in classical Athens and elsewhere. The earliest steps in this direction were the formal recognition of (limited) popular sovereignty in the Spartan Great Rhetra (which I would date to c. 600, though most place it c. 650), and the various 'popular' councils and boards of officials first attested at about the same time, which were no doubt still manned by the elite but formally identified themselves as bodies of government which represented the people at large. Why did the elite make such concessions? I would argue that it was precisely because 'the people' had previously been far from powerless and passive and had frequently resorted to extreme violence against their rulers. It was in order to prevent popular sentiment from erupting in such ways that assemblies were given formal powers and procedures to make sure that the wishes of the majority were heard.

[61] For the law and the concept of humiliating aggression, see N.R.E. FISHER, *Hybris* (London 1992).

The most radical and successful attempt to contain the violence of *both* the elite *and* the people was made in Cleisthenes' reforms — even if the political events which inspired them had in themselves not been unusual. Cleisthenes' complex reorganisation of the Athenian tribes broke up the regional divisions which had shaped, or had been shaped by, by elite *stasis* over the previous two to four generations; his devolution of power to the local level — especially, I hope to argue elsewhere, in the least-discussed of his reforms, the replacement of *naukraroi* with demarchs — gave the poor greater protection against abuse; and his creation of a new Council gave national government a new legitimacy as properly representing the whole community. Most ingeniously, the institution of ostracism, whenever exactly that happened, offered a perfect means of leading both elite rivalry and popular discontent into non-violent channels: by allowing the most resented person in the community to be driven out of town by majority vote and return ten years later without loss of property or status, it proved possible to avoid the cycle of violent expulsions and returns which had plagued so many other cities.[62]

Although Athens continued to live in fear of *stasis* throughout the fifth century, political crises passed off with little bloodshed for a century after the reforms. Cleisthenes certainly made Athens "much more democratic" (*Ath.Pol.* 22.1, 41.2) in a number of ways, but we ought to remember above all that his reforms created the political stability which is a precondition of democracy, and that, whatever he did for political equality in Athens, Cleisthenes created a constitution "with a view to harmony and security" (Plut. *Per.* 3.2).

[62] This is the main argument of S. FORSDYKE's book, *op.cit.* (n.15), and it is brilliantly made — although I hope to have shown that the involvement of the people at large is not the entirely new element she argues it is.

DISCUSSION

C. Brélaz: J'ai noté avec intérêt vos propos sur les révoltes populaires dans la cité archaïque et l'impact que ces mouvements de foule ont pu avoir sur la façon dont les aristocrates percevaient le peuple comme force politique. En concédant de nouveaux pouvoirs au *dèmos* afin de prévenir des émeutes, les aristocrates ont reconnu *de facto* le poids sociologique incompressible que représente le peuple en tant que foule, numériquement supérieure et potentiellement violente. Vous avez montré, par ailleurs, l'existence, dans la littérature archaïque, de différents termes dénotant le danger que constituent les troubles civils et de plusieurs expressions qualifiant l'insécurité. Mais qu'en est-il de la notion de sécurité publique? Ce concept est-il alors positivement établi, comme c'est le cas aux périodes postérieures avec les termes d'*asphaleia* et de *phylakè* notamment?

H. van Wees: Despite expressing a fear of insecurity so often and in such varied ways — being 'beyond rescue', having 'no protection', and so forth —, archaic poets do not, I think, formulate a positive concept of security or stability. *Asphalês*, for example, is used by Archilochus of an individual standing "steady" in battle [frr. 114.4; 128.4], but not in an abstract or political sense. This is quite surprising, and I am grateful that you have brought this to my attention. The formulation of an abstract notion of 'security' appears be a new development of the classical period, a reflection perhaps of the growing complexity of political thought.

A. Lintott: Does *eunomia* not cover the concepts of security and stability in the archaic period?

H. van Wees: Yes — I had not thought of that, but you are right that *eunomia* denotes a state of affairs in which internal violence and division are eliminated, as Solon explicitly says: "*Eunomia* ... halts the works of faction (*dichostasis*), stops the anger of harsh rivalry (*eris*)" (fr. 4.37-38). So a lack of conflict was seen as one of the main benefits of *eunomia* and the word therefore implies security, much as the modern phrase 'law and order' does. Still, it is interesting that classical authors developed a concept of 'security' as a distinct goal in its own right, rather than leaving it implicit in broader notions such as *eunomia* or *homonoia*.

A. Lintott: You argued against my view that the word *stasis* includes non-violent political opposition as well as civil war. Yet Herodotus places *stasis* in a sequence after 'feuds' but before 'murders', and Theognis likewise distinguishes *stasis* from killings. Does this not suggest that a political conflict could be called *stasis* even before it turned violent?

H. van Wees: I must concede that it is hard to tell what kind of opposition is conveyed by the word *stasis*. It is true that Theognis and Herodotus present murders as a result of *stasis* rather than as an integral part of it. By the same token, however, Herodotus presents *stasis* as a step beyond a 'great feud', which in turn is presumably already one step beyond routine political opposition. Perhaps the close association between these three terms is more significant than the precise sequence in which they appear. Solon's law demanding the taking up of arms in case of *stasis* does seem to me to show that we cannot be dealing with simple day-to-day political disagreement, but beyond that we can only guess at what point on a sliding scale of political friction a situation became tense enough to qualify as *stasis*. If it did not take an actual assassination, I imagine that it must have taken at least minor acts of violence — beatings, woundings, seizures of property — before a state of *stasis* was felt to exist.

A. Chaniotis: I wonder to what extent the insecurity and violence which you have described in your paper is reflected in sources in which we might expect it to be reflected. For example, I cannot recall any allusions to persons killed during internal strife in epitaphs of the archaic and classical period. Is this because this type of commemoration (*mnesikakein*, as it were) seemed inappropriate? There are also hardly any relevant monuments (e.g., the statue of the tyrant-slayers in Athens). On the other hand, we do find at least indirect references in other sources. A scolion sung in classical Athens by aristocrats, for instance, recalled their battle against Peisistratus at Leipsydrion; the murder of Hipparchus during the Panathenaic festival at the Leokoreion (an Athenian *lieu de mémoire*) indirectly transformed the festival into a commemorative anniversary of the killing of the tyrant and attached a new memory to the Leokoreion. I have the impression that some sacred regulations, such as those aiming at the limitation of supplication in sanctuaries, or the idea that the killing of a tyrant or an oligarch does not cause miasma (e.g., in relevant laws in Athens and Eretria), or the unique prohibition against traitors entering a sanctuary in Eresos, are directly connected with experiences Greek cities had of political violence and its attendant problems.

H. van Wees: The rarity of commemoration of civil war is perhaps not surprising, since, as you rightly suggest, it is not generally regarded as appropriate to perpetuate the memory of civil war. Monuments to internal conflict might actively encourage its continuation. It has been thought that the epitaph of the Athenian Kroisos, for example, commemorated his death in the battle of Pallene against Peisistratos. But if so the occasion of his death is glossed over with a generic, heroic allusion to his falling "among the *promachoi*". A recent suggestion is that archaic monuments referring to Athenians as *eupatridai* allude specifically to their opposition to the tyrants [A. Duplouy, "Les Eupatrides d'Athènes, 'nobles défenseurs de leur

patrie'", in *Cahiers Glotz* 14 (2003), 7-22], but this is still not explicit commemoration of civil conflict.

Religious institutions which inhibit violence are of great interest, and I am grateful for your references. I should have considered this religious dimension which can significantly enrich the general picture of widespread attempts to reduce internal violence. Sacred laws will no doubt repay further study in this context.

A. Chaniotis: Are the phenomena which you have described more common in big cities? Can they be regarded as the result of urbanisation processes and the movement of population to urban centres? Note the reference to *astoi* in Solon and the contemptuous remarks of Theognis concerning the savage rustics who have taken over the city.

H. van Wees: The relation between civil conflict and urbanisation is certainly another topic which deserves more thought. On the one hand, one might think that life in larger, denser settlements provides more scope for conflict; on the other hand, in such settlements it is all the more important that people cooperate, and one might imagine greater efforts being made to avoid open antagonism. So it is not immediately obvious that urbanisation would necessarily increase conflict amongst the political elite. If the process involved the movement of large numbers of agricultural labourers and smallholders into an urban settlement, the likelihood of popular riots and lynchings would probably increase. Theognis' complaint about an influx of 'savage rustics', however, does not, I think, refer to the formation of an agricultural proletariat in town, because these men are said to have become Megara's new upper class, after all. Theognis' resentment focuses on upward social mobility rather than geographical mobility. Later stories do tell of Peisistratus and Cleisthenes of Sicyon finding ways to keep the poor outside the city, which suggests anxiety about the role of the agricultural labour force, but whether this represents archaic or classical anxiety is hard to tell.

Most of the cities which feature in my account were indeed large — Athens, Syracuse, Miletus, Mytilene, and Naxos, which had the same number of citizens as Sparta around 500 BC, according to Herodotus [5.30.4; 7.234.2] — but that probably just reflects the fact that we have little information about the smaller and less powerful cities. I can think of two counter-examples: archaic Megara was a relatively small community, long settled in scattered villages, with a notably violent history of civil conflict, while classical Athens was the largest city in Greece, yet its level of political violence was relatively low.

W. Riess: You rightly stress the continuity of endemic insecurity from archaic to classical times. I wonder, however, if we cannot discern shifts in the meaning and phenomenology of *stasis*. What are, in your opinion, the most significant changes, if any, between the two epochs with regard to social unrest and political violence?

H. van Wees: So far as the meaning of *stasis* is concerned, I was struck by the very close similarity between some of Theognis' warnings and the famous observations on *stasis* made by Herodotus and Thucydides, and on that basis I would say that at the level of concepts the continuities are strong and clear. More detailed lexicographical analysis will no doubt reveal subtle differences, however.

The nature of actual political conflict may well have changed more than its vocabulary did. The parties to classical *stasis* are usually presented in our sources as having explicit political agendas, programmes for oligarchic or democratic reform. It seems likely that such articulate and complex political goals featured less in archaic than in classical civil conflict. When the author of *Athenaion Politeia* attributed distinct constitutional goals to each of the factions in mid-sixth-century Athens, he was surely projecting back a typical feature of classical *stasis*. But I am inclined to see this as a change of emphasis, a change in how political rivalry was legitimised, rather than a fundamental difference.

In both archaic and classical Greece, city politics were dominated by two or three major factions, some of which from time to time tried to win the support of the wider community. In archaic Greece, factions seem generally not to have proposed structural change to the system of government but merely claimed that, if granted power and honour, they would govern fairly and to the benefit of everyone. In classical Greece, the agenda was less personal and less vague insofar as each side justified its existence by advocating a specific form of government, but ultimately these programmes still served to win power and honour for the elite factions involved, whether they called themselves oligarchs, democrats or 'moderates'.

So I will concede that the apparent differences between the archaic and classical incarnations of *stasis* are not only a reflection of the changing nature of our sources but also of a real change in political self-representation, at least.

W. Riess: Concerning Athens you speak of the fear of *stasis* in the fifth century. Did the fear of *stasis* subside in the fourth century? Thinking of the strong discourse on tyranny and the Eucrates-decree, for example, I wonder if the fear of *stasis*, if not the real threat of *stasis*, was still lurking in the background during the fourth century BC.

H. van Wees: You are very probably right. Certainly ferocious civil wars continued to erupt in many other cities throughout the fourth century, and the threat must have remained quite evident to the Athenians. The rhetorical emphasis on harmony between rich and poor in the Attic orators suggests that civic unity was not something which could be taken for granted even in Athens itself.

R. MacMullen: I think I can see from your description a middle element in states. Sometimes you point to it expressly. At the top are the dangerous people, members of the leadership stratum who are at the moment 'rogue' factors. At the bottom

are the masses, sometimes appearing to act *en masse*, but rarely. In between you mention magistrates, sometimes, or popular leaders who appear not to be of the 'nobility'.

I wonder whether the existence of such in-between power brokers or mediators does not imply the existence of dependency-groups reaching down into the masses, like *clientelae*. Do we hear of such things? Perhaps you could shed light on this 'middle'.

H. van Wees: You identify two elements which complicate my picture of archaic politics a good deal, and which I should have discussed. I imagine archaic Greek society as quite starkly polarised between rich and poor, with so few in the middle that one cannot really speak of a 'middle class', but there does seem to be a 'middle' group in a different sense. The story of events in Athens in 508 BC implies that numerous councillors (and presumably some magistrates) were not closely affiliated with either Cleisthenes' or Isagoras' factions, yet they must have belonged to the leisure class, since they were able to serve on the Council in the days before pay for office. So if this story is at all accurate, we have an elite 'middle' of sorts, by the end of the sixth century at any rate, which might act as an intermediary in political conflict.

Relations of dependency must have been important in archaic Greece, although they are rarely mentioned and evidently highly informal, unlike the Roman *clientela*. Their scale and nature are hard to determine, and their role in *stasis* even harder. The 700 households which formed Cleisthenes' faction were presumably bound together by favours and the like, but since the total number of those embroiled in factional rivalry amounted to no more than 3% of the citizen population, they probably did not include many poor men economically dependent on their patrons. Perhaps poor dependents were occasionally used as 'muscle' in elite rivalry. I suppose I would have to argue that the bulk of the lower classes were not so closely dependent on their patrons and

employers that they could not intervene as an independent force at times.

As for the other kind of *stasis*, the popular uprising, I have argued elsewhere [van Wees, *art.cit.* (n.49)] that it might be sparked off by the *decline* of patronage. The seventh-century elite was increasingly reluctant to extend patronage, preferring to exploit their labour force to the hilt. Rioting and agitation for the cancellation of debt and redistribution of land was often the result.

P. Ducrey: Apart from internal threats to security there were of course external threats as well. I wonder if you think that such internal and external threats have any bearing on yet another major phenomenon of the archaic age: colonization?

H. van Wees: Yes indeed. Both are a major driving force behind overseas settlement, I believe, and I am glad that you have given me the opportunity to make this point. A number of well-known stories explicitly identified certain groups of overseas settlers as men who left their cities because they had been defeated in civil or external wars, or wished to avoid fighting such wars, or were simply not satisfied with their social and political status at home. The Samians rebelling against Polycrates spring to mind, or the legendary Parthenioi and the historical Dorieus leaving Sparta for the West, or the Phocaeans and Teans escaping from the conquering Persians to Sardinia and Abdera. Stories about murderers going into exile and founding new towns abroad point in the same direction, even if they also carry the sort of symbolic meanings analysed by Carol Dougherty. And it is very tempting to connect the vast number of overseas settlements said to have been founded by Milesians with the brutal *stasis* which tore Miletus apart for two generations, according to Herodotus.

Even if one thinks of overseas settlement as 'colonization' in the modern sense, as a state-organised enterprise, the

establishment of a 'colony' to resolve an internal conflict seems a plausible enough scenario. If one follows Robin Osborne in assuming that many archaic overseas settlements were in fact *private* enterprises, then it becomes even more likely that that refugees from all kinds of internal conflict and war provided a large proportion of settlers. Internal conflict ought to be considered an engine of overseas settlement at least as powerful as trade or landhunger.