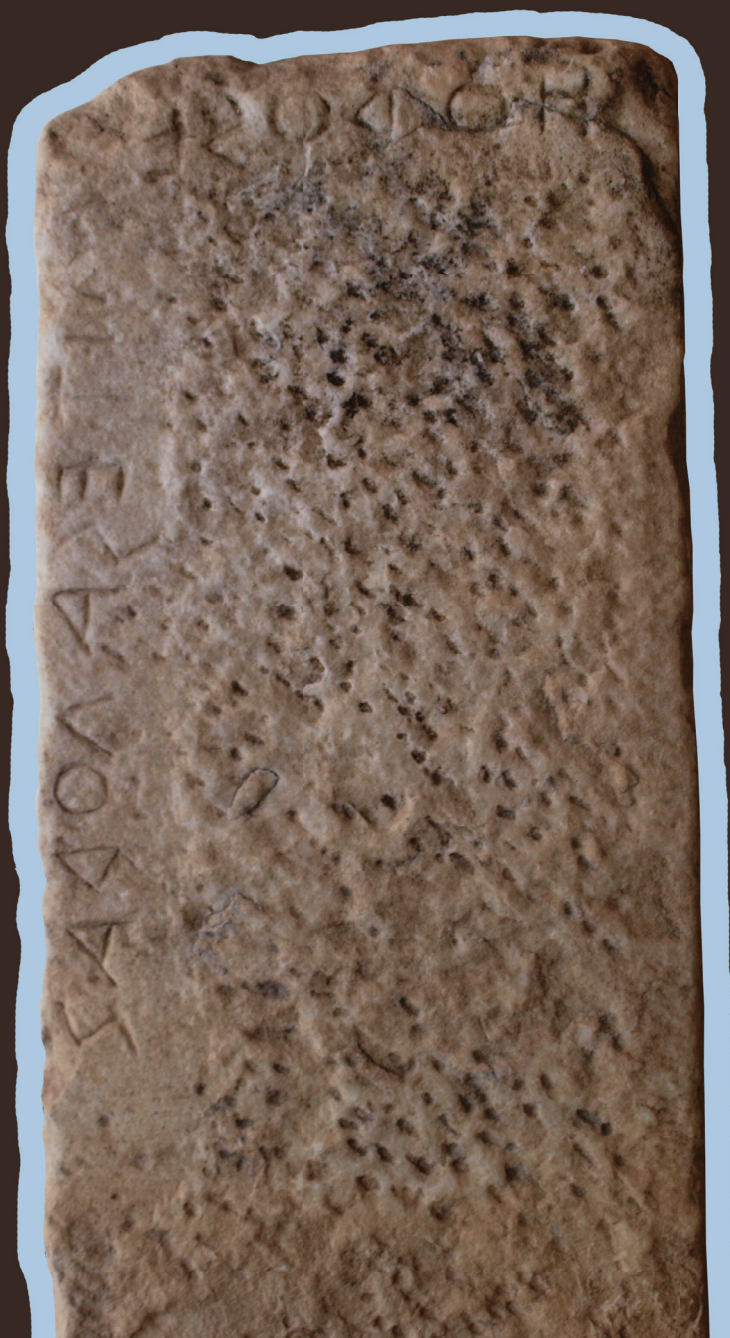


ANCIENT BOUNDARIES AND THE  
ECOLOGY OF STONE

# H O R O S



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POTTER



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Fig. 7. ΟΡΟΣ ΚΕΡΑΜΕΙΚΟΥY 'Oros of the Kerameikos' (4<sup>th</sup> c BC). Found outside the archaeological site in the area between Hippias Kolonos and Plato's Academy. [I 322] Photograph by M. Goutsourela, 2013. Rights belong to the Kerameikos Museum, Athens. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development (H.O.C.R.E.D.).

# 7. Solon's Petromorphic Biopolitics

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ὁ ὄρος-*decision of a magistrate [...] standard, measure [...] end, aim.*<sup>1</sup>

ἐγὼ δὲ τούτων ὥσπερ ἐν μεταχμίῳ  
ὄρος κατέστην.

*I stood between them like a horos in no man's land.*<sup>2</sup>

Solon brought Athens out of a situation of *stasis*, or so he claims. In order to appreciate the further implications of Solon's intervention into the Athenian *polis*, the word '*stasis*' should be understood in both its political, and physical sense. That Athens was caught up in civil war (*stasis*) provides the justification for the intervention of legal reforms instituted by Solon. However, that a stable state of equilibrium where the equal strength of opposing forces cancels one another out (*stasis*) is not economically profitable or beneficial to expansionist political and imperial policies should be the key lesson learnt and adopted into the normal, everyday functioning and theoretical constructs of the city-state. To put it otherwise, deconstructing *stasis* becomes the main tenet of economic, political power.

Solon is often championed as the liberator of the poor, introducing the basic legislative structures that would eventually bring about notions of equality and freedom in the Athenian state. That this was not the case at all and that this is a reconstruction developed to the benefit of the later constitutional powers, keeping Solon on their side, is certainly possible. Solonic Athens is not normally understood as the beginning of a gradual institutionalised breakdown of human relations, but that does

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1 LS: 1256.

2 Ar.Ath.12.5

not mean it was not. As an economic and legal project sometimes called 'oligarchy,' other times 'democracy,' the city of Athens used multiple resources in its creation of a mythological political heritage: the myth of autochthony is one example and Solon may well be another. Although the name changed, with the numerical fluctuation of those present in the spaces of public decision-making, the structures that supported these systems remained the same, and have largely remained the same since. Law, economics, the dissemination of information and knowledge discourses from the natural sciences to the human sciences, all enforced limits that kept humans at an increasing distance from other humans and ensured the domination of some over the many, be this through rhetoric, demagoguery, legislative authority or the implementation of novel laws.

The ancient polis well deserves its fame, because here, perhaps exclusively at that time throughout the world humans had developed a political and philosophical justification and methodology for human autarchy and the domination of the human over the nonhuman. This permitted the almost total eclipse of the nonhuman in the intellectual and emotional life of the human. Humans were separated from all other beings, both practically and legally. And while the definition of the human might have been officially inclusive, in a practical sense the citizen was the active autonomous subject, responsible and dominant over excluded others, from women, children, slaves, sometimes foreigners, to animals, plants and land, as well as anything else falling in between these categories.

The development of the *polis* as an institution connected speech (*parrhesia*, freedom of speech of its citizens) with exchange (market-based valuation of goods, animals and people as objects to be bought and sold). And it did so under the umbrella of a politically organised community of consenting mature males of a particular mythically-based ethnicity and caste not only coinciding but providing the basis for the exclusion of other models of organisation, including religious, sexual, cultural and ecological. Rather than celebrating the Ancient Greek state as the origins of 'democratic' systems of government we should condemn it as the cause of the institutionalised conspiracy between economic interests, elite classes and political and legal structures of control over and against the animistic interactivity and cohabitation of all beings within the cosmic order.

In this chapter, I will provide a number of examples of the changes that occurred under the legislative authority of Solon restricting the movement of women in particular and their activity as the primary economic actors. I also refer to laws that intervened within the household, destabilising it and making it an area subject to the laws of the state, isolating it as the 'private sphere' as opposed to the 'public'; such as the law that recognised the frequency of the sexual act as constituting the basis of legally binding marriage, and laws that regulated the outcome of sexual reproduction. Human biological processes are made the subject of law, not just culturally organised by religious or ritual activities as they were previously, but legally and economically mediated by the state. Economic and biological productivity are defined as something that can be organised by the state and not left up to nature, instinct or mutual relations of communal life. With Solon's reforms, law becomes proscriptive, discriminatory and deeply invasive, and it could be argued has remained so since.

Is Solon's legacy not a legal code disseminating equality, but in fact the active desecration of former kinship relations, and in their place the institution of intrusive and aggressive policies that permit public bodies to increasingly encroach upon the private life of the family and the individual? Solon's reforms can be understood first and foremost as a problem of limits. Here I argue that Solon's reforms opened up a new set of relations between the human being, the human body and the earth, a relation that instigated a principle of unlimited productivity and use both of the body and of the earth for economic processes and purposes. Foucault argued that the analysis of power must take into account not only discursive practices but also how the materiality of the body is regulated through its movements and 'according to a system of constraints and privations obligations and prohibitions.'<sup>3</sup> Something analogous can be understood as happening here. The body of women, men and children is being used as the text of the law, through which law communicates itself. Merchant investigated how women lost ground in the sphere of production and reproduction during the transition to early modern capitalism.<sup>4</sup> Here I present the argument that it is possible to see a similar recasting of women's activities as early as the sixth century

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3 Foucault (1991) 11.

4 Merchant (1990) 149ff.

BC. Not only was the development of an economic system of exchange coincident with the elision of the value of women's roles and bodies for and within the common space of the community, but it was also coincident with the development of autocratic systems of legislation and the shift to centralised government.

Market-based economic exchange and city-state institutions were founded upon the domination of novel notions of production over earlier systems of household production and reproduction. Foucault shows 'how the deployments of power are directly connected to the body—to bodies, functions, physiological processes, sensations, and pleasure.'<sup>5</sup> Following Foucault, this analysis seeks to make visible the systems of power in which the biological and the historical are 'bound together in an increasingly complex fashion in accordance with the development of [ancient] technologies of power that take life as their objective.'<sup>6</sup> The political use of the human body, both in a passive and active capacity as well as the reproductive capacity is subjected to the laws of the centralised state, so that reproduction also reproduces the enforcement of law. And as children are born into socio-politically constituted spaces, the laws become naturalised, passing from generation to generation the governed life comes to be taken for granted as part of the biological landscape, as much as of the political.

The language used during Solon's legal transformations is significant and casts his reforms as deeply involved with the breaking and making of limits, or determinations. Solon casts himself both as abolishing the ancient *horoi* and the customs bound to them, and presents himself as a new *horos* standing amongst the Athenian people.

## In Bed with the Law

Up until now we've been balancing upon the boundary without actually assuming the position and certainly without having crossed over to one side or the other. Why? For fear of what lies on either side? Or is it because this is the very position/non-position from which differences are decided and definition given? The question that will draw this archaic example of a stone to a close is; what became of the *horos* in the politics

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5 Foucault (1978) 152.

6 Ibid.

of the state and what were the economic repercussions of politicising the *horos*? The following laws referred to should all be thought of as intervening in the most basic functions of human social and biological life. They should also be thought of as potentially modified in practise, instituted in fact just not by Solon, or as not quite the same as the actual laws in effect.<sup>7</sup> The exact nature of the laws that are here discussed, and their implementation in the archaic *polis* is not always known, though their retention in the writings of classical authors suggests that they were in one way or another politically useful even if for later times and other authors.<sup>8</sup> That we today base our concepts of government upon those of Ancient Greece, should alert us to the ongoing presence of these kinds of interventions and their insidious character particularly given the fact that for the most part the Greek *polis* is celebrated as privileging 'freedom,' 'equality,' and 'justice,' rather than the oppressive legislative control and surveillance of social and biological functions, as we see here.

To begin with, the demonstration of mourning rituals was quickly clamped down on by Solon. Whether this was to the disadvantage of aristocrats or women or a heartless attack upon the dead remains unclear. Aristocrats doubtless exhibited grander funerals and could have been seen as presenting a threat to the state, while women are said to have been disorderly during such times, and so a crackdown on their expressions of grief would serve to remind them of their social propriety.<sup>9</sup> It seems to me that both these explanations miss the more sinister aspect of Solon's laws restricting mourning. Plutarch tells us that, amongst his reforms, Solon enacted a law restricting demonstrative mourning at funerals.

ἐπέστησε δὲ καὶ ταῖς ἐξόδοις τῶν γυναικῶν καὶ τοῖς πένθεσι καὶ  
ταῖς ἑορταῖς νόμον ἀπείργοντα τὸ ἄτακτον καὶ ἀκόλαστον [...] ἀμυχὰς δὲ κοπτομένων καὶ τὸ θρηνεῖν πεποιημένα καὶ τὸ κωκύειν

7 Ruschenbusch's collection of Solonic laws remains the main compendium of fragments, and he discusses the plausibility of Plutarch's version, see Ruschenbusch (1966) 31–42. However, on the accuracy of the laws collected by Ruschenbusch, see Adele Scafuro 'Identifying Solonian Laws' in Blok and Lardinois (2006) 175–176.

8 For a discussion on the probability of Solon's laws, see Harris (2006) 3ff; and on the political motivation for altering Solon's verses, see Lardinois 'Have We Solon's Verses?' in Blok, J. and A. Lardinois (2006) 15–38.

9 'Women were apt to flock to the funerals and graves of people outside their own family.' Shapiro (1991) 630; 'the task of mourning the dead fell chiefly to the women, whose displays of grief, unless checked, might amount to a social nuisance.' Garland (1989) 5.



ἄλλον ἐν ταφαῖς ἐτέρων ἀφεῖλεν. ἐναγίζειν δὲ βοῦν οὐκ εἶασεν, οὐδὲ συντιθέναι πλέον ἱματίων τριῶν, οὐδ' ἐπ' ἀλλότρια μνήματα βαδίζειν χωρὶς ἐκκομιδῆς. ὧν τὰ πλεῖστα καὶ τοῖς ἡμετέροις νόμοις ἀπηγόρευται: πρόσκειται δὲ τοῖς ἡμετέροις ζημιουῖσθαι τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιοῦντας ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικονόμων, ὡς ἀνάνδρους καὶ γυναικώδεσι τοῖς περὶ τὰ πένθη πάθεισι καὶ ἀμαρτήμασιν ἐνεχομένους.

He also subjected the public appearances of the women, their mourning and their festivals, to a law which did away with disorder and licence [...] Laceration of the flesh by mourners, and the use of set lamentations, and the bewailing of any one at the funeral ceremonies of another, he forbade. The sacrifice of an ox at the grave was not permitted, nor the burial with the dead of more than three changes of raiment, nor the visiting of other tombs than those of their own family, except at the time of interment. Most of these practices are also forbidden by our laws, but ours contain the additional proviso that such offenders shall be punished by the board of censors for women, because they indulge in unmanly and effeminate extravagances of sorrow when they mourn.<sup>10</sup>

Plutarch would have us believe that Solon enacted a whole spate of laws that restricted the movement and expression of women in public, the exhibition of grief, given the importance funeral rituals held in the lives of women, must have been chief one amongst them. On Attic and Athenian funerary plaques and vases, detailed pictures of lament are found of women acting as professional mourners, so evidence suggests that mourning was the traditional role of women.<sup>11</sup> However, the last sentence of Plutarch could also suggest the earlier involvement of men, which was however no longer condoned; by the time legislation was laid restricting mourning, lament was considered the role of women, otherwise men who indulged in what were deemed excessive forms of grief would not be required to be sent to the women's council.<sup>12</sup>

If, as argued in the previous chapter, women were caught up in a structure of ancient law that bound together responsibility and care for

10 Plut.*Sol.*21.4–5. tr. Rackham.

11 Horst-Warhaft (1992) 103, 113–114; Alexiou (2002) 6.

12 For men lamenting, see Creon lamenting the death of his son, *Antigone* (1261–1346), Theseus mourning the death of Phaedra, *Hippolytus* (811–873), Orestes, Electra and the chorus singing a kommos for Agamemnon in the *Choephoroi*, and the *kommos* that ends the Persians. Webster (1970) 114, 127; Arnott (1989) 34.; Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 86–91.

the dead with an economics of kinship rather than exchange, then the restricting of funeral rites and rituals may have gone to the heart of such a social structure. It is significant, here, that women should bear both the burden and the responsibility for representing grief in the community, and that expressions of grief were a communal, and not merely a private matter. The dead continued to belong to kin after burial, whether in a good sense 'as tomb cult kept kin and group allegiance alive' or in a bad sense, as death was a 'source of pollution, which, if not properly handled, could cause various disasters.'<sup>13</sup> For these reasons, Blok states, 'the early funerary laws reveal a common purpose, albeit with differences in details: they regulated the relations between the living and the dead. They did so in three ways: they regulated behaviour at various stages of the funeral, they restricted the (value of) goods put into the grave, and they regulated the sacrifices at the tomb.'<sup>14</sup> Mourning and the expression of loss was one of the most significant activities in the archaic community and one which, as the city develops into an economically productive state, above all else suffered restrictions and was limited. I suggest that these restrictions reduced the arena in which goods and actions were exempted from the economy, or went out of circulation, in order to raise the political to the main organising structure of economic affairs, and eventually permitted the exponential expansion of the economic and the administration of the realm of productivity.

There is without doubt truth to Denise Ackermann's suggestion that Solon's restrictions on, particularly women's, ritual mourning and lamentation were politically motivated: 'traditionally lament was expressed by pulling hair, lacerating cheeks and beating breasts. Such behaviour could amount to a social menace and disturb the public order. Although Solon did not do away with these gestures entirely, he restricted them.'<sup>15</sup> That funerals stirred up feelings that were not easily quashed or channelled into useful political or economic activities is surely one among the reasons motivating the reforms. But that it is merely a question of the political preference for 'order, not chaos, cooperation not vengeance,' is I think a serious oversight as to the insidious nature

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13 Josine Blok 'Solon's Funerary Laws: Questions of Authenticity and Function' in Blok and Lardinois (2006) 230.

14 Ibid.

15 Ackermann, 'Lamenting Tragedy from "the Other Side"' in Cochrane (2000) 213–241.

of policy reforms within states when they begin to intrude into and censor culturally and religiously sanctioned behaviour.<sup>16</sup> Lament was indeed tamed by the state, though this is not something that happened overnight. But what was the political danger that appeared to adhere to mourning? What exactly was the core of the problem? Why mourning practices posed a political challenge to the status quo remains a matter of conjecture. I can only suggest that mourning rituals, and the focus upon the household that came with it as the main locale of ritual performance, challenged on the one hand the political dominance of the public sphere and on the other the drive to economic profit, where mourning meant the cessation or interruption of economic activities.

It is clear, however, that the political reforms of Solon were also motivated by the political advantage of controlling the different gender roles expressed within the city. Many of the reforms were undoubtedly sexually discriminative; though as regards mourning it is disputable whether the effect was the restriction of one sex more than the other. As I argue, however, this stress on the restriction of certain sexual activities and the suppression of particular social expressions of sexuality were not ends in themselves. Rather, the aim was (and still is) to modify and even curtail the social power of the different sexes in order to promulgate an alternative economics that was reliant upon productivity and profiteering taking precedence over other affiliations and identities. Henceforth, and in spite of its etymology, economics was not a household affair, it no longer came within the purview of women, and the exteriorising of economic effectively raised productivity into the arena of the state. All this was done under the auspices and often the nomenclature of the traditional religious institutions of the city, which were the main authorities and the centralised state apparatus of laws, procedures and offices, there to organise and 'oversee an increasingly monetized form of sacred wealth.'<sup>17</sup>

With Solon law enters the bedroom and I doubt his presence heightened libido. He ensures the legal imperative that an heiress be approached with sexual intent by her husband 'at least three times a month,' he publishes laws on prostitution and adultery, prohibits dowries amongst the lower classes, bans pederasty among slaves, and he limits a woman's

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16 Ibid.

17 Bubelis (2016) 5.

excursion beyond the house at night with the qualification that she travel by lighted wagon and carry no more than three cloaks and a quantity of victuals to the value of one obol.<sup>18</sup> It is easy to read into these restrictions a policy that was intended to do no more than reduce a woman's (and a slave's) role in public affairs. However, given the gradual rise of market-based policies and productions over the last two thousand odd years, as well as the ongoing legislative attacks upon individual legal, social and economic autonomy all the while accompanied by a parallel discourse championing sexual freedoms, I think it is permissible to interpret Solon's laws as the beginning of a chronic manipulation of public and sexual discourse while negotiating new forms of political and economic control. As obvious as this may appear to me today, I work however under a dimmed light of interpretation, as the effects and reactions to such evidently sex-oriented legislation are still not commented upon in the literature, no doubt for good reason: either the laws had the desired effect, or unable to be properly enforced they remained a weak spot in the new regime.

As much as we might wish such debates were resolved or simply not an issue, these laws, regardless of their subsequent validity and enforceability, must not be permitted to recede into the background when we consider the novelty of the Solonian city-state. They are foundational for the democracy, as much at least as are Solon's economic and representative reforms. And yet, given the impossibility of privileging any one interpretation unreservedly over another, these laws will not be engaged with in order to present any steadfast image of the sexual relations in the ancient city and the question of the body's place in these reforms will remain for the moment as a tantalising morsel for later consumption. Instead, I will break with the typical categorisation of these reforms in order to bring a certain economic silhouette into outline, a boundary that might resonate with the previous chapters and draw us into a complex of questions, that far from being conclusive will actually provide the profile for a new method of questioning and provide the basis for the explosion of Athens onto the economic scene.

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18 ἐξιέναι μὲν ἱματίων τριῶν μὴ πλεόν ἔχουσας, μηδὲ βρωτὸν ἢ ποτὸν πλείονος ἢ ὀβολοῦ φερομένην, μηδὲ κἀνητα πηχθαίου μείζονα, μηδὲ νύκτωρ πορεύεσθαι πλὴν ἀμάξης κομιζομένην λύχνου προφαίνοντος. *Plut.Sol.*20–24.

## Reframing Biological Boundaries

According to Aristotle's account, Solon resolved a state of civil war, *stasis*, in the city of Athens that had broken out between the aristocrats, or landed gentry and the rest of the population, including presumably, the disenfranchised poor.<sup>19</sup> As Aristotle presents him, Solon, in the grand tradition of political and legislative authority, did not belong to the latter party.

ἦν δ' ὁ Σόλων τῆ μὲν φύσει καὶ τῆ δόξῃ τῶν πρώτων, τῆ δ' οὐσία καὶ τοῖς πράγμασι τῶν μέσων.<sup>20</sup>

Solon was in his nature and in reputation of the first rank, but in wealth and position belonged to the middle classes.

He was, as Plutarch says, 'a man of the people and of the middle rank' (δημοτικὸς ὢν καὶ μέσος).<sup>21</sup> Solon is most famed for a reappraisal of representation based upon property in order to construct a class-system that, as the representative democratic myth goes, enfranchised a larger proportion of the populous while leaving the holding of offices within the jurisdiction of the wealthy. Although the labouring class was granted perhaps a degree of power by their permission to act as jury-members in the courts of law, the new system did not bring about the redistribution of property and universal equality that Plutarch suggests the lower class had hoped for (γῆς ἀναδασμὸν οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἐλπίσασιν αὐτοῖς, οὐδὲ παντάπασιν).<sup>22</sup> Aristotle also describes the people's hopes for a redistribution of land,

καὶ πάλιν δ' ἐτέρωθί που λέγει περὶ τῶν διανείμασθαι τὴν γῆν βουλομένων: "οἱ δ' ἐφ' ἀρπαγαῖσιν ἦλθον, ἐλπίδ' εἶχον ἀφνεάν, κἀδόκουν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ὄλβον εὐρήσειν πολύν,

And again in a different place he says about those who wish to divide up the land: They that came on plunder bent, were filled with over-lavish hope, each and all imagining that they would find abundant wealth.<sup>23</sup>

19 For debate on these divisions and Solon's institution of the festival *Genesia*, see Bubelis (2016) 6; 92f.

20 *Ar.Ath.*5.3.

21 *Plut.Sol.*16.2.

22 *Ibid.*16.1; *Ar.Ath.*12.3.

23 *Ar. Ath.* 12.3 trans. H Rackham.

Stripping away the moralistic justification against a universal redistribution of land to all equally, Solon's refusal can be seen explicitly to support the maintenance of wealth and power in the hands of the wealthy and the powerful. As his own poem explains he cast this refusal to rule over the wealthy in reapportioning the land as his own refusal to act as king (*tyrannos*). The implication being, in the style of advanced propaganda, that he followed the peoples will, rather than his own, and as with election promises unfulfilled in the aftermath of an election, claimed to have done exactly what he promised he would do.

ἄ μὲν γὰρ εἶπα, σὺν θεοῖσιν ἦνυσα,  
 ἄλλα δ' οὐ μάτην ἔερδον, οὐδέ μοι τυραννίδος  
 ἀνδάνει βία τι ῥέζειν, οὐδέ πειράς χθονὸς  
 πατρίδος κακοῖσιν ἐσθλοὺς ἰσομοίριαν ἔχειν.

for the things I promised, those by heaven's aid I did,  
 And much else, no idle exploits; nothing did it please my mind  
 By tyrannic force to compass, nor that in our fatherland  
 Good and bad men should have equal portion in her fertile soil.<sup>24</sup>

The relative virtues and vices of the reforms' revolutionary potential are not at issue. What is significant here is that there remains a sinister edge to the method Solon adopted in his legislation, a suspicious presentiment of later alloys of power that is not merely that of the legislator come sovereign in a 'state of exception' who exiles himself perforce once he has brought about a new state of legal hegemony. But there is also the use of the message, that is, his own poems, to distort both the views of his opposition and the actions the legislator performed, but I will look at the poetry later.

Solon organised the representative rights of each man in accordance with a system of proportion that differed from the former constitution as well as the expectations and claims of the different classes:

λέγεται δὲ καὶ φωνή τις αὐτοῦ περιφερομένη πρότερον, εἰπόντος  
 ὡς τὸ ἴσον πόλεμον οὐ ποιεῖ, καὶ τοῖς κτηματικοῖς ἀρέσκειν καὶ τοῖς  
 ἀκτήμοσι, τῶν μὲν ἀξία καὶ ἀρετῆ, τῶν δὲ μέτρῳ καὶ ἀριθμῷ τὸ ἴσον  
 ἔξειν προσδοκῶντων.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Plut.Sol.14.2.

It is also said that a certain utterance of his which was current before his election, to the effect that ‘equality bred no war,’ pleased both the men in possession of land and those without land; the former expecting to have equality based on worth and excellence, the latter on measure and number.

And yet Solon offered a third option that satisfied neither party and which can be said to be the democratic principle of his reforms, where equality is measured neither according to aristocratic principles (value and virtue, *axia kai aretē*) nor *in utero* communist principles (measure and number, *metro kai arithmo*). He introduced a proportionate mean—he is himself after all described as *mesos*—based upon produce, or, more precisely income. Aristotle states that he divided the population into four classes, just as they had been previously divided, and he made the dividing measure economic (τιμήματι διεΐλεν εἰς τέτταρα τέλη, καθάπερ διήρητο καὶ πρότερον),<sup>26</sup>

ἐκάστοις ἀνάλογον τῷ μεγέθει τοῦ τιμήματος ἀποδιδούς τὴν ἀρχήν<sup>27</sup>

giving to each a position [*archē*] analogous to the size of the payment [*timēmatos*].

It should be no surprise, then, that one of his first enactments was to augment the value of the measures and weights of coinage to the percentile, bringing weights into correspondence with the currency (ἐποίησε δὲ καὶ σταθμὰ πρὸς τὸ νόμισμα, τρεῖς καὶ ἐξήκοντα μνᾶς τὸ τάλαντον ἀγούσας, καὶ ἐπιδιενεμήθησαν αἱ τρεῖς μναὶ τῷ στατηῆρι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις σταθμοῖς.).<sup>28</sup> On the one hand, then, he brought law into the bedroom, but on the other he made the economic and productive capacity of each man the principle of his claim to political representation and office-holding potential. What is evident in Solon is how the market, through market values and measures, not only provided the means but also became the means and method of political activity. Henceforth, it can be said even today that there is no such thing as pure political power, there is only economic power activated within the legal constitution of the *polis*.

<sup>26</sup> Ar.Ath. 7.3.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.10.

How, then, do what I call Solon's 'bedroom policies' correspond to this economic reform of the political, or his politico-economic reform? Here an answer is already implicated. Productivity, both biological and economic, comes under civic protection.

For the most part the bedroom policies as they are recounted by Plutarch orient sexual activity towards the exclusive outcome of producing children. In Ancient Greek, it is worth noting, the word for 'interest' (money to be repaid at a rate for the use of money lent, or for delaying the repayment of a debt) in Greek is *tokos* (τόκος), and the word also means 'childbirth'; as well as the 'children' themselves.<sup>29</sup> In what sense childbirth and children are transformed into profit is perhaps not entirely savoury. Of course, we have no idea how accurate Plutarch's rendition is.<sup>30</sup> But we have to deal with something, and the mere fact that these laws were possible even as thought experiments is significant enough.

For example, the law that in the case of sexual dysfunction of some sort or in the case that the husband cannot perform at all entitles an heiress to 'consort' (ὕπὸ τῶν ἔγγιστα του ἀνδρὸς ὀπύεσθαι), not necessarily to remarry, but to have sexual relations with another kinsman. This law condones exogamous sexual relations but only in the case that a woman is wealthy enough to support the habit. The law also limited her choice of partner from blood relations of the husband, as Plutarch states, 'that her offspring may be of his family and lineage.'<sup>31</sup> So the legally prescribed production of children appears to be the main aim of such a law, and certainly not the satisfaction of woman's pleasure. Age was also a theme of law, insofar as marriage was condoned only between a man and a woman within the fertile years of age: the law did 'not tolerate untimely and unseemly intercourse, nor sex that has no result or aim' (οὐδὲ περιοπτέον ἄωρους καὶ ἀχαρίτους ἐπιπλοκάς καὶ μηδὲν ἔργον γαμήλιον ἐχούσας μηδὲ τέλος).<sup>32</sup> Indeed, forcible removal seemed to be within the bounds of the law, as it is stated that

29 Seaford (2003) 218.

30 That marriage became a predominantly economic affair, see Michael Leese 'An Economic Perspective on Marriage Alliances in Ancient Greece' in Kehoe and McGinn (2017) 32–45.

31 Plut.*Sol.*20.2–3.

32 Plut.*Sol.*20.5.



if a young man is discovered living with an elderly woman, he will be removed and given to a younger, more fertile woman.<sup>33</sup>

εις τοῦτο δὲ συντελεῖ καὶ τὸ τὴν νύμφην τῷ νυμφίῳ συγκαθείργνυσθαι μήλου κυδωνίου κατατραγοῦσαν, καὶ τὸ τρις ἐκάστου μηνὸς ἐντυγχάνειν πάντως τῇ ἐπικλήρῳ τὸν λαβόντα. καὶ γὰρ εἰ μὴ γένοιτο παῖδες, ἀλλὰ τιμὴ τις ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆ πρὸς σῶφρονα γυναῖκα.<sup>34</sup>

Conformable to this, also, is that the bride must devour a quince and then be confined with the bridegroom; and that at least three times a month the husband of an heiress shall have intercourse with her without fail. For even in the case that this doesn't produce children, this is the price a man should pay to a chaste wife.

Not eating the quince was probably not a punishable act. There were also varying fines given for rape, depending upon how it was performed; for example an adulterer caught in the act could be killed, and the rape of a free woman resulted in a fine of one hundred drachmas, while the same conducted through persuasion was twenty drachmas.<sup>35</sup> What appears to me to be the most extreme law is, however, presented as an aside, for 'no man is allowed to sell a daughter or a sister, unless upon intercourse it is discovered that she was not a virgin,' in which case sell away!—(ἔτι δ' οὔτε θυγατέρας πωλεῖν οὔτ' ἀδελφὰς δίδωσι, πλὴν ἂν μὴ λάβῃ παρθένον ἀνδρὶ συγγεγεννημένην).<sup>36</sup> Such a law, with such high stakes, would certainly have the effect of limiting the activities of girls and young women, sexual or otherwise.

And to reinforce this novel situation that puts so much focus upon production and reproduction Solon enacts a law holding a father responsible for the lack of productivity of his son: he 'enacted a law that no son who had not been taught a trade should be compelled to support his father.'<sup>37</sup> The state has entered the household fully, to the extent that the basic indebtedness and obligation of care of one's parents, that correspondence in the archaic family between birth and death, between the shared womb and the shared tomb, has become optional, or at least

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33 Ibid. 20.4.

34 Ibid. 20.3

35 Ibid. 23.1.

36 Ibid. 23.2.

37 Ibid. 22.1.

not obligatory for all. He also instituted a policy that sons born out of wedlock need not support their fathers.

ἔξ ἑταίρας γενομένοις ἐπάναγκες εἶναι τοὺς πατέρας τρέφειν. ὁ γὰρ ἐν γάμῳ παρορῶν τὸ καλὸν οὐ τέκνων ἔνεκα δῆλός ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἡδονῆς ἀγόμενος γυναῖκα, τὸν τε μισθὸν ἀπέχει, καὶ παρρησίαν αὐτῷ πρὸς τοὺς γενομένους οὐκ ἀπολέουπεν, οἷς αὐτὸ τὸ γενέσθαι πεποίηκεν ὄνειδος.

He relieved the sons who were born out of wedlock [from a prostitute] from the necessity of supporting their fathers at all. For he that avoids the honourable state of marriage, clearly takes a woman to himself not for the sake of children, but of pleasure; and he has his reward, in that he robs himself of all right to upbraid his sons for neglecting him, since he has made their very existence a reproach to them.<sup>38</sup>

The result is, of course, a policy that denigrates pleasure and seeks to ensure the productivity of its citizens (men and women alike) and the utmost economic potential of the city as a whole. The supreme legislative council is for the first time not merely permitted but commanded to manage the economic usefulness or serviceability of its citizens: καὶ τὴν ἐξ Ἀρείου πάγου βουλὴν ἔταξεν ἐπισκοπεῖν ὅθεν ἕκαστος ἔχει τὰ ἐπιτήδεια, καὶ τοὺς ἀργοὺς κολάζειν, 'and he ordered the council of the Areiopagus to examine into every man's means of livelihood, and punish those who had no occupation.'<sup>39</sup> These laws might be said to be an archaic version of the capitalist welfare state, where the status quo is maintained, supporting the wealthy classes, while subjecting the labouring classes to legislative controls and supervision. The reason given for the necessity of the productive 'examination,' the management and surveillance of the labourers, is that farming is longer sustainable and that those in the city must go by force into trade. What punishment meant for the slackers in practical terms is not made explicit. Later, the Athenians had recourse to the silver mines in much the same way as the twentieth century had work camps, perhaps they were sent there.

It is in this light that we should read Solon's restriction against mourning rituals, since mourning, the expression of loss as such, is in principle non-productive. With Solon we have a political and

38 Plut. *Sol.* 22.4. trans. Rackham.

39 Ibid. 22.3

economic climate that is increasingly forcing its gaze toward gain and the productive and reproductive procedures that such a directive requires. Mourning intervenes into such procedures by introducing non-productive, non-evaluative activity that is inherently opposed to the reproductive processes of city life. Mourning is shared; production is self-interested. Mourning is without value, work generates value. Mourning and the ritual care for the dead is not primarily political but that does not mean that it is not radical or does not have significant political consequences.

And then above and beyond all this, mourning breaks into (by bringing into definition) the continuity of a functional and hence utilisable measurement of time. In contradistinction, the very last law that Plutarch credits to Solon is the introduction of a new measure of time, in his attempt to regulate the anomaly of the month (τοῦ μηνὸς τὴν ἀνωμαλίαν) in relation to the sun and the moon.<sup>40</sup> Benigni, in her collation of studies into calendar and rituals, draws an outline of a feminine precedent of the calendar based upon regenerative cycles influenced by the rotations of the heavenly body of Venus.<sup>41</sup> I can only speculate upon the matter, but it is possible that the decrees introduced during this period impacted upon or deviated from an earlier feminine concept of time measurement.

## My Boundary, My Choice

Solon claims to have succeeded in bringing about the end of *stasis*. That he used the situation of *stasis* as justification to bring in a whole spate of laws is not impossible. That his reforms changed the definitions, the limits and boundaries of the political and economic realm of Athens both materially and in the social imaginary of the city seems obvious, but how he did this and what changes were wrought will be the topic of this section. It must also be asked what measures he brought in under cover of his reforms and whether his *seisactheia* corresponds to the potentially metaphorical appearance of the *horos* in his poetry. Solon provides an

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40 Plut.*Sol.*25.3.

41 On the associations between the worship of Venus and the cosmology of the sacred feminine, including archaeoastronomy and ritual calendars that reflect the cycles of Venus, see Benigni (2013) 1–48. Also, Barbara Carter ‘The Astronomy of the Nights of Venus’ and ‘The Eight Year Cycle of Venus’ in Benigni (2013) 83–96.

image of himself as raising the boundary-stones (ὄρους ἀνεῖλον), but whether this was an actual act of his where material stones were torn from the ground, or whether he meant to denote the removal of certain more nebulous limits or distinctions that separated the people, is up for debate. In a way it does not matter because under the auspices of the *horoi* what Solon really achieved was to alter the warp and weft of the social fabric of Athens, changing the relations between its citizens and noncitizens, or excluded others, as well as between the people and the land. Solon does this by explicitly assuming the position of authority in the middle. In his poetry he states that he stood as a *horos*, as both an end and a principle of the law, but also as the marker of boundaries and determinations as well.

Ἐγὼ δὲ τούτων ὥσπερ ἐν μεταίχμῳ  
ὄρος κατέστην.<sup>42</sup>

I stood between them like a boundary-stone (*horos*) in no-man's land.

This place of authority was in the middle of the people, he says, neither in support of one side or the other, no friend to any, on the contrary he presents himself as standing alone in the centre with the spears of the people pointing at himself. His claim or right to occupy this position is put figuratively by his appropriation of the place of the *horos*. Solon's use of metaphor when he assumes for himself the position of the *horos* accomplishes this manipulation in a particular way. By placing himself in no-mans'-land, *metaichmion*, literally the 'place between spears,' he subjects himself to the violence of the Athenian city, divided, but suddenly no longer distinguished into two camps mediated as the populous is by his presence.<sup>43</sup> Instead, the image transforms the division into a single hostile force that Solon's self-sacrificial assumption of the position in the midst confronts with the solid determination of stone, or *horos*.

What must be assumed in Solon's assumption of the position of the *horos* is that the *horos* in the archaic period before Solon's reforms bore a certain significance, such that this statement, even metaphorically, was comprehensible to all. *Horoi* must have been commonly known

42 Ar.Ath.12.5.

43 I agree with Loraux's etymology as discussed in Martin, Blok (2006) 165.

and visible as actual stone, or at the very least frequently employed as a metaphorical trope. As the previous chapters have shown, there were various forms of the *horos* extant throughout Attica, though the exact nature of any pre-Solonian *horoi* is unknown. Nonetheless they do appear in the Homeric epics a couple of times both as boundary-markers on the field of battle and as similes taken from agrarian life.<sup>44</sup> That said, the epics are hardly saturated with *horoi*, the references are few, could be later interpolations and hardly justify the use of the *horos* by Solon as a marker of a common metaphorical, poetic vocabulary.

Solon's reform as a composite achievement is known to us through his poetry. The other reference to the *horoi* appears in the longest remaining fragment of Solon's poetry, given to us both in Plutarch and Aristotle. It is worth quoting the poem in full, as a number of coincidences in terminology (between *horoi*, mother earth, time and freedom) become evident and require further discussion.

ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν μὲν οὐνεκα ξυνήγαγον  
 δῆμον, τί τούτων πρὶν τυχεῖν ἐπαυσάμην;  
 συμμαρτυροίη ταῦτ' ἂν ἐν δίκῃ Χρόνου  
 μήτηρ μεγίστη δαιμόνων Ὀλυμπίων  
 ἄριστα, Γῆ μέλαινα, τῆς ἐγὼ ποτε  
 ὄρους ἀνεῖλον πολλαχῆ πεπηγότας,  
 πρόσθεν δὲ δουλεύουσα, νῦν ἐλευθέρα.  
 πολλοὺς δ' Ἀθήνας, πατρίδ' εἰς θεόκτιτον,  
 ἀνήγαγον πραθέντας, ἄλλον ἐκδίκως,  
 ἄλλον δικαίως, τοὺς δ' ἀναγκαίης ὑπὸ  
 χρειοῦς φυγόντας, γλῶσσαν οὐκέτ' Ἀττικὴν  
 ἰέντας, ὡς ἂν πολλαχῆ πλανωμένους;  
 τοὺς δ' ἐνθάδ' αὐτοῦ δουλίην ἀεικέα  
 ἔχοντας, ἦθη δεσποτῶν τρομευμένους,  
 ἐλευθέρους ἔθηκα. ταῦτα μὲν κράτει  
 νομοῦ βίην τε καὶ δίκην συναρμόσας  
 ἔρεξα καὶ διήλθον ὡς ὑπεσχόμην.  
 θεσμοὺς δ' ὁμοίως τῷ κακῷ τε κάγαθῷ,  
 εὐθεΐαν εἰς ἕκαστον ἀρμόσας δίκην,  
 ἔγραψα. κέντρον δ' ἄλλος ὡς ἐγὼ λαβῶν,  
 κακοφραδῆς τε καὶ φιλοκτῆμων ἀνήρ,  
 οὐκ ἂν κατέσχε δῆμον. εἰ γὰρ ἤθελον  
 ἂ τοῖς ἐναντίοισιν ἦνδανεν τότε,

44 Discussed in Chapter Three.

αὔθις δ' ἄ τοῖσιν οὔτεροι φρασαίατο,  
 πολλῶν ἄν ἀνδρῶν ἢδ' ἐχηρώθη πόλις.  
 τῶν οὔνεκ' ἀλκὴν πάντοθεν ποιούμενος  
 ὡς ἐν κυσὶν πολλῆσιν ἐστράφην λύκος.

But what did I leave unachieved, of all/The ends for which I did unite the people?/Whereof before the judgement-seat of Time/The mighty mother of the Olympian gods, /Black Earth, would best bear witness, for 'twas I/Removed her many boundary-posts [*horous*] implanted:/Ere then she was a slave, but now is free./And many sold away I did bring home/To god-built Athens, this one sold unjustly,/That other justly; others that had fled/From dire constraint of need, uttering no more/Their Attic tongue, so widely had they wandered,/And others suffering base slavery/Even here, trembling before their masters' humors,/I did set free. These deeds I make prevail,/Adjusting might and right to fit together,/And did accomplish even as I had promised./And rules of law alike for base and noble,/Fitting straight justice unto each man's case,/I drafted. Had another than myself/Taken the goad, unwise and covetous,/He'd not have held the people! Had I willed/Now that pleased one of the opposing parties,/And then whatever the other party bade them,/The city had been bereft of many men./Wherefore I stood at guard on every side,/A wolf at bay among a pack of hounds!<sup>45</sup>

That the word *horos* in Solon's poetry refers to security-markers, rather than boundary-stones, as indicators of a debt or mortgage upon the land, is the interpretation given within the descriptions of both Aristotle and Plutarch.<sup>46</sup> On this interpretation, the *seisachtheia* is understood as being related to the removal of the *horoi* from the land, and the cancellation of debts.<sup>47</sup> Finley argued that Solon's reforms abolished debt-bondage, the practice of lending on the security of the body, and this remained the largely accepted interpretation of the passage used to explain the actual state of affairs before and after Solon's reforms.<sup>48</sup>

In this interpretation, Solon appears as the champion of the poor peasants, 'in some fashion he lifted the encumbrances that were squeezing the small Attic farmers off their land.'<sup>49</sup> However, that *horoi*

45 *Ar.Ath.*12.4–5. tr. Rackham. Also in *Plut.Sol.*15.

46 *Ar.Ath.*2.2,4.4,6.1,9.1 *Plut.Sol.* 13.4,15.2.

47 For terminology and the difference between, 'enslavement for debt' and debt 'bondage,' see Harris (2002) 415–416.

48 Finley (1981) 62–66, 117–118, 122, 157, 166.

49 *Ibid.* 63.

were security-markers was not, as we have seen, the normal use either of the word or the stone as marker until the fourth century BC (or 363/2 to be exact). Before this period *horoi* were boundary markers of one sort or another, proscribing entrance to the Athenian *agora*, describing the borders of temple lands, or placed upon roads to outline the edge of counties, or of course, gravestones.<sup>50</sup> To ascribe the pre-Solonic *horoi* the same function as they developed within the fourth century, that is, roughly two centuries later, is, if anything, anachronistic. There is, as Harris states 'an insurmountable objection to this interpretation: the word *horos* in early Greek literature always means boundary marker,' or as has been investigated here, a number of variations on the theme.<sup>51</sup> That the pre-Solonic *horoi* were mortgage-markers in the same capacity as the later use can be ruled out. That there were *horoi* placed upon the land as boundary markers that also signified in some figurative or metaphorical sense a kind of relational bond between land and freedom is nonetheless possible.

Harris ventures that a literal reading of the poem must be ruled out, since Solon could not have actually torn out the boundary-stones, as their removal was considered a serious crime (as seen in Chapter Three). In which case Harris suggests a metaphorical reading. Here the suggestion is that there were boundaries separating the population into the divisions of civil war or *stasis*, and it is these metaphorical boundaries that Solon did away with. The language that is used is figurative, then, so not about land at all, nor about debt or freedom, purely about *stasis*. The argument is persuasive, especially given Solon's other comparison to himself as a *horos* that stands between spears, as on the dividing line of a battle.<sup>52</sup> It would appear, then, that the appearance of the *horos* in both these cases acts as a metaphor for the activities of Solon, the first in eradicating the differences or divisions that kept the people apart in a state of *stasis*, the second as representing the role of Solon as 'putting himself on the line' insofar as he became the legal mediator or the 'in between man.'

It must be acknowledged that poetry was an acceptable means of disseminating information about the political, legal and economic reorganisation in Attica, otherwise someone in such a position of

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50 Jeffreys, IG ii (2)2654.

51 Harris (1997) 104.

52 Ibid. 105–108.

power would not have used the poetic form, whether it meant that the reforms slipped into an epic sensibility on account of their poetic form, or whether this gave them a religious legitimacy remains a question. Nonetheless, that poetry, or as Martin argues, 'the aesthetic' had a social role in Athens is convincing.<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps the importance of rhetoric for later demagogues also suggests the continuation of the importance of form in the political life of the *polis*. Just because the poetry is ancient and the *polis* is still in its early days does not mean that method by which the message was transmitted must have been naïve. Putting something modern in verse might have been the best way of naturalising radical content in a form that was tested by time and endowed the content with a formal validity.

Poetry, by giving voice to a common experience, through implication, metaphor and an embedded audience, has the potential of creating social cohesion and control in a way that the enforcement of legislation cannot. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle says that poetry is manipulative, 'for something that goes on in circles tricks the ears, and the audience suffer emotion just as most people do with prophets' (φενακίζει γὰρ τὸ κύκλω πολὺ ὄν, καὶ πάσχουσιν οἱ ἀκροαταὶ ὅπερ οἱ πολλοὶ παρὰ τοῖς μάντεσιν).<sup>54</sup> In comparison to today, we might say that government control over media outlets creates a soft platform of social and political manipulation and ideological, indeed even intellectual conformity. Of Solon we can make one generalisation, that everything can take the form of poetry—philosophy, morals, exhortations and rebukes to others, justifications of his own actions, even his actual legal policies are said to have been transferred through epic poetry. Should this fact alone not suggest that for Solon philosophy, morals, rebukes and laws are inseparable from poetic form? Plutarch explains that Solon's poetry began as a worthless diversion, κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν εἰς οὐδὲν ἄξιον σπουδῆς, ἀλλὰ παίζων, 'he was playing a game with no serious value.'

ὑστερον δὲ καὶ γνώμας ἐνέτεινε φιλοσόφους καὶ τῶν πολιτικῶν πολλὰ συγκατέπλεκε τοῖς ποιήμασιν, οὐχ ἱστορίας ἔνεκεν καὶ μνήμης, ἀλλ' ἀπολογισμούς τε τῶν πεπραγμένων ἔχοντα καὶ προτροπὰς ἐνιαχοῦ καὶ νοουθεσίας καὶ ἐπιπλήξεις πρὸς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους.

53 Richard Martin 'Solon in Noman's Land' in Blok (2006) 157.

54 *Ar.Rhet.* 3.5.4.



Then later, he put philosophic maxims into verse, and interwove many political teachings in his poems, not simply to record and transmit them, but because they contained justifications of his acts, and sometimes exhortations, admonitions, and rebukes for the Athenians.<sup>55</sup>

It is instructive as to how removed from the pre-Solonic setting Plutarch must have been to believe that poetry was little more than a diversion, rather than the necessary form of radical political and religious change. It should stand as a case in point that we might be dealing with something in Solon that is considerably different, even for the periods immediately following, to what we have come to view as the distinction between law, politics, economy, and aesthetics.

Presumably, however, he did not eradicate the state of *stasis* with his poetic use of metaphor. So, what exactly did he do that 'freed' the earth and 'brought the people together'? If we do not need to explain Solon's reforms as a new system of land tenure or mortgage repayments, Solon's use of the figure of the *horos* to explain his reforms is open to speculation, whether metaphorically or actually. Ober offers one solution, that the *horoi* may well have been boundary markers between counties or communities, and the retraction of these may have contributed to an idea of a unified state, or 'asserting the conceptual unity of a "divinely founded homeland",' though his consequent assertion that they were in any way symbolic of 'asserting the freedom and base-line equality of the Athenians' is I think doubtful.<sup>56</sup> Or if they were it was purely symbolic, with little actual reality of equality 'on the ground,' as Solon himself makes clear in his resistance to the equal redistribution of land.

Harris suggests the *seisachtheia* was more likely the abolition of a fixed, feudal tithe placed upon peasant landowners to secure their protection by the lord of the area. Examples taken from Homeric epics and Hesiod imply that the lords provided both protection and a certain glory to the area in exchange for money or gifts.<sup>57</sup> Such a reform would weaken these lordly households, and make them to some degree at least subservient to the *polis*: 'This corresponded to Solon's attempt to strengthen the powers of the elected officials and the formal institutions operating in

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55 Plut.*Sol.*3.3. trans. Bernadotte Perrin.

56 Josiah Ober 'facts on the Ground in Ancient Athens' in Blok (2006) 451.

57 see Harris (1997) 108–109.

the center of Attica in Athens.<sup>58</sup> While it makes sense that Solon's aims were therefore to obliterate the cause of instability in the region between feuding households in regional areas, it does not take away from the fact that he did so by reducing the economic predominance of these regional households in favour of a centralised legal and religious *polis* authority underscored by a penal code that enforced a centralised economic system. The authority of his reforms was thus based both upon the alteration of a previous economy of tithe systems and the institution of economic penalties (such as those for rape) and economic restrictions (such as the eradication of the dowry), such that the *polis* itself became the main edifice of (sacred) economic activity, with the power to give and to take away.

The reference to the *horoi*, in Solon's poem, regardless of whether it refers to actual stones lifted, or metaphorical boundaries raised, serves to show us that Solon is engaged in an act of redefinition. His reforms have to do with redrawing the limits, the definitions and distinctions of the city, as well as obliterating old definitions, distinctions, determinations and limits. As Ober says, 'in seeking to instantiate a new political/ethical order in Athens in 594, Solon confronted various facts on the ground. Prominent among these, not least in terms of their presumptive materiality and groundedness, were *horoi*.'<sup>59</sup> That these *horoi* are metaphorical is as speculative as is their presence as rocks. That said, the archaeological record does not show an abundance of archaic age *horoi* thrown into waste dumps, or acting as filling for walls in the classical period. But that does not mean they were not there.

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the *horoi* although they are often recognisable in the archaeological record on account of the inscription of the word  $\text{HOPOC}$ , need not necessarily have been inscribed in order to be recognisable as a *horos*. In which case they might have just been appropriately placed rocks, that, as has again been discussed in Chapters One and Two, were read as *horoi* nonetheless because the boundaries they signified or marked were already known to the local population. However we read his removal and assumption of the *horoi*, Solon is the manipulator of markers and markets. Perhaps it is not necessary to choose between a socio-economic reading of Solon's

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58 Ibid. 111.

59 Ober in Blok and Lardinois (2006) 446.

seisachtheia and a religious and political reading, because the definition between these different aspects of the city was exactly what was called into question and reframed by Solon's metaphorical or actual dealings with the *horoi*.

Maybe the removal of the *horoi* had the effect of changing the sites of exchange, bringing them in to the centre of the city; then again, maybe it changed the allegiances between counties allowing marriages and other alliances or prohibiting them; maybe it opened up the property market, allowing Athenians to buy, sell and rent land; maybe it changed the relations between the small landholders and the regional authorities; maybe it caused a massive centralisation of legal, economic, religious and social authority in the *polis*. That Solon's law reform was a catalyst for secularisation is not an argument held to here. That his reforms had an effect upon later efforts at secularisation I do not doubt. However, if Solon's reforms must be interpreted as some kind of forerunner spurring novel institutions within the Athenian *polis* into the future, I believe that catalyst is his economic policies rather than his legal ones: or rather, his legal policies were framed in such a way that they were for the most part enacted economically or had a significant economic impact.

## Alienable Earth

That these reforms negatively affected or destabilised the household as the primary site of economic production within the city was perhaps paralleled with the maintenance of a religious economy as the principal site of the accumulation of capital.<sup>60</sup> That the democracy developed out of a predominantly religious system could explain the continuing import of the city's cults and ritual practices within the fifth century and the sacral administration of the fourth. The myth of Athenian autochthony for example provided the Athenians with their exclusive notions of citizenship, with the Parthenon and the Erechtheum as spatial representations of this myth. Among Solon's reforms, the reorganising of religious festivals and the cultic calendar is no small matter—for example the importance he placed on the festival of the Genesia was likely to have simultaneously put more focus upon the city cult while

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<sup>60</sup> On property and sacred offices, or the relation between state and cult, see Bubelis (2016).

retracting from other regional cults.<sup>61</sup> 'Hence the reorganisation of the Genesia from private cults of the dead into a *polis*-cult with a fixed date in the calendar. The Genesia as *polis*-festival only makes sense if it subsumed the former commemoration of the dead by *groups*, such as phratries or extensive families.'<sup>62</sup>

After Solon's law and into the classical period, the *polis* enforced all laws related to sacred affairs, since 'parallel to such exclusive power of the management of resources, the classical *polis* also possessed an absolute judicial authority such as would be necessary for the sacred treasurers to exercise the fullest control possible.'<sup>63</sup> The religious sector particularly within the city thus coincided, as Bubelis argues, with economic control, or rather even though there were analogous offices held both within the religious and political sector, it appeared to be the norm that the political offices were the ones that organised the funding of cultic practices and temple maintenance.

How Solon's reforms actually changed the landscape of the political and religious performance and the social imaginary of the city is not entirely clear. The main problem is that the exact nature of the situation that preceded his reforms is unknown, though it has engendered plenty of speculation, which, given the political predisposition of the speculators should only make us more suspect in believing these later interpretations from the classical period until now.

For example, there has been a strong tendency to romanticise Solon as the forefather of the democracy, as well as his reforms as the catalyst of secular politics. The implied assumptions are indicative of the position from which the interpreters come to the original texts, for example, the democracy was a site of freedom and equality, organised and originating in a patriarchy; rather than an exclusive politico-religious organisation that benefitted the few, designated as masculine adults of substance and a particular ethnicity and dependent upon the non-remunerative labour of women and slaves and the religiously sanctified use of children to support the cultic institutions and boundaries of the state. It might be worth reconsidering Solon's reforms from this perspective, especially as regards the importance placed upon freedom, both of the population and in regards to the land.

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61 Bubelis (2016).

62 Blok in Blok and Lardinois (2006) 235.

63 Bubelis (2016) 12.

κύριος δὲ γενόμενος τῶν πραγμάτων Σόλων τὸν τε δῆμον ἠλευθέρωσε καὶ ἐν τῷ παρόντι καὶ εἰς τὸ μέλλον, κωλύσας δανεῖζειν ἐπὶ τοῖς σώμασιν, καὶ νόμους ἔθηκε καὶ χρεῶν ἀποκοπὰς ἐποίησε, καὶ τῶν ιδίων καὶ τῶν δημοσίων, ἃς σεισάχθειαν καλοῦσιν, ὡς ἀποσεισάμενοι τὸ βᾶρος.<sup>64</sup>

Solon having become lord of everything freed the populous both in the present time and for the future, by prohibiting loans secured on their bodies, and he laid down laws, and enacted cancellations of debts, both private and public, known as the *seisachtheia*, because the men shook off their burden.

Conventionally, as was said to begin with, the *seisachtheia* was perceived as describing a new relation between citizen and land. According to Finley, this was the eradication of the situation in which a citizen was enslaved on account of failing to repay a debt.<sup>65</sup> But the relation might be considerably different if Harris's alternative reading holds. In which case it might be worth asking whether the above quote meant that freedom was entitled to the citizen as the very meaning of the word 'citizen,' as it became later; or if freedom held to the land, in so far as a citizen was 'free' who owned land without indebtedness. Perhaps a free citizen designated anyone who owned land, as was the case in the classical period, where land ownership becomes a requirement of being a citizen. But in neither of these cases is the land itself 'free.'

Meanwhile Solon explicitly states that he 'freed' the black earth (πρόσθεν δὲ δουλεύουσα, νῦν ἔλευθέρᾳ) but we know that he did not make the earth free in the sense of being freely available, or open on the free market, or free to acquire or dispose of. The reference to the earth's colour, 'black' (*melaina*), could possibly be in reference to the boundaries of Attica, where the ephebes went to perform their military service.<sup>66</sup> Why the boundary markers of the furthest regions of Attica would be implicated in this reference, is however entirely hypothetical: perhaps he permitted exchange to be conducted with other cities, opening up the boundaries of the region to increased interactions with other cities, and thereby expanding markets? Perhaps he allowed the use of lands that were previously thought to be beyond the realms of agriculture?

64 Ar.Ath.6.1.

65 'The Alienability of Land in Ancient Greece' in Finley (2000) 153–160.

66 See Vidal-Naquet (1986) 106f.

Finley suggests that the alienation of land in Greece was one of the most important changes in Athenian law, impacting what it meant both to be a citizen but also how property came to be subject to buying and selling. Finley proposed that the above lines of Solon be taken implying a means by which men could take out loans by placing themselves as security, as opposed to the later custom when they could offer property or land as a kind of mortgage.<sup>67</sup> As Harris states, 'in this arrangement the debtor pledges an object in his possession as security for a loan. If the debtor defaults on the loan, the creditor has the right to seize the security, over which he thereby acquires the rights of ownership.'<sup>68</sup> This is distinct to enslavement for debt, where a man who could not repay his loan would be sold into slavery until such a time as the debt was paid off. The situation of debt-bondage differs from enslavement insofar as the man retained his status as a freeman, meaning he could potentially be freed again, whereas a slave was a slave for life (unless his owner decided to grant him freedom).

And yet, as Solon's reforms suggest there must be considerable doubt about whether, given that a man might be sold into slavery and sent abroad, the subsequent release from enslavement could actually be achieved. According to Plutarch's interpretation the body of the debtor was 'reserved' as a security (ἐγγύς) for the loan; as he puts it, they were χρέα λαμβάνοντες ἐπὶ τοῖς σώμασι, 'contracting debts on [the security of] their bodies.'<sup>69</sup> The subtleties of the situation before Solon depend upon a comparison of different texts from varying periods and places and are a problem that has not been entirely resolved, nor is there any unreservedly conclusive argument that Solon effectively prohibited this situation.<sup>70</sup> Before Solon, it appears to be the case that it was impossible to acquire land except through inheritance. This explains why Solon changed the inheritance laws, to keep what he designates as unwanted miscreants and illegitimate sons from land ownership. If this was a way to keep objectionable elements of the society from access to land ownership, even after Solon's reforms, land could not have been available as a property open to exchange, because they could simply have bought into what inheritance refused them.

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67 Finley (2000) 153–160.

68 Harris (2006) 255.

69 Plut.*Sol.*13.4–5.

70 But see Harris (2006) 249ff.

So, we end up again at the reading of Solon's poem as metaphorical—that the earth was metaphorically, not literally, freed. When he addresses the subject of the earth, Solon alludes to this subterranean power as a mother of the Olympians, at once witness to Solon's law and former slave (συμμαρτυροίη ταῦτ' ἂν ἐν δίκῃ Χρόνου/μήτηρ μεγίστη δαιμόνων Ὀλυμπίων/ἄριστα, Γῆ μέλαινα, [...] πρόσθεν δὲ δουλεύουσα, νῦν ἔλυθέρα). There is a correlation here with the *Antigone* of Sophocles.<sup>71</sup> Antigone, repudiating the decrees of Creon, invoked subterranean Justice (*Dikē*) and Zeus; Solon reiterating the justice of his laws invokes Time (*Chronos*) and Earth (*Gē*). In both cases a subterranean force is invoked, even though the two instances appear in every respect to be opposite. Antigone opposes the predominance of the laws of the city, Solon establishes them; Antigone covers her brother's corpse with a handful of earth, Solon limits burial rituals and expressions of mourning; Antigone upholds the laws of the gods, Solon reforms the legal relations between men and women. There is one other significant contradiction; Antigone stated that Creon's decrees were not determined by the gods, implying that the eternal laws of honouring the dead and mourning had been determined by the gods, and she used the verbal form of the *horos*. Solon, on the other hand states that he has removed the *horoi* and freed the earth from its slavish determinations. Solon might be said to have achieved what Creon mishandled. Solon, in the divinely inspired form of poetry, related how through his actions he had the earth on his side, taking this mother of all positions to stabilise his own otherwise volatile and precarious position as the giver of laws.

In this sense, Solon's call to the earth as witness is an expert work of publicity, turning the potential criticism of him as a tyrant disobeying the ancestral, subterranean laws to his advantage. The fact that his reforms were thus advertised through poetry also reinforces their sanctity, stressing the reverence for the gods even while doing the work of men. The pre-Solonic *horoi* may well be actual, material markers. And yet, there is no evidence in the archaeological record of any *horoi* that can be said to belong to the period during which Solon instituted his reforms. We therefore have no idea what these *horoi* actually were, whether metaphorical or material, except by assuming they bore a certain resemblance with other later examples within the classical era of

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71 Sophocles' *Antigone* was discussed in the previous chapter.

Athens. Were they inscribed or were they mere stones? Were they even stone?

Essentially, an alternative has already been suggested. For we saw the *horos* erected upon the grave of the dead, supplemented with the inscription *sēmatos*, which in a liberal translation could be read the 'limit of the sign.' Therefore, the limit of the sign coincides with the marker of the tomb. On top of this we've also confronted the problem of deciphering exactly what, or who this marker is. Obviously, it is the stone itself, but it is also the inscription, and whoever it was who demarcated the site as (re)markable, be it Antigone or the body of her dead brother, not to mention those 'unwritten laws' prescribing burial and mourning. The legal restrictions that limited the gifts the living offered to the dead broke into the reciprocal relation between the living and the dead and as it were cemented the separation between the living and the dead. As Blok concludes,

offerings to the dead, like those to the gods and heroes, would create a relation of reciprocity and exchange with the recipients. This must have been the attitude the early lawgivers wanted to restrict: the limitations on grave goods and sacrifices to the dead cut down the degree to which the dead had to reciprocate these gifts and had to act on behalf of the living.<sup>72</sup>

So *xenia* and death rituals are inherently related and posed a challenge to the development of the *polis* as an autonomous structure of economic and legal authority. And yet, what is most interesting in the debate is a relation often lost in the finer details between body and land. For, whatever the situation before Solon, it is significant that in the light of the later usage of the security-markers it was interpreted that when it came to debt a *horos* was placed upon the land to signify that the body of a man was in some way put into a condition of suspension. In this condition the payment of debt was deferred by holding the body as pledge for the land, inverting the former state in which the land was held as a pledge for the loan, and suggesting a certain substitutability between land, body and *horos*.

The question is that, if the debt was incurred ἐπὶ τοῖς σώμασι, 'upon the bodies,' why would this be represented with a *horos* placed upon the land? What is the relation between the debt and the body on

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72 Blok in Blok and Lardinois (2006) 237.



the one hand, and its representation of *horos* and land? Further, is it correct to view the *horos* as a type of representation or signification, a 'sign' upon the land of a body burdened by debt? Does this not already suggest to us the nexus of ideas that adhered to the tomb as *horos sēmatos*, the sign of the dead? Is the relative correspondence between debt and *horos* that of signified and sign, or have we lost the actual relation that these four terms were supposed to describe by assuming a system of signification?

The *horos* would appear to consolidate stone, living and dead in a single term. In this sense the *horos* never functioned as a signifier, hence the addition of the sign in the genitive. It is the boundary, the stolidly material boundary that gives definition to either side, be this guest-host, letter-word, before-after, living-dead and so forth. And, it would appear, it shares this site with the body that remains and is yet different between life and death. It is worth noting another coincidence that refers us back again to the previous chapter and implies the collusion between the relation of *xenia*, and all these different ways of being indebted in the mark and the *horos*. Before Herakles was received as a guest in the house of Admetos, this household was the most unusual case of a god having fallen into debt-bondage.<sup>73</sup> In the prologue, Apollo tells how he came to work for Admetos. After Zeus killed his son Asklepius with his thunderbolt, in retaliation Apollo killed the Cyclops who forged the thunderbolt. In compensation for this murder, Zeus commanded that Apollo be enslaved in the house of Admetos, in order to pay off his debt to Zeus for his blood-guilt.

Is this what the pre-Solonian *horoi* marked then; that the body is the limit and that the incurrance of debt, which is also the pledge of increase, of production/reproduction, and of return and repayment finds its limit, finds its *horos*, in the body? Were these markers of the fact that we each of us are our (re)productive limit, we describe the boundary of our input/output, the boundary of our economic value is prescribed by the body? Perhaps. In any case, whatever the situation was in regards to this limit, it was prohibited by Solon.

After Solon, the traditional definitions where different customs and meanings collide were suspended. And the earth that he claimed was enslaved was made free. Men were free from their relations as defined

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<sup>73</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter.

by the earth, or a relation of *xenia* with other men; they were also henceforth free from the indebtedness to the great mother, as well as all those other women who believed that their role as primary producer had been eclipsed. Men were then free to work, to produce, to borrow, to repay and everyone, women, men and children alike were all freely subjected to the laws and economic penalties imposed upon them by the state—now that Solon had removed the limits (*horoi*). Is there, or was there once, an inherent relation between the human body and the earth? Just as men were henceforth free to engage in their transactions without the threatening limits of traditional customs, was the earth also free to be worked? Was there in pre-Solonian times a corresponding limit upon men's use of the land as upon the use of their own bodies? Did Solon do away with some very material limits that described a common boundary of 'use' between man and land?

It is feasible to imagine a time when the relation with the earth was modified by a structure of beliefs in which its utility in the productive life of humans was limited. As much as it might appear that it is the earth that is the subject of liberation in his poem, it is more likely that it was actually the relation between a man's body and the earth that becomes not the subject of liberation but the object of possession. Each (free Athenian) man, henceforth, was the indubitable possessor of his own body, his own land, any beings that inhabited that land, and he was consequently responsible for the productivity of all.

## Death to the Speculator

If appropriation is death to the speculator, how does the masochistic potentiality of the *horos* resonate upon whomsoever would aspire to claim the boundary in his own name?

HOPOS EIMI TES AGOPAES read the stones, 'I AM THE BOUNDARY OF THE MARKET,' and presumably the work of the market was limited to the confines of these boundaries. Not only did these boundaries signify who was to enter within the area, but they also restricted what would escape. In the classical period the *agora*, the 'market-place,' became the site of exchange of goods and of words. Here values could be discussed and challenged without posing a risk to daily life dependent upon the stability of such values. Well and good, but the

boundaries did not hold. Socrates escaped the boundaries, raising his questions of the value of words and concepts well beyond the secure confines of the Athenian *agora*. He might have been put to death for it, but the borders had been broken; at least the matter of the boundary did not mean what it meant before.

The transgression and violation of boundaries are not necessarily a call to obliterate boundaries as such. Boundaries might be removed only to be displaced and imposed elsewhere, just as, when we approach the horizon, a further horizon opens up at a distance before us. Even Solon could not evade the necessity of placing new boundaries. His supreme act of hubris is that he believed he could be the one and common boundary for all (Ἐγὼ δὲ τούτων ὥσπερ ἐν μεταίχμιῳ ἄρορος κατέστην).<sup>74</sup> Solon's claim, and I do not mean necessarily the historical man but the absent signifier of the force of the law, is that opposition can be mediated by men, that men have the power to mediate what before was determined by gods or 'unwritten laws' mutually inscribed by the community as a whole, including women and children, the memory of the dead but presumably also the nonhuman as it imposes restrictions or interacts within the world shared with humans. In contrast, the Law asserts that there are no boundaries in nature beyond our control to mark, choose and enforce, and that human or more particularly masculine authority is master over the living, the dead, animals, plants, stones and whatever else comes within his dominion. By adopting the site and name of the *horos*, Solon presents this position of authority as neutral ground. Ironically, Solon recognised exactly the problem of this claim to neutrality, since if anyone else claimed this position it would put into question the very essence of his own position, his authority, his laws.

Positions of power are rarely appropriated for the sake of the common weal, and Solon's reforms should come under scrutiny as to what more subtle changes were brought about and to the benefit of whom. Solon himself, in his poetry, is acutely self-deprecatory; he asserts to never have claimed power for himself, and moreover, after instituting his reforms, he absents himself. After the laws were posited, they came under scrutiny, and Solon was subjected to a barrage of questions as to their applicability under different conditions:

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74 Ar.Ath.12.5

ἐπειδὴ προσιόντες αὐτῷ περὶ τῶν νόμων ἠνώχλουν, τὰ μὲν ἐπιτιμῶντες τὰ δὲ ἀνακρίνοντες, βουλόμενος μήτε ταῦτα κινεῖν, μήτ' ἀπεχθάνεσθαι παρῶν, ἀποδημίαν ἐποιήσατο κατ' ἐμπορίαν ἅμα καὶ θεωρίαν εἰς Αἴγυπτον, εἰπὼν ὡς οὐχ ἤξει δέκα ἐτῶν, οὐ γὰρ οἶεσθαι δίκαιον εἶναι τοὺς νόμους ἐξηγεῖσθαι παρῶν, ἀλλ' ἕκαστον τὰ γεγραμμένα ποιεῖν.<sup>75</sup>

Because people kept annoying him about his laws, questioning here and criticising there, and as he did not wish either to change them or by his presence to become hateful, he went abroad to Egypt, at once both for the purpose of trade and to see the wonders, saying that he would not come back for ten years, as he did not believe it was right for him to stay and explain his laws, but for each to act in accordance to what was written.

Was this absence necessary in order to hinder attempts at further legal reform or modifications of his laws as he suggests, or is his absence the necessary displacement of the authority of the law? The law is always forced to confront the limits of its authority. As Agamben acknowledges, the 'paradox of sovereignty consists in the fact the sovereign is, at the same time, outside and inside the judicial order.'<sup>76</sup> What this means is that 'the sovereign, having the validity of the law, legally places himself outside the law.' Solon's absence becomes the absent origin essential to the maintenance of the law, the heteronomous authority that cannot be questioned because the origin of law is always elsewhere. Solon stands as the sovereign figure reassuring through his exception that there is 'nothing outside the law.'<sup>77</sup>

In a way Solon is the precedent, the legislative basis of this paradoxical state of exception in the law. As Agamben suggests, it is worth reflecting upon the topology implicit in the paradox of the legal reformer, 'since the degree to which sovereignty marks the limit (in the double sense of end and principle) of the judicial order will become clear only once the structure of the paradox is grasped.'<sup>78</sup> Hence, the name 'Solon' is attached to the law, which thereby gains in sanctity and authenticity, regardless of whether it was actually coined by him. In a way the name 'Solon' becomes the necessary signifier for the authority of law, all the more potent when the particularities and historical accuracies of his acts

<sup>75</sup> *Ar.Ath.*11.1–2.

<sup>76</sup> Agamben (1998) 15.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

are withdrawn. Before the name of Solon was absented, he claimed for himself the position of authority, on the boundary between men, the neutral ground of the *horos* from which he could ensure the immutability of his legislative reforms.

Ironically, before absenting himself from the city, he decreed that no other man could ever again claim the *horos* for himself, positing the law that no man was to remain neutral in a situation of *stasis*, that every citizen had to choose one side or another—with the exception, of course, of himself. Again, we could ask if this *horos* that Solon identifies with himself is metaphorical. Given that the claim of the law to inhabit neutral ground is still observed and has considerable, actual effect, the metaphor, if it was one, has no lack of material consequences. Can these be traced back to a material basis that the law has abstracted in order to claim the position? Is there any meaningful origin that matters but the material? The word itself, '*horos*,' is material, and its meaning is indivisible from the word, type-set on this page or inscribed upon stone. Is the read word, thought word, the spoken word any less material than the senses required to read it, with eyes moving, synapses firing, tongue forming and lips contorting? The *horos* is never fully abstracted from its material or its place. So, Solon placing himself bodily as a security and pledge between and against the restive population becomes the *horos*, the definition of the material foundation of the law, or the body of the law, his body and person belongs to the people as an investment and intervention. The task of the withdrawal of this bodily imposition is to keep the dogs at bay, separated when it comes to their disagreements but joined in one new polity. But no man can embody the foundation of authority absolutely. Despite what he says, man is not as solid as stone.

With the reforms of Solon, relations amongst the populous as a whole, between men and women, between parents and children, and finally between land and body became a subject of political economics. Perhaps metaphorically, perhaps actually, the removal of the *horoi* had ensured this. Is the result the expansion of economic limits or their abstraction, that is the removal of earlier limitations? Is the tendency toward an ever-expanding market paralleled by new economic determinations that make everything a potential object of exchange? If so, the problem that this expansion of the economic caused in the

early classical society might be what prompted the placement of the *horos* markers of the *agora*. This may well be why the Athenian *polis* instituted a market with clearly defined boundaries, in order to keep the behemoth of free-market economic exchange within discreet terms, within human limits.

Do we mourn the dead alone, or do we also mourn the breakdown of our relations with nonhumans? It might be obvious to some that we mourn (with) animals, but what about our experience of loss of other things: an old house destroyed to make a car-park, a mountain valley dug up and sacrificed for a swathe of tourist villas, the draining of a swamp (swimming pools included), the ancient birthing tree cut down to make way for another highway, a faithful pair of shoes that finally gave up the ghost. The interventions and mediations that have arisen between us and the things to hand put us out of touch with the common boundaries of our interaction and the shared experience of living in a world where emotional investments are not limited to marriage vows or blood relations.

Nonetheless, we experience feelings of loss with the world around us as it changes and morphs into a world full of things and places and people that at first appear foreign and often antipathetic. In our ability to mourn the past and its inhabitants, of all walks of life and nonlife, organic and inorganic, human and nonhuman, we can make out the traces of a material embeddedness of language and thought, a non-mediated relation with the matter of meaning. George Steiner refers to a Kabbalistic speculation 'about a day on which words will "shake off the burden of having to mean" and will be only themselves, blank and replete as stone.'<sup>79</sup> Perhaps this is the reverse side of what Solon's *seisachtheia* ('shaking off the burdens') described. Perhaps in the *seisachtheia* matter shook off the burden of meaning. In any case we do know that from the end of the sixth century the language of the Greeks began to take a turn toward the speculative. Thales is the champion of economic speculation, and the story of his monopoly of the olive presses reveals that in form speculation is inherent to philosophical thought, while the result (increased profits) is foreign and undesirable.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Steiner (1998) 313.

<sup>80</sup> *Ar.Pol.*1259a.

After Solon's reforms, even words would be required to serve different purposes in different conditions; the classical era witnesses the gradual formalisation of a legal vocabulary, an economic one, a technical philosophical lexicon. How did this influence the *horos* and its swathe of meanings? To what degree was the material presence of the *horos* fractured throughout the classical period? It might still have implied a nexus of meaning and matter, however its use becomes increasingly context specific until within the fourth century it splinters into matter on the one hand and meaning on the other, signifying debt in its material form and philosophical term in its immaterial form. This could be said to be the logical conclusion of all those other meanings transposed and translated into the legalese of the democratic *polis*. The Athenians might be said to have had no particular terminology for law, economics and commerce, continuing to use a language largely inherited from earlier social conditions. And yet the adoption of this language may simultaneously have caused the linguistic eclipse of prior social conditions.

What was initiated by Solon was nothing short of a linguistic coup. It was not only the law, politics and economics that began to spread its tentacles throughout the region of Attica, but the economically enforced transformation and appropriation of language that supported his economic and legal reforms. Solon shakes up language: this language engendered a politico-religious, legal structure that insinuated itself into aspects of life that were hitherto unregulated by anything but those unwritten laws Antigone so desperately defended.

This coup worked by creating a new vocabulary within the epic structures of the old. Solon's poetry brought the novelty of his laws into relation with age-old, revered terms and determinations (*horoi*), all the while filtering in a new responsibility for the self and the other, for one's own and others' property, a new basis for production and reproduction, a new economy prescribed within a system that structured *polis* life into (increasingly more) distinct categories of possession. Above and beyond the separation of the dead and the living, we have all those new limits placed upon the family, denigrated in favour of the increasingly legal categories of the individual as woman, man, child, foreigner, slave.

Solon removed the *horoi* from the *polis*, but do the material limits remain to be read in the nature of the stone? In the absence of traditional *horoi* and in the absence of material limits, the work of politics, law and economics is supposed to be autonomous, but does this make it also automatic? It might continue in its own time, unwriting, rewriting, buying, selling, producing, trading, speaking, condemning, interpreting interminably in a process that has no natural end in sight. But has the *agora*, the market-place extended its boundaries so widely and furtively that it has obliterated every trace of our authorship in the materialisation of limits? Is the definition of the loss of such limits the final word and then also the common term or the grounding determination by means of which the presence of the stone can be read again in the fateful continuation of life?