

## THE OFFICIALS

The people of Athens were divided up into 10 tribes. The Council was made up of 500 citizens - 50 elected from each tribe. The tribes took turns running the Council and the daily affairs of the state.

Under the democratic system, the most important officials were the *stratego*i who were 10 military commanders, elected annually, one from each tribe. Popular *stratego*i, like Pericles, were reelected many times.

There were also 9 archons, also chosen annually, but their duties were mostly ceremonial rather than political. Three of them, shown below, had special roles in the government of Athens.



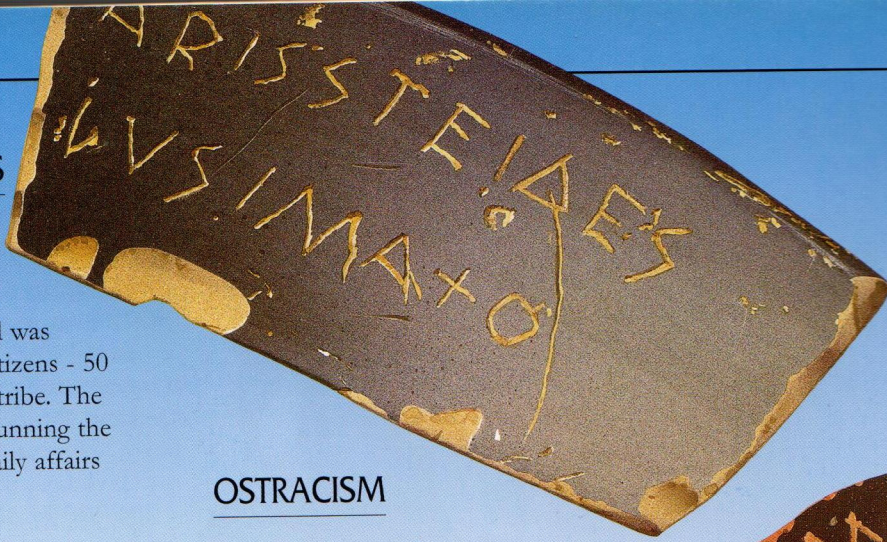
The Basileus Archon presided over the law courts, arranged religious sacrifices and the renting of temple land, and supervised festivals and feasts.



The Eponymous Archon chose the men who financed the choral and drama contests. He was also responsible for lawsuits about inheritance and the affairs of heiresses, orphans and widows.



The Polemarch Archon was in charge of athletic contests held to commemorate men killed in battle. He also dealt with the legal affairs of metics.



## OSTRACISM

The Athenians had an interesting system for getting rid of unpopular politicians. A vote was held once a year, at which any citizen could write down the name of a politician he wished to see banished on a piece of broken pot called an *ostrakon* (plural: *ostraka*). If more than 6,000 votes were cast against someone, that person would have to leave Athens for 10 years. This procedure is known as ostracism, after the pottery on which the name was written.



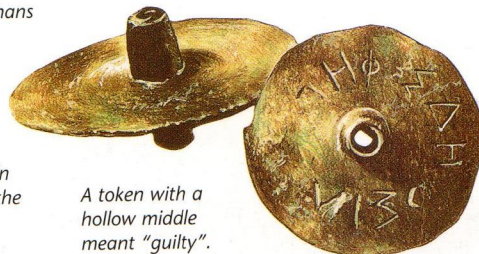
These ostraka show the names of two Athenian soldiers and politicians, Aristideides and Cimon. They were both ostracized, and then later recalled to help out in wartime.

## THE LAW

One of the duties of an Athenian citizen was to take part in the legal system, because there were no professional lawyers. All citizens over 30 were expected to volunteer for jury service. Each jury had over 200 men, which made it too difficult to bribe or intimidate all the jurors.



These bronze tokens were used for voting. A token with a solid middle meant "innocent".



A token with a hollow middle meant "guilty".

Citizens had to conduct their own cases, but they could hire speechwriters to help out. Metics (see page 173) could not speak in court. They had to ask a citizen to speak for them.