

ATTICA – THE PAEONID CLAN (THE CLAN OF PEISISTRATUS)



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The heavy cartwheel, a symbol that appears after Solon's retirement, and corresponds to the period of the 10 Archons (580 BCE - 578 BCE), when a short lived political arrangement, allows for 3 out of the 10 Archons to be elected from the class of farmers, or the agricultural party, 2 from the labour party, while the rest come from the Eupatridae, the ruling aristocratic families of Attica. This political alliance represents a state of emergency, in order to check and avert the planned coup d' état by Archon Damasias, and the Paionid clan (headed by Peisistratus), which fights for equal rights on behalf of the lower classes, emerges as their champion, so the symbol is a form of shorthand for the country farmer's cart, which is obviously used as an emblem by members of the clan and farmers. Based on an amphora by the painter Nicosthenes during the second decade of the VI century BCE, and coins issued in the same period (*Wiener Vorlegeblätter für Archäologische Übungen, Vienna, 1869-1891, 1890/1, Platt V, Ib & Paris, B.T. II i, Plate XXXIII 14*).

2

The forepart of the horse, symbol of the Paionid clan, which also claims its ancestry from Homeric Pylos and the family of Nestor, a well known lover of horses, while the symbol is almost *un type parlant*, implying names of members of the leading Peisistratid family that contain the term hippos (horse), as his father Hippocrates, or his sons Hippias and Hippachus. Based on an amphora during the last decades of the VI century BCE and coins issued by the clan, obviously under the influence of Peisistratus himself during 595 BCE - 562 BCE, with most possible date the period between 570 BCE – 565 BCE, when Peisistratus captures the island of Salamis, and escalates the conflict with Megara for the port of Nisaia in the Saronic gulf (*Northwick Park Private Collection / Captain E. G. Spencer Churchill & Pozzi, 1920, Plate XLVII 1509 & Seltman, Cambridge*).



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The horse, symbol of the Paionid clan, remains for at least seven decades the dominant emblem of its members, appearing in various vases. Based on an amphora during the middle of the VI century BCE, and on a kylix from the workshop of the potter Hieron, during the beginning of the V century BCE (*Floruit, Jahrbuch des Kaiserlichen deutschen Archaelogischen Instituts, Berlin, 1917, xxxii, σελίς 137 & Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*).



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The head of the horse, an alternative symbol of the Paionid clan, and quite possibly, the emblem of Peisistratus himself. It appears on coins issued by the clan in the period between 570 BCE – 565 BCE, probably honouring its leader for his successful operations against Megara, that culminate in the possession of Salamis. Based on coins of this period and mainly on an amphora, by the great painter Amasis during 520 BCE – 510 BCE (*Musée du Louvre, de Luynes, Vases, Plate I 7 & Pozzi, 1920, Plate XLVII 1509 & Seltman, Cambridge*).

6

Head of the goddess Athena, a symbol that is promoted by Peisistratus during his three periods of tyranny, reflecting his efforts to establish a Panathenean cult, opposed to the localised cults of the landed aristocracy, and as a clearly recognizable emblem, to unify his followers. Based on coins of the periods of his tyranny, and on a vase after the middle of the VI century BCE (*Museum of Fine Arts, 37-19, Houston, USA*).



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The owl, the dominant symbol of the goddess Athena, and emblem adopted by followers of Peisistratus that remain outside the big clans of Attica, or are loosely connected through the process of recognition and adoption, running always the risk of being disfranchised through legal procedures, and ending up as slaves. Based on an olpe by the great painter Amasis during the period between 550 BCE – 530 BCE, which marks the peak of Peisistratus' power in Attica (*F 30, Musée du Louvre*).

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