

invented by men to induce fear and obedience.⁴⁹ The three best symbols of the reaction to such thinking may be (1) the recall of Alcibiades from the Sicilian expedition in 415 b.c.; (2) the exile of Diagoras of Miletus, who was likely prosecuted for questioning religion, although his reputation as an atheist is probably overblown; and (3) the execution of Socrates, ostensibly for teaching the youth in ways that denied the existence of the gods accepted in Athens. These attacks on religion were connected to criticisms of scientific thinking, and were parodied in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, where the existence of justice is denied, the gods are reduced to physical principles, and philosophical education is a means to subvert justice in the law courts.

Diagoras is alluded to in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, 830, perhaps to tarnish Socrates with atheism. Aristophanes' *Birds* 1071–75, has a price on Diagoras's head. The date of his exile was likely c. 431 b.c., or c. 415, after the massacre of Melos.

The second reaction was constitutional and began with the commitment to rediscover, and to reinscribe, the ancestral laws of Athens. These were the norms and principles, embodied in laws, that could set proper limits to the actions of the Assembly, but would not require the establishment of a political body superior to the Assembly. Athens had fallen into problems, many could have claimed, because the Assembly had failed to follow the traditional laws established by Solon and other lawgivers. This was, in the minds of many "conservatives," connected to the rejection of the gods, whom they considered to provide both sanctions for the ancestral laws and moral points of focus for the Athenians. In the late fifth century, the laws had fallen out of use, and had become scattered and disorganized, a process that had begun with the Persian sack of Athens in 480, when the laws, arranged in public displays, may have been destroyed.

Under the oligarchic government of the Four Hundred in 411 b.c., a board of lawmakers (thesmothetai) had been charged with researching these traditional laws and with reinscribing them into stone for public viewing. The very approach was legalistic and intellectual in nature; rather than electing new officials and hoping for a good man to lead them, the Athenians opted for a solution in law, which required public knowledge of the laws. Nearly a decade later, after their defeat by the Spartans in 403, the Athenians continued to grapple with how to maintain their laws, in a tense atmosphere that came at times close to violence. Exiles and others who had fled Athens were trying to return, and whether and how they could regain their citizenship was a hot issue. Tensions were high between supporters of the democracy—who established a fortress on the Munychia, a hill near the Peiraeus—and those who had aided "The Thirty" (the despotic clique, first installed after the Spartan victory, that had waged a campaign of terror that killed some fifteen hundred Athenians). In a battle at the Munychia, the oligarchs were defeated and fled; the democracy was restored. But the desire for vengeance was high, and the Athenians had to decide how far the law could be used to avenge past crimes.

Draco's homicide law was reinscribed in 409/8 Hedrick thinks the Athenian epigraphy was intended to make knowledge available.

To end the vengeance, the restored democracy would ultimately enact, as law, an amnesia (a "forgetting-ness") that made it illegal to prosecute political enemies for past grievances. In addition, the traditional laws of Solon were reinscribed, and applied only to crimes after 403 b.c.⁵⁴ This task, which took years, may have culminated under the leadership of Euclides, in 403/402 b.c., when the Ionic alphabet was made the standard for official communication. A distinct office, the nomothesia,