

## **Law Topic 5: Solon. The Athenian Lawmaker.**

*Read the text. (Прочитайте текст).*

### **Solon (b. 630 – d. 560 B.C.)**

Solon, the Athenian statesman, is known as one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece. He ended exclusive aristocratic control of the government,

substituted a system of control by the wealthy, and introduced a new and **more humane law code**. He was also a noted poet.

Unfortunately it was not until the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. that accounts of his life and works began to be put together, mostly on the evidence of his poems and his law code. Although certain details have a legendary ring, the main features of his story seem to be reliable.

Solon was **of noble descent** but **moderate means**. He first became **prominent** in about 600 B.C. The early 6<sup>th</sup> century was a troubled time for the Athenians. Society was **dominated** by an **aristocracy of birth**, who **owned** the best land, monopolized the government, and were themselves **split into rival factions**. **The social, economic, and political evils** might well have culminated in a revolution and subsequent **tyranny (dictatorship)**, as they had in other Greek states, had it not been for Solon, to whom Athenians of all classes **turned in the hope of a generally satisfactory solution** of their problems. Because he believed in **moderation** and in an **ordered** society in which each class had its **proper place and function**, his **solution** was not revolution but reform.

Solon's **great contribution to the future good of Athens** was his new code of laws. The first **written code** at Athens, that of Draco, was still **in force**. Draco's laws **were shockingly severe** (hence the term *draconian*), **so severe** that they were said to have been written not in ink but in blood. **On the civil side** they **permitted enslavement for debt**, and death seems to have been the **penalty for almost all criminal offenses**. Solon **revised** every statute except that **on homicide** and made Athenian law altogether more **humane**.

(Law Worldwide K:2002)

**Exercise 5.1.** *Translate the text. (Перекладіть текст).*

**Exercise 5.2.** *Answer the questions. (Дайте відповіді на запитання).*

1. Who was Solon?
2. Who owned the best land that time?
3. What did Solon believe in?
4. What was Solon's greatest contribution?
5. Did Solon leave anything from Draco's Code?

**Exercise 5.3.** *Render the following text into English using the vocabulary and information from the texts above. (Перекладіть текст, використовуючи лексику та інформацію з попередніх текстів).*

Драконт – афінський законотворець. Його дуже суворі закони передбачали лише одне покарання – смерть. Зараз його ім'я пов'язують із жорстокістю. Кодекс Драконта прийнято у 621 р. до н.е. Він не був першим записаним зводом афінських законів. Пізніше Солон скасував драконтові закони і видав нові, залишивши тільки одне покарання – смерть – за вбивство.

**Exercise 5.4.** *Creative writing. (Творче завдання).*

*Analyze the ancient laws. Were they perfect? Think up what features from ancient law we can use in modern society? Write down a short essay (10-15 sentences). (Проаналізуйте стародавні закони. Чи були вони досконалі? Подумайте, які деталі стародавніх законів можна використовувати зараз. Напишіть есе (10-15 речень).*