

Notes on Quiz #4: Athens and the Art of Society

1. Stages of Athens's political development included all of the following EXCEPT:

- a. Harsh penalties under the laws of Draco
- b. Solon's class-related reforms
- c. Pisistratus killing everyone and painting the statues in blood
- d. Cleisthenes's reorganization of the tribes

Pisistratus established a successful and bloodless tyranny, which involves many popular reforms. His rule lasted long enough for him to pass the leadership of Athens to his sons, who were not as favored by the fates.

2. Solon wrote, "I took my stand with strong shield covering both sides, allowing neither unjust dominance." Which sides was he talking about?

- a. Sparta and Athens
- b. rich and poor
- c. Greece and Persia
- d. mortal and divine

Solon had the trust of both aristocrats and the commoners and so was able to enact reforms that benefitted Athens as a whole. He weakened the power of local and family influence by making participation in Athenian politics dependent on wealth, not blood, creating new classes that cut across local and family loyalties in order to strengthen Athenian unity and the prosperity that would come from a stronger and more vibrant unified economy. He strengthened Athenian agricultural production and relieved the debt slavery crisis that was crippling the poor peasantry. He fought not for the poor against the rich (as with the tyrants), or vice versa, but for a stronger Athens.

3. When Athens received a sudden windfall from the silver mines of Laurium, they spent the money on

- a. triremes
- b. theater-building
- c. jewelry
- d. goats

At the urging of Themistocles, the Laurium windfall was spent on triremes to prepare Athens for the resurgence of Persian aggression, which was likely to come by land and by sea. This crucial decision resulted in Athens being able to establish itself as a naval power and as a viable rival to the military hegemony of Athens, in turn making possible the Delian League and the so-called Athenian Empire.

4. In Athens, the conspiracy of Cylon ended with
- a. a successful coup and a long tyranny by Cylon
 - b. the murder of Cylon's followers, who had sought sanctuary in the temple of Athena
 - c. the intervention of Sparta, who took the citadel of Athens by force
 - d. the treachery of Baltar and the flight of Adama

Cylon was a popular Athlete who sought to take power in Athens. When the coup failed, Cylon surrendered to the archons and his followers sought refuge in the temple of Athena, descending by a string tied to the statue of the goddess. When the string snapped, the archon Megacles used the "rejection" of the goddess as a pretext to slaughter the supplicants. This sacrilege was held against Megacles and his clan, the Alcmaeonids, a cloud that dogged later extremely prominent clan members like Cleisthenes and Pericles. [Answer d is incorrect because the events being referenced took place on Caprica, not in Athens.]

5. The Greeks won all of the following battles against Persia EXCEPT:

- a. the Battle of Marathon
- b. the Battle of Thermopylae
- c. the Battle of Salamis
- d. the Battle of Plataea

(a) The battle of Marathon saw Athens (without Sparta) defeat a much larger Persian army on the beaches of Marathon in Attica. It demonstrated that the Persians could be beaten despite their vast numbers and Persia's vast resources, and in particular it could be beaten by the free Greek fighting for freedom against disenfranchised Persians fighting for a despot. (b) At Thermopylae, a narrow pass into the heart of mainland Greece, 300 Spartans held the narrow pass to the last man before being overrun and defeated, forever remembered as the ideal of bravery. (c) At Salamis, the Athenian navy under Themistocles thoroughly defeated the larger Persian navy through clever tactics. This marks the beginning of Athens as a naval military power, and thus of the Athenian navy as a rival to the Spartan hoplite army as the protector of Greece. (d) At Plataea, a combined Greek land army led by the Spartans defeated the Persians, forcing them into retreat and ending the Persian invasions.

Optional Extra Credit

- EC. Of the leaders discussed in this chapter, who stands out to you as having a particularly interesting or important legacy? Why do you think so?

This is a subjective answer, potentially involving Theseus, Draco, Solon, Pisistratus, Cleisthenes, Themistocles, and others.