

The Athenian democracy in the 5th Century BC

BOOK P 30 TO 94

In the Antiquity, Greeks and Romans imposed their domination.

They are remembered as influent civilisations.

The Athenians invented democracy which gave Athens a leading role.

Why was Athens a dominant city in the Mediterranean, during the Antiquity?

A 3 part-layout

- Athens's integration in the Greek world**

- Athens's political system: the first
democracy**

- Criticisms toward (s) the democracy**

I/ Athens was well integrated in the Greek world

A/Location



South of Greece, in the Aegean Sea

The biggest city of Greece :

it was 2500 SqKm large (1/3 of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques)

A wide territory called THE ATTICA

A lot of a resources and a commercial power

It was highly populated : 250 000 inhabitants

B/ Athens's power

Athens won a war against the Persian empire in 480 BC (The Medic wars) thanks to its powerful fleet.

Athens was a maritime power: it was a THALASSOCRACY

So, after this victory, the **DELIAN League (LIGUE DE DELOS)** was formed.

It was a **coalition** of Greek cities:

Athens protected them in return of a tribute

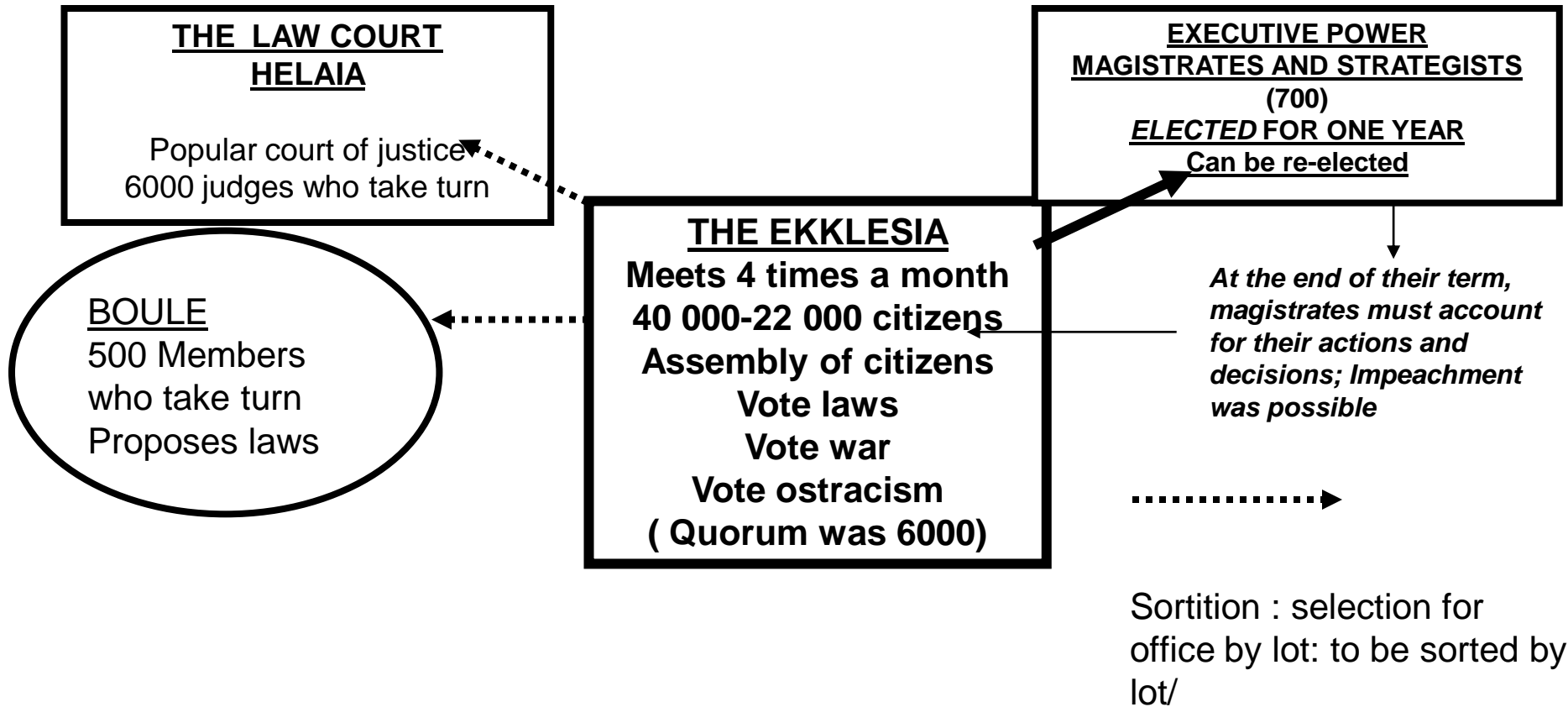
So, Athens was very rich/wealthy

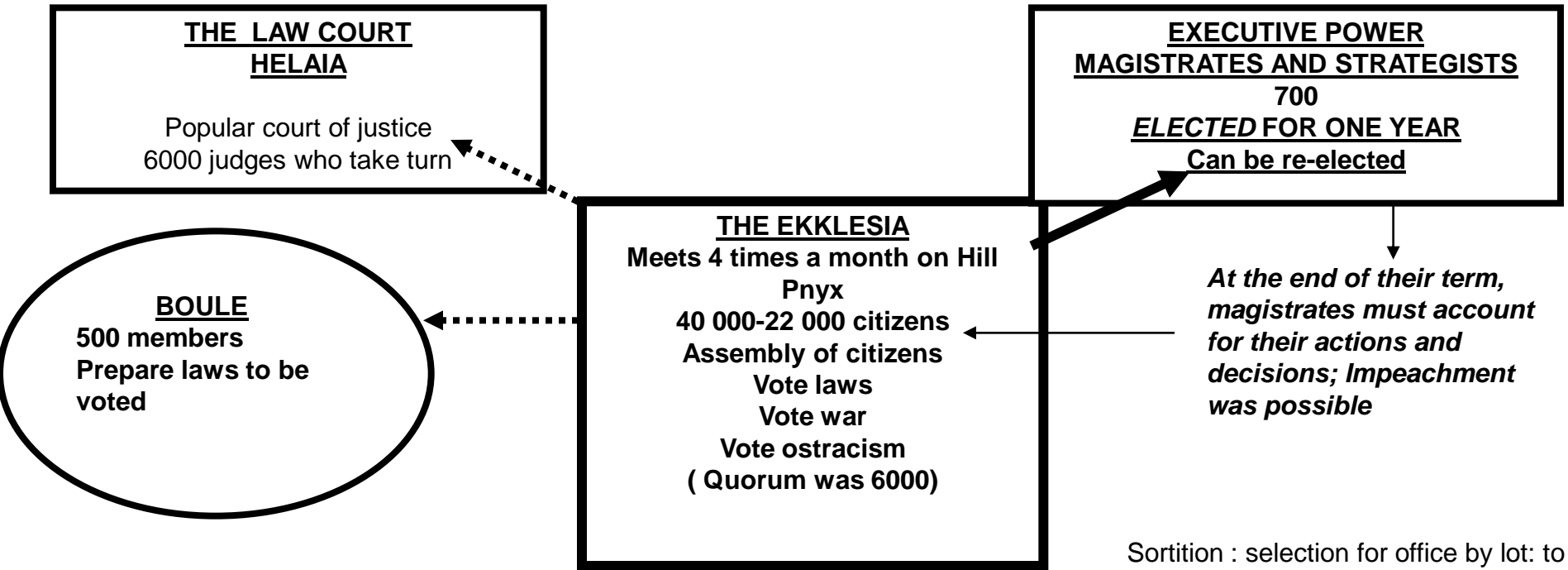
Athens was a huge economic and military power.

But, It was also a model for other cities because of its unusual political system

II/ An unprecedented political system: the Athenian democracy

A/ The Athenian constitution





The legislative power belonged to :

the Boule and Ekklesia

they prepared laws and voted laws

The executive power belonged to :

Magistrates and strategists

they enforced laws

The judiciary power belonged to : The Law court / Helaia

they judged people

B/ Citizens and non-citizens

1/Full Citizens

Adult males after 2 years of military service (EPHEBIA: 18-20)

Born to Athenian parents: at first only from an Athenian father, then, from an Athenian mother's father too

Rights:

Vote, hold political office, own land

Duties:

Military service

Only about **10–20%** of Athens' population were citizens

2/Non- Citizens

Metics: Resident foreigners from Greece

Free

Could work and trade

Paid special tax

No voting rights

Xenoi: Resident foreigners from outside Greece

Same as Metics but non- Greek

Women:

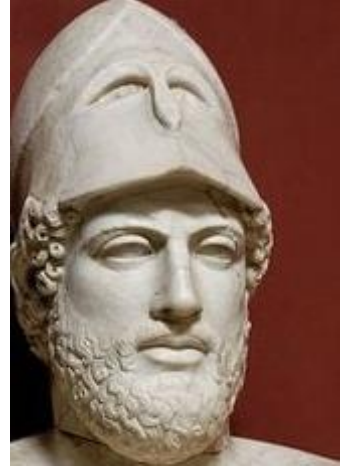
No political rights

Focused on household, prepared religious ceremonies

Slaves

Despite the ideal of equality, the Athenian democracy was highly unequal **by our standards.**

C /Pericles, the founding father of the Athenian democracy



He was a strategist from 461 to 429 BC

He worked to make Athens a great and fair democracy.

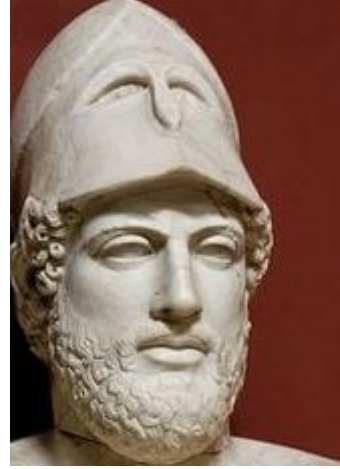
He was famous for:

-creating an allowance, so poor citizens could go into politics: **THE MISTHOS** (corresponded to a worker's wage)

- making citizenship more restrictive (Athenian mother's father)

-being re-elected as a strategist during **30 years**

Let's work on one of his most famous speech



The Greek historian Thucydides recounted the story of the Peloponnesian War during which Pericles pronounced the funeral oration for the Athenian soldiers who fell during the war

Our system of government does not copy the institutions of our neighbours. It's more the case of our being a model to other than of our imitating anyone else.

Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hand not of a minority but of the whole people.

When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting someone before someone else in position of public responsibility, what counts is not membership of a particular class, but the actual ability that the man possesses. No one as long as he has it in him to be in the service of the state, is kept in political obscurity because of poverty. (...)

From: Thucydides, "the Peloponnesian War" Book II. Translated by rex Warner, Penguin books, 1954.

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1- Identify the document

TO PRESENT/IDENTIFY A DOCUMENT:

-The author:

Periclès made/delivered the speech. But it is quoted by Thucydides

-The nature:

Extract from a speech

-The topic/the/subject:

It deals with/ It is about the features/characteristics of Athens's democracy

-The date:

5th Century BC

-The context

Power and domination of Athens in Greece
First democracy in history

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2-Why is Athens a democracy?

“Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hand not of a minority but of the whole people.”

ATHENIANS HAD THE POWER

BUT (what he does not say in the text):

he restricted democracy

40,000 first then 22,000 as your mother's father had to be Athenian too

WOMEN DID NOT COUNT IN POLITICS

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3- According to this text, was it a fair system?

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everyone is equal before the law

ISONOMY -HELAIIA's members are chosen by lot

what counts is not membership of a particular class, but the actual ability that the man possesses

SORTITION by lot : but we can wonder: is ABILITY a priority OR just RANDOM counts?

No one as long as he has it in him to be in the service of the state, is kept in political obscurity because of poverty. (...)

MISTHOS

BUT he does not say (that):

**VOTING CAMPAIGN TO BE ELECTED MAGISTRATE
REQUIRED EDUCATION AND MONEY and the Misthos was
not high enough**

III/ Criticisms towards the democracy

A/Political criticisms

Only a minority were citizens(40 000 -22 000) (right of blood)

Women, metics, slaves excluded from politics

B/Social criticisms

There were social classes in Athens and money was an issue to have political power: citizens were not equal

Influential speakers dominated debates and influenced people : It's called demagoguery

Pericles's enemies liked to say he was a demagogue

Social Group	Wealth & Property	Political Role	Military Role	Social Status & Influence
Pentakosiomedi mnoi	Very wealthy landowners	Eligible for highest offices	Cavalry leaders possible	Highest prestige, political power
Hippeis	Wealthy, could afford horses	Can hold important offices	Cavalry	Upper-middle class
Zeugitae	Moderate wealth, landowning	Regular political rights	Hoplites (heavy infantry)	Middle class
Thetes	Poorer citizens, laborers	Basic political rights	Naval rowers, light infantry	Lowest citizen class
Aristocratic families	Old noble lineage	Informal influence	Varies	Social prestige beyond wealth

PERICLES



CONCLUSION

So Athens was really a powerful city which left a print in the Mediterranean

Indeed, it was a military power and a wealthy city.

On top of this, its political system became a model.

However, this power was not flawless and its system was criticized

Athens was defeated by Sparta in the Peloponnesian War at the end of the 5th Century BC

The democracy did not survive

MIND MAP TO REVIEW

