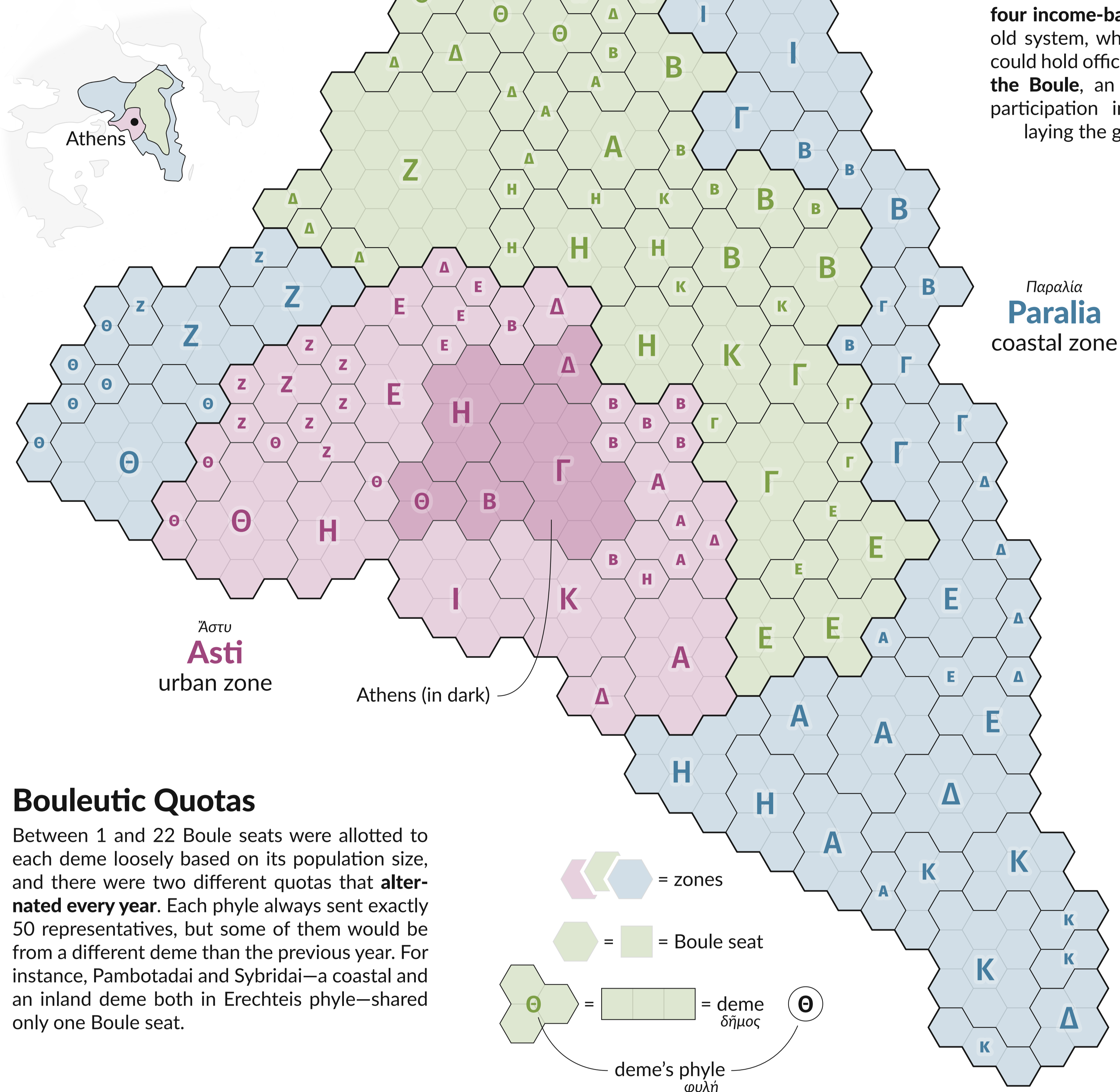


# STRUCTURE OF THE EARLY ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY

In the 6th century BCE, as a result of political reforms by Solon and Cleisthenes, a democratic rule was established in Athens. Continuous efforts of Athenians to reduce the power of the traditional nobility did not go in vain, creating a system where many had a say in political matters, not just the noble or the wealthy. This infographic provides a simplified overview of how this system functioned.

## Attica's Subdivision

In 508 BCE, Attica was subdivided into 139 demes grouped into 30 trittyes, each belonging to one of 10 phylai and to one of three zones (urban, coastal or inland).



## Bouleutic Quotas

Between 1 and 22 Boule seats were allotted to each deme loosely based on its population size, and there were two different quotas that **alternated every year**. Each phyle always sent exactly 50 representatives, but some of them would be from a different deme than the previous year. For instance, Pambotadai and Sybridai—a coastal and an inland deme both in Erechteis phyle—shared only one Boule seat.

## Solonian Constitution

early 6th century

Solon's main focus was to mediate the growing conflict between the nobility and the rest of the population, driven by an agricultural crisis. Among other measures, Solonian constitution introduced **four income-based social classes** in place of the old system, where only members of the nobility could hold official positions. Solon also introduced **the Boule**, an institution that allowed broader participation in politics for Athenian citizens, laying the groundwork for future reforms.

## Peisistratos' Tyranny

561–527

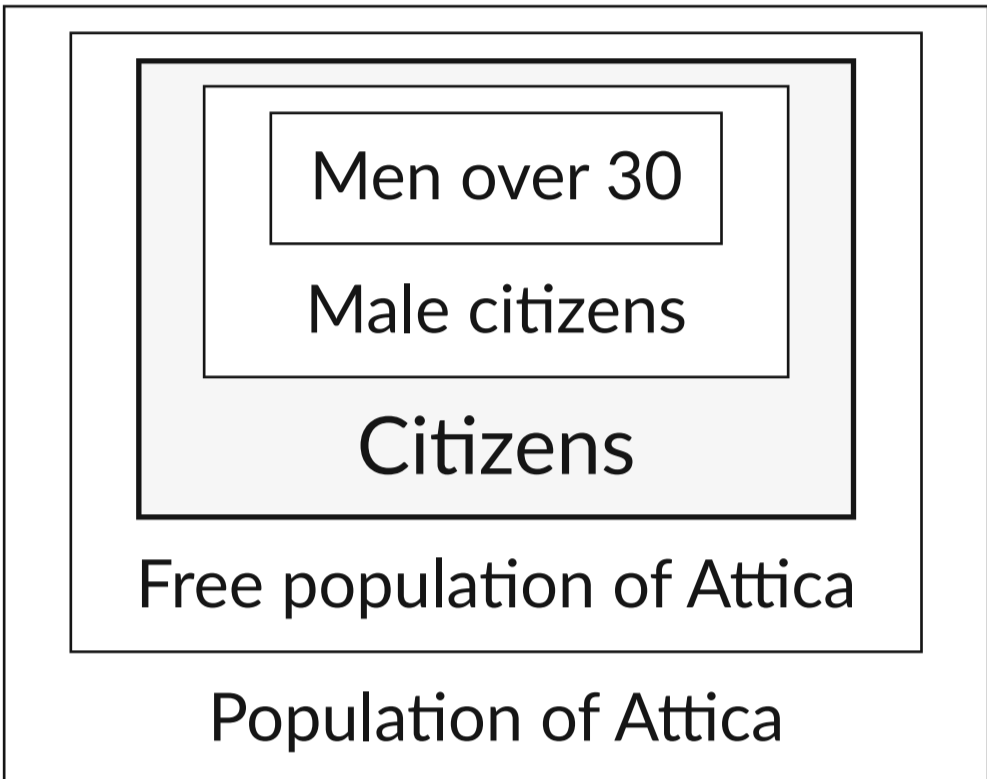
Peisistratos seized power in 561 and established a tyranny. Although his rule was by no means democratic, it was still an important part of transitioning to democracy. Peisistratos did not destroy the foundation laid out by Solon, but instead used it to **weaken traditional aristocratic families**. Additionally, both his military successes and populist measures, such as large-scale construction projects and organizing splendidous festivals, strengthened Attica's **sense of unity**.

## Cleisthenes' Reforms

508–507

After the chaos of the 510–508 political crisis following the overthrow of Peisistratos' son Hippias, Cleisthenes assumed leadership in Athens. To prevent future instability, he implemented reforms that strengthened Attica's political structure. He granted **Athenian citizenship** to citizens of all other settlements in Attica and **reorganized the Boule**. Unlike the old Solonian Boule, which was based on hereditary phylai, Cleisthenes' version was structured around residence.

## Citizenship



Despite being called a democracy, that is, a rule of the people, not everyone in Athens had the same **political rights**, not even all citizens. For example, women did not have any voting rights, while young men could vote but could not hold public offices. Additionally, a citizen could be made **atimos** and lose his voting rights.

Ten times a year, all eligible citizens were invited to participate in **Ekklesia hearings**. For instance, in 499 BCE, the Ekklesia made a crucial foreign policy decision to support the Ionian Revolt. However, it is important to note that not all decisions were purely impartial—skilled orators could sometimes sway the outcome.



After archons retired, they joined the Areopagos, the **traditional** executive, legislative, and juridical body. Both institutions, the archons and the Areopagos, were being gradually stripped of their political power by democratic reforms, but never lost it completely.



Archons, the highest public officials, were appointed every year among **pentakosiomedimnoi**. The three most prominent archons were the eponymous archon (titular head of state), the archon basileus (high priest), and the polemarch (commander of all Athenian military forces).



Erechtheis (A)	Euonymon	Kephisia	Anagyrous	Upper Lamptrai	Coast Lamptrai
Aigeis (B)	Erchia	Gargettos	Ikarion	Teithras	Halai Araphenides
Pandionis (Γ)	Skambonidai	Oa	Lower Paiania	Myrrhinous	Probalinthos
Leontis (Δ)				Phrearrhioi	Sounion
Akamantis (Ε)	Cholargos	Kerameis	Hagnous	Prospalta	Sphettos
Oeneis (Ζ)			Acharnai		Oe
Kekropis (Η)	Melite	Xypete	Athmonon	Phlya	Aixone
Hippothontis (Θ)	Peiraeus		Deketeia		Eleusis
Aiantis (Ι)	Phaleron		Aphidna	Marathon	Oinoe
Antiochis (Κ)	Alopeke		Pallene	Aigilia	Anaphlystos

Representatives were chosen annually by lot among volunteers from each of the 10 phyles for both the Boule and the Heliia.

