

ATHENS AND ROME: LIFE AND CULTURE IN CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

The City of Athens and Rome
Lecture 3 – Status and Occupation

CLCS4007

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Social and Legal Status

- ▣ Social and legal status, as well as influence and power do not always conform or equate to each other.
- ▣ Social status = how you are regarded among your peers and other members of society.
- ▣ Legal status = your rights, duties and subjection to the law.
- ▣ Influence and power = ability to control, influence or be taken into account (informal as well as formal).

Social and Legal Status in Athens

- ❑ Citizens = an adult son of an Athenian Citizen (after 451/50 BC both father and mother must be Athenian).
- ❑ Metic = a resident foreigner (compulsory registration after 1 months stay in Athens).
- ❑ Slave = a individual who has been deprived of most or all legal and social rights, and is the property of his/her master.

Citizenship Qualifications

□ Ancient Athens

- Registered in deme
 - Citizen
 - Male
 - 18 or over

- not disqualified

[disqualified are:

- Any *atimos* (dishonourable person); judicial status given as direct or indirect punishment
 - = internal exile
- Public debtors]

□ Modern UK

- 18 or over
- UK national
- registered in a constituency
- not disqualified

[disqualified are:

- Member House of Lords
- Prisoner
- Recently convicted of electoral fraud
- 'Idiot' or 'lunatic']

Minors

- ▣ Citizen children acquired the right to life after 5 days.
 - 'Pot-found' babies were discovered in the agora
 - abandonment illegal in Thebes
 - ▣ unwanted children officially auctioned to lowest bidder, and gained citizenship on death of adopters
- ▣ Boys acquired the right to rule and be ruled in turn once they were registered with the deme (at 18)
- ▣ Females never acquired that right
 - Remained politically and legally minors for life
 - Hence needed male guardian (*kurios*) for any interaction with officialdom.

Rights and Duties

- ▣ To be protected from physical attack
- ▣ To attend, propose, discuss, and vote on proposals in assembly
- ▣ To take turn in various offices
- ▣ To use the courts
- ▣ To own land
- ▣ To participate in festivals and sacrifices
- ▣ To exercise in gymnasiums
- ▣ To obey the laws
- ▣ To defend the state (serve in military forces in whatever capacity possible when called up)
- ▣ To serve in office when chosen
- ▣ To learn how to perform those offices (ignorance is not an excuse for incompetence)

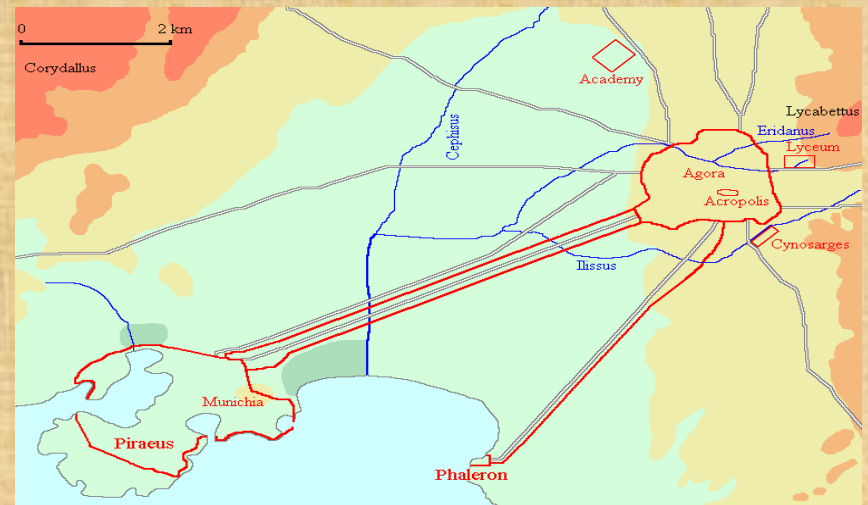
Citizen numbers

- ▣ Numbers much disputed; probably around 30,000 adult males:
 - Multiply for women and children to give a 'citizen' population of c. 135,000 (not including metics and slaves)
 - Around 1/5 or less of the population 'rules and is ruled in turn'.



Metics (1)

- ▣ *Metoikos* = cohabiter, someone who lives with the Athenians
- ▣ Composed of two groups:
 - Free people who moved to Athens.
 - Freed slaves who stayed in Athens.
- ▣ Estimated population of c. 10,000 in fifth century BC, living mostly in city and Peiraios



http://www.livius.org/a/1/maps/athens_map.gif



Metics (2)

RIGHTS

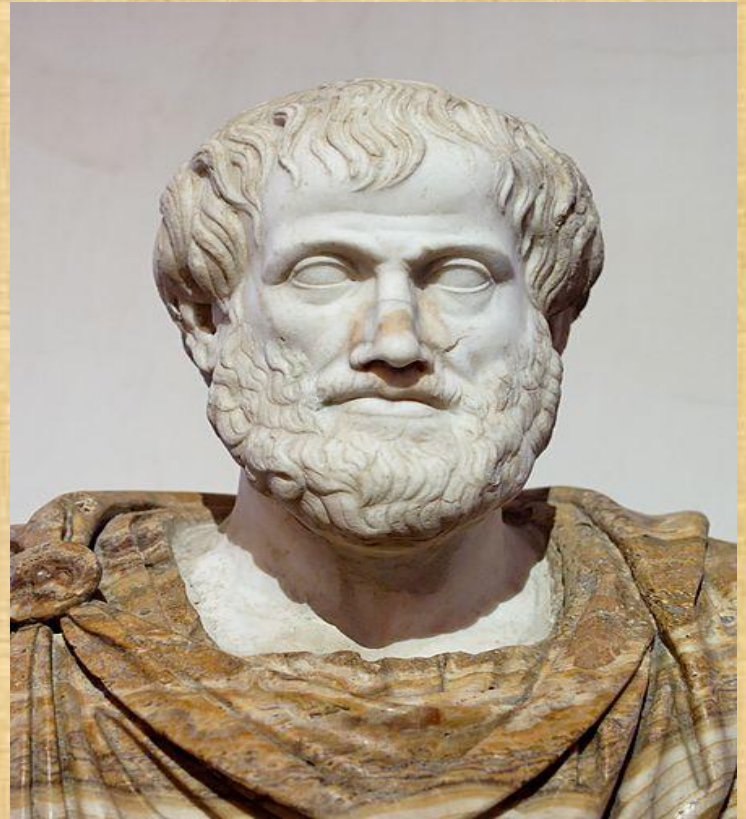
- ▣ To be protected from seizure (enslavement and reprisals).
- ▣ To use the courts via a *prostates*.
- ▣ Equal speech (*isegoria*).

DUTIES

- ▣ To obey the laws.
- ▣ To serve in military forces when called.
- ▣ To have a citizen patron.
- ▣ To pay the metic tax.

Famous Metics

- ❑ Pericles + family lived as metics in Sicyon. when his father was ostracised from Athens.
- ❑ Aspasia of Miletus – mistress of Pericles.
- ❑ Lysias of Syracuse – speechwriter.
- ❑ Aristotle of Stageira – philosopher (pupil of Plato).



Aristotle (copy of a statue by Lysippos).

Social Classes in Athens

- ▣ *Pentakosiomedimnoi* – those that owned land able to yield more than 500 *medimni* a year.
- ▣ *Hippeis* – those that could afford to maintain a horse.
- ▣ *Zeugitai* – those that could afford to keep two oxen.
- ▣ *Thetes* – the lowest social class, those whose property in land yielded less than 150 *medimni*.
- ▣ *Medimnos* = c.52 dry litres (equivalent to about 48 days of rations by Athenian standards).

Common Occupations

- ▣ Agriculture – farming ones own land or having others farm it.
- ▣ Casual labour (to be permanently in someone's employ would be dishonourable).
- ▣ Craft industries – potters, smiths, tanners, masons, sculptures etc.
- ▣ Other services – tutoring, medicine etc.
- ▣ (Women particularly) – weaving cloths in household.
- ▣ Merchants – petty and large scale.
- ▣ Banking (lending money).
- ▣ Vendors (selling items in the market).

1) “We now turn to Shame and Shamelessness... withholding a deposit or otherwise wronging people about money... making profit in petty or disgraceful ways... borrowing when it will seem like begging...” **Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1383b-1384a.**

2) “The beginning of last month he [the Demos personified] bought a slave, a Paphlagonian tanner [Cleon], an arrant rogue, the incarnation of slander. This man of leather knows his old master thoroughly...”
Aristophanes *Knights* lines 43-46.

“But you will see this more clearly if you hear what the property was. My father, men of the jury, left two factories, both doing a large business. One was a sword-manufactory, employing thirty-two or thirty-three slaves, most of them worth five or six minae each and none worth less than three minae. From these my father received a clear income of thirty minae each year. The other was a sofa-manufactory, employing twenty slaves, given to my father as security for a debt of forty minae. These brought him in a clear income of twelve minae. In money he left as much as a talent, loaned at the rate of a drachma a month, the interest of which amounted to more than seven minae a year.” – Demosthenes 27.9.

- ▣ 1 talent = 60 minae; 1 mina = 100 drachmae; 1 drachma = 6 obols.
- ▣ Drachma = 4.3 grams of silver.

Status, Power and Influence – Cleisthenes

- ▣ Member of the elite Alcmaeonid family.
- ▣ Initial failure to win overall support from other traditional landed elites.
- ▣ Initiates reforms that are popular with the wider *demos*.

“The people having taken control of affairs, Cleisthenes was their leader and was head of the people. For almost the chief initiative in the expulsion of the tyrants was taken by the Alcmaeonids, and they accomplished most of it by party faction” – Aristotle
Athenian Constitution
20.4.

Status, Power and Influence – Pasion

- Initially a slave, who ran the banking interests of two citizens.
- Freed, inherits bank, becomes very wealthy.
- Provided the state with 1000 shields and a trireme.
- Granted citizenship.

“For although to you, men of Athens, who are citizens by birth, it would be a disgrace to esteem any conceivable amount of wealth above your honourable descent, yet those who obtain citizenship as a gift either from you or from others, and who in the first instance, thanks to this good fortune, were counted worthy of the same privileges, because of their success in money-making, and their possession of more wealth than others, must hold fast to these advantages.” –
Demosthenes 36.30.

Social and Legal Status in Rome

- Roman citizens (*optimo iure* and *non optimo iure*)
 - those born of a citizen father and a free mother
 - freedmen (limits placed on it)
 - children of freedmen (full citizen rights).
- Latin rights.
- *Socii* – subjects of communities with treaty obligations towards Rome.
- Local citizenship (e.g. Alexandrian citizenship).
- *Peregrini* (free provincial subjects).
- Slaves.

“The principal division of the *ius* of persons is the following, namely, that all men are either free or slaves.

Again, men who are free are either freeborn or freedmen.

Freeborn are those who are free by birth, freedmen are those who have been manumitted from legal slavery.

Again, there are three types of freedmen: they are either classified as Roman citizens, Latins, or ‘surrendered foreigners’...” – **Gaius *Institutes* 1.3** (mid-late second century AD).

Legal Rights of Roman Citizenship

- Right to vote in assemblies (*Ius suffragiorum*).
 - Right to stand for public office (*Ius honorum*).
 - Marriage and parental rights (*Ius connubii*).
 - Right to make contracts, hold property and initiate/conduct legal cases (*Ius commercii*).
 - Cannot be legally tortured.
 - Immunity from some taxation (though subject to poll tax).
 - Right to enlist in Roman legion.
- “But Paul replied, "They have publicly beaten us without a trial and put us in prison, and we are Roman citizens. So now they want us to leave secretly? Certainly not! Let them come themselves to release us!"”
- St Paul Acts 16.37.

Enfranchisement

- ▣ Social War (91-88 BC) and *Lex Iulia* – granting of Roman citizenship to most of Italian *socii*.
- ▣ Manumission – *Lex Aelia Sentia* and *Lex Fufia Canina* (imposing restrictions).
- ▣ *Latium maius* – granted all magistrates in provincial communities Roman citizenship (AD 123).
- ▣ *Constitutio Antoniniana* – all freeborn males become Roman citizens (AD 212).

Social Classes

▣ Patricians

- claim lineage back to foundation of Rome.
- disproportionate influence in *Comitia Centuriata*.
- Initially some religious offices and magistracies restricted to Patricians.

▣ Plebeians

- Free Roman citizens.
- *Lex Licinia Sextia* (367 BC) – required one of consuls to be Plebeian.

“When he was satisfied as to its strength, his next step was to provide for that strength being wisely directed. He created a hundred senators; either because that number was adequate, or because there were only a hundred heads of houses who could be created. In any case they were called the ***“Patres”*** in virtue of their rank, and their descendants were called **Patricians”** – Livy 1.8.

Influential Families

PATRICIANS

- ▣ Iulii – Julius Caesar and Augustus.
- ▣ Iunia – Lucius Junius Brutus.



PLEBEIANS

- ▣ Porcii – Cato the Elder and Cato the Younger.
- ▣ Maria – Gaius Marius.



Occupations

REPUTABLE

- ▣ Military service.
- ▣ Landownership and farming.
- ▣ Politics and holding magistracies.
- ▣ Legal Practice.
- ▣ Large scale trading? (preferably discretely and though slaves/freedmen).

DISREPUTABLE

- ▣ Prostitution.
- ▣ Acting.
- ▣ Working with ones hands – e.g. potters, fullers, sculptures(?)
- ▣ Vending/ market stall trader.
- ▣ Petty trading.
- ▣ Doctors, architects, teachers?

“Now in regard to trades and other means of livelihood, which ones are to be considered acceptable to a gentleman and which ones are vulgar, we have been taught, in general, as follows. First, those means of livelihood are rejected as undesirable which incur people's ill-will, as those of tax-gatherers and usurers. Unsuitable for gentleman, even vulgar, are those means of livelihood of all hired workmen whom we pay for mere manual labour, not for artistic skill; for in their case the very wage they receive is a pledge of their slavery. Vulgar we must consider those also who buy from wholesale merchants to retail immediately; for they would get no profits without a great deal of downright lying; and truly there is no action that is meaner than misrepresentation. And all craftsmen are engaged in vulgar trades; for no workshop can have anything liberal about it. Least respectable of all are those trades which cater for sensual pleasures: Fishmongers, butchers, cooks, and poulterers, and fishermen, as Terence [playwright] says. ‘Add to these, if you please, the perfumers, dancers, and the whole group of ballet dancers’.” – **Cicero *De Officiis* 1.150.**

“But the professions in which either a higher degree of intelligence is required or from which no small benefit to society is derived — medicine and architecture, for example, and teaching — these are proper for those whose social position they are appropriate. Trade, if it is on a small scale, is to be considered vulgar; but if wholesale and on a large scale, importing large quantities from all parts of the world and distributing to many without misrepresentation, it is not to be greatly disparaged. Indeed, it even seems to deserve the highest respect, if those who are engaged in it, satiated, or rather, I should say, satisfied with the fortunes they have made, make their way from the port to a country estate, as they have often made it from the sea into port. But of all the occupations by which gain is secured, **none is better than agriculture, none more profitable, none more delightful, and none more appropriate to a freeman.** - Cicero *De Officiis* 1.151.