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# The So-Called Solonian Property Classes Citizenship in Archaic Athens\*

*Alain Duplouy*

In a recent issue of the *Annales*, Julien Zurbach published a stimulating study on the evolution of land tenure systems in Archaic Greece, relating it to the general historiography on the formation of Greek cities.<sup>1</sup> In particular, he outlined how twentieth-century French historiography progressively shifted from a juridical and institutionalist approach to the Greek city—rooted in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century German public law (*Staatsrecht*)—to an approach focused on sharing, participation, and civic identity, which emerged from the late 1970s on. More specifically, Zurbach carefully traced the epistemological changes that took place within the concept of status, which gradually moved from a legal to a psychological register, from a bundle of rights and duties to a fluid, unstable position based on public esteem and individual prestige. Criticizing this shift and the “debatable interpretations” deriving from it, Zurbach advocates in favor of a legal reappropriation of the concept of status. His critical position focuses on the idea that “new statuses are constantly constructed and contested,” which implies that “those

This article was translated from the French by Christophe Rethoré, revised by Alain Duplouy, and edited by Chloe Morgan and Nicolas Barreyre.

\* This study, which I would like to dedicate to Claude Mossé, has benefited from the comments of Paulin Ismard and the two anonymous readers consulted by the *Annales*. I am very grateful for their remarks. Unless otherwise indicated, translations of Greek texts are taken from the Loeb Classical Library, published by Harvard University Press.  
1. Julien Zurbach, “The Formation of Greek City-States: Status, Class, and Land Tenure Systems,” *Annales HSS (English Edition)* 68, no. 4 (2013): 617-57.

enjoying a strictly equivalent symbolic capital, granted by the same group of individuals or based on identical practices, were rare.”<sup>2</sup> In contrast, Zurbach argues that the notion of “status groups” should be established on a legal basis, members of this kind of group being “characterized by a similar bundle of rights and duties,” guaranteed by a collective decision made by the city. In this article, I will focus closely on some of the different groups that made up the Archaic city, and remind the reader that it is possible to approach the formation of Greek cities and the definition of Archaic citizenship from a perspective that has nothing to do with any legal conception of statuses.

First, however, we need to agree on the concept of citizenship.<sup>3</sup> In 1970, Émile Benveniste drew historians’ attention to the two linguistic models of the ancient city. In Latin, *civitas* is derived from *civis*, but in Greek the opposite is true: *politēs* is a derivative of *polis*. In other words, in the structure of the Greek language (as, incidentally, in both French and English) the citizen cannot be conceived without a city.<sup>4</sup> This linguistic relationship tends to support a historical vision in which the city represents a theoretical, rational entity—Oswyn Murray’s “cities of reason,” for instance.<sup>5</sup> The foundation or reorganization of this entity, attributed to a founding father or *archēgetēs* (such as Theseus in the case of Athens) or a legislator (Draco, Solon, Cleisthenes), supposedly offers a political, legal, social, institutional, economic, cultural, and artistic framework to its members, within which they can be considered as citizens. In this sense, citizens only exist when they belong to a city with clearly defined structures.

The Greek city has generated infinite historiographical debates, most recently synthesized by Vincent Azoulay and Paulin Ismard.<sup>6</sup> Though I do not wish to enter into these debates here, I should briefly clarify my position on the nature and the origin of this entity. As a historian and an archaeologist, I have always found it difficult to imagine the Greek city as a creation emanating from “reason” and to envision it, as Aristotle and Plato did, as a theoretical model of the relationships between the state and the individual that gradually took shape over the course of the Archaic period. Far from considering that the Greek city is

2. Alain Duploux, *Le prestige des élites. Recherches sur les modes de reconnaissance sociale en Grèce entre les X<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> siècles avant J.-C.* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2006), 262.

3. For a detailed historiographical review of work on citizenship in Archaic Greece, see my introduction to the volume *Defining Citizenship in Archaic Greece*, ed. Alain Duploux and Roger W. Brock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

4. Émile Benveniste, “Deux modèles linguistiques de la cité,” in *Échanges et communications. Mélanges offerts à Claude Lévi-Strauss*, ed. Jean Pouillon and Pierre Maranda (Paris: Mouton, 1970), 1:589-96; Alain Duploux, “L’individu et la cité. Quelques stratégies identitaires et leur contexte,” *Revue des études anciennes* 108 (2006): 61-78.

5. Oswyn Murray, “Cities of Reason,” in *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander*, ed. Oswyn Murray and Simon Price (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 1-25.

6. Vincent Azoulay and Paulin Ismard, “Les lieux du politique dans l’Athènes classique. Entre structures institutionnelles, idéologie civique et pratiques sociales,” in *Athènes et le politique. Dans le sillage de Claude Mossé*, ed. Pauline Schmitt Pantel and François de Polignac (Paris: Albin Michel, 2007), 271-309.

based on a kind of “social contract” negotiated within elites to reinforce their domination over the masses, I believe that it is the result of a long, empirical process aimed at defining the contours of a social community that gradually came to consider its members as citizens. In this sense, I follow the program that François de Polignac set out in the mid-1990s when he proposed to “rethink the city,” or, more precisely, to “forget the city in order to think about society,” discarding the concept of *polis* as “more misleading label than heuristic concept.”<sup>7</sup> Emerging from the ruins of the Mycenaean palatial system (with which it nevertheless showed obvious signs of continuity, notably religious), the Greek world of the early Iron Age was driven by a dynamic of rebuilding and restructuring social communities where the political—in short, the “common”—was placed at the center of collective concerns. This formative stage of the Greek city began well before the so-called “eighth-century renaissance.” It was mainly the result of mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, for conformity with the model that gradually came to be valued by the group was essential in order to be accepted and acknowledged by its members.<sup>8</sup> To understand the construction of Greek cities, it is thus crucial to grasp the creation of citizen communities—that is, of groups of citizens—and to determine the modalities of this process. This is why I insist on resituating individual action at the heart of the formation of Greek cities in a particularly dynamic way, and on reinstating its role in the shaping of communities and the identities connected to them.

For Benveniste, the structure of the language was not necessarily a direct reflection of reality: “each time it is only part of the language and part of society that are being compared in this way.” The linguistic derivation between *polis* and *politēs* evokes only “the possibility (which is all that one can say a priori) of a parallel situation in the realm of social realities.”<sup>9</sup> Benveniste never claimed to work on anything other than a world of representations. Linguistic derivation should not, then, be confused with the historical process of the formation of the city and the definition of the citizen. The link between the city and the citizen cannot be conceived as the simple relationship between an abstract entity and its members. As Josine Blok has shown, the term *politēs* was never used in its singular form before the last quarter of the fifth century BCE.<sup>10</sup> During the Archaic period, it only occurs in the plural form, *politai*, whose collective dimension is, by definition,

7. François de Polignac, “Repenser la ‘cité’ ? Rituels et société en Grèce archaïque,” in *Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis*, ed. Mogens H. Hansen and Kurt A. Raaflaub (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1995), 7-19.

8. See Alain Duplouy, “Culti e cultura nella Grecia di età geometrica (1000-750),” in *Alle origini della Magna Grecia. Mobilità, migrazioni, fondazioni* (Taranto: Istituto per la storia e l’archeologia della Magna Grecia, 2012), 1:101-32.

9. Benveniste, “Deux modèles linguistiques,” loc. cit.

10. Josine H. Blok, “Recht und Ritus der Polis. Zu Bürgerstatus und Geschlechterverhältnissen im klassischen Athen,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 278, no. 1 (2004): 1-26; Blok, “Becoming Citizens: Some Notes on the Semantics of ‘Citizen’ in Archaic Greece and Classical Athens,” *Klio* 87, no. 1 (2005): 7-40.

essential. Before it was a status granted by the *polis*, the Archaic *politēs* was above all a “fellow citizen,” who existed only in relation to his peers and not in relation to an abstract statal entity.

This is, however, how the relationship between city and citizens has usually been conceived, as the simple “membership” of an individual in a political entity. In his research on the origins of citizenship in Athens, for instance, Philip Manville invoked the formation of the city: “the quest for the origin of the community will necessarily provide clues about membership in it.”<sup>11</sup> Mogens Hansen, for whom a strict parallel exists between the Greek notion of *polis* and the modern concept of the state as it has been defined since the eighteenth century, likewise claims that “in the ancient Greek city-state culture ‘citizenship’ was what it has become again in the modern world: a person’s juridically defined, inherited, membership in a state, in virtue of which that citizen enjoys a number of political, social and economic privileges in that state which a non-citizen living in the state is deprived of or can enjoy only to a limited extent.”<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, some historians go so far as to conclude that, during the Archaic period, cities could exist without true citizens. As Benedetto Bravo put it (in his critique of the idea), “one could say that in the Archaic period the *polis* already existed, but not the *politai*.”<sup>13</sup> Henri Van Effenterre and Françoise Ruzé talk of “pre-*politeia*,” defined not as “a precise status that preceded Classical citizenship,” but as “the convergence of disparate efforts, enabling the fundamental relationship between individuals and their cities to gradually be defined.”<sup>14</sup> However, this kind of ideal and conceptual Archaic city is not the *polis* that I have found myself confronted with in the sources, whether literary or archaeological. “*Andres gar polis*,” wrote Thucydides, following Alcaeus: “Men make the city.”<sup>15</sup> And these “men” must be our focus, in a perspective that leads from individuals to institutions, and not from institutions to individuals.

Instead of describing the relationship between citizens and their city as “membership,” which implies a top-down vision, I prefer to see Archaic citizenship as a form of “participation.” This is the true meaning of the definition proposed by Aristotle when he spoke of the “right to participate in judicial functions and in office” (his famous *metechein kriseōs kai archēs*),<sup>16</sup> provided that participation is not

11. Philip B. Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 35.

12. Mogens H. Hansen, *Polis: An Introduction to the Ancient Greek City-State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 110-12. See also Hansen, *Polis and City-State: An Ancient Concept and its Modern Equivalent* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard 1998).

13. Benedetto Bravo, “Una società legata alla terra,” in *I Greci. Storia, cultura, arte, società*, vol. 2, *Una storia greca*, part 1, *Formazione*, ed. Salvatore Settis (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1996), 527-61, here p. 531: “si potrebbe dire che nell’età arcaica c’era già la *polis*, ma non c’erano ancora i πολῖται.”

14. Henri Van Effenterre and Françoise Ruzé, *Nomima. Recueil d’inscriptions politiques et juridiques de l’archaïsme grec*, vol. 1, *Cités et institutions* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1994), 25-28.

15. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 8.77.7; Alcaeus, frag. 112.10 and 426.

16. Aristotle, *Politics* 3.1275a23.

restricted to political and judicial institutions, but also includes cults and rituals, war and funerals, the economy and political rivalries, as well as the multiple domains that in reality were related to the practice of citizenship.<sup>17</sup> The result is an active conception of Archaic citizenship that makes it possible to consider the role played by individuals in the construction of communities (the contours of which they helped to define), but also to stress the importance of the social practices that brought these communities to life.

Among the many elements that may have played a part in the definition of citizenship in Archaic Greece, economic factors were essential—if only because land ownership was one of the main privileges of citizens. Unlike Moses Finley, who linked individuals' economic activity to their legal status and considered that land ownership hindered the development of the ancient economy,<sup>18</sup> historians today tend to see economic activity as independent from the legal distinctions established by the Classical city and to highlight the involvement of citizens in activities that were long considered unbefitting of their status.<sup>19</sup> In Archaic Greece, economic capacity, regardless of where it came from, was undoubtedly an essential element in the definition of a citizen and his or her acceptance by the community.<sup>20</sup>

From this point of view, Solonian Athens provides an indispensable case study. Over the course of this article, I will focus my attention on the so-called property classes attributed to Solon, the standard interpretation of which<sup>21</sup> (incidentally implying the existence of a Solonian constitution) relies more on a certain conception of Archaic history essentially inherited from Classical Athens than on a specifically Archaic approach to Greek societies and their functioning.

## Solonian Property Classes

Sources relating to Solonian Athens are rare. Apart from a few fragments of Solon that have unfortunately been decontextualized (or rather recontextualized by later authors), they essentially consist of the first chapters of the *Athenian Constitution* and Plutarch's *Life of Solon*, the latter being largely inspired by the former. These

17. Carmine Ampolo, "Il sistema della polis," in Settis, *Formazione*, 297-342.

18. Moses I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* [1973], updated edition with a foreword by Ian Morris (Berkeley: University of California Press 1999), 48. See also Michel Austin and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, eds. *Economic and Social History of Ancient Greece: An Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1977), 95-97.

19. See Hans van Wees, "The Economy," in *A Companion to Archaic Greece*, ed. Kurt A. Raafaub and Hans van Wees (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 444-67.

20. This theme is explored in greater detail in Alain Duplouy, "Ploutos e cittadinanza in Grecia arcaica," in *Ploutos e Polis. Aspetti del rapporto tra economia e politica nel mondo greco*, ed. Marco Santucci and Valentino Nizzo (Ediarché, forthcoming).

21. Summarized in Francis Prost, "Législateurs, tyrans, lois somptuaires, ou comment définir un groupe social en Grèce ancienne," in *La cité et ses élites. Pratiques et représentation des formes de domination et de contrôle social dans les cités grecques*, ed. Laurent Capdetrey and Yves Lafond (Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2010), 187-210, esp. pp. 195-200.

texts credit Solon with an extensive reform of the citizen body, including its division into four property classes (*telē*) based on disposable income (*timēma*). According to the author of the *Athenian Constitution*:

*[H]e arranged the constitution in the following way: he divided the people by assessment into four classes, as they had been divided before, pentakosiomedimnoi, hippeis, zeugitai and thetes, and he distributed the other offices to be held from among the pentakosiomedimnoi, hippeis and zeugitai—the Nine Archons, the Treasurers, the Vendors of Contracts, the Eleven and the Paymasters, assigning each office to the several classes in proportion to the amount of their assessment; while those who were rated in the thetic class he admitted to the membership of the Assembly and law-courts alone. Any man had to be rated as a pentakosiomedimnos the produce from whose estate was five hundred dry and liquid measures jointly, and in the hippic class those who made three hundred—or as some say, those who were able to keep a horse, and they adduce as a proof the name of the rating as being derived from the fact, and also the votive offerings of the ancients; for there stands dedicated in the Acropolis a statue of Diphilus on which are inscribed these lines: “Anthemion Diphilus’s son dedicated this statue to the gods having exchanged the thetic for the hippic class” and a horse stands beside him, in evidence that ‘hippic’ meant the class able to keep a horse. Nevertheless it is more probable that the hippeis were distinguished by their amounts of produce as the pentakosiomedimnoi were. And men had to be rated in the class of zeugitai who made two hundred measures, wet and dry together; while the rest were rated in the thetic class, being admitted to no office: hence even now when the presiding official asks a man who is about to draw lots for some office what rate he pays, no one whatever would say that he was rated in the thetic class.<sup>22</sup>*

Apart from the order in which the first three classes are listed, we find the same information in a short passage from Aristotle’s *Politics*:

*He appointed all the offices from the notable and the wealthy, the pentakosiomedimnoi and the zeugitai and a third property class called hippic; while the fourth class, the thetes, were admitted to no office.<sup>23</sup>*

Plutarch’s description was also identical:

*In the second place, wishing to leave all the magistracies in the hands of the well-to-do, as they were, but to give the common people a share in the rest of the government, of which they had hitherto been deprived, Solon made an appraisal of the property of the citizens. Those who enjoyed a yearly increase of five hundred measures (wet and dry), he placed in the first class, and called them pentakosiomedimnoi; the second class was composed of those who were able to keep a horse, or had a yearly increase of three hundred*

22. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 7.2-4 [translation modified].

23. Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1274a18-21 [translation modified].



*measures, and they were called Hippada Telountes, since they paid a Knight's tax; the members of the third class, whose yearly increase amounted to two hundred measures (wet and dry together), were called zeugitai. All the rest were called thetes, they were not allowed to hold any office, but took part in the administration only as members of the assembly and as jurors.*<sup>24</sup>

The bibliography on the Solonian property classes is extremely rich, and they have been interpreted in numerous different ways. Set between Cylon's failed coup and Pisistratus's seizure of power, and associated with the series of constitutional reforms undertaken during Solon's archonship in 594/593, modern historians generally consider the Solonian system of property classes to be a pivotal point in the history of Archaic Athens. For many, this reform marked a major step forward for democracy: it deprived the Athenian nobility of their political exclusivity, opening up full citizenship to commoners solely on the basis of their wealth, even if this was still assessed through land ownership.<sup>25</sup> In Athens, the establishment of Solon's property classes is thus supposed to have introduced a social hierarchy and a right to take part in political life based on the sole criterion of means. In the words of Victor Hanson, with this reform "wealth must replace birth as a prerequisite for *polis* participation."<sup>26</sup> According to this interpretation, a class of wealthy people gradually supplanted the old hereditary nobility, the political exclusivity of Theseus's *eupatridai* in particular fading into memory. No longer restricted to the nobility, this new, wealth-based institutional elite supposedly had a broader base than the one it replaced and thus, it was argued, paved the way for democracy. This interpretation seemed all the more satisfying in that the transition from nobility to wealth-based elite corresponded to the Aristotelian principle of aristocracies' degeneration into oligarchies.

This vulgate, however, does not fit with what we now know about the Greek aristocracy. In *Le prestige des élites*, I showed that this hereditary nobility—supposedly formed at the same time as the city and thought to have dominated society throughout the entire Archaic period—is actually a chimera devised by fourth-century-BCE thinkers and developed by nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians. Archaic Greece in fact had multiple elites whose status depended on their

24. Plutarch, *Life of Solon* 18.1-2.

25. Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 55-65; Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens*, 144-46; Chester G. Starr, *The Aristocratic Temper of Greek Civilization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 20-21; Oswyn Murray, *Early Greece*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 194-95; Kurt A. Raaflaub, "Solone, la nuova Atene e l'emergere della politica," in Settis, *Formazione*, 1035-81; Claude Baurain, *Les Grecs et la Méditerranée orientale. Des "siècles obscurs" à la fin de l'époque archaïque* (Paris: PUF, 1997), 460-63; Geoffrey E. M. de Ste. Croix, "The Solonian Census Classes and the Qualification for Cavalry and Hoplite Service," in *Athenian Democratic Origins and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 5-72.

26. Victor D. Hanson, *The Other Greeks: The Family Farm and the Agrarian Roots of Western Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 109-24, here p. 122.



social investment in time- and energy-consuming strategies for achieving social recognition, such as genealogies, weddings, funerals, offerings, banquets, wars, and so on. Even the *eupatridai* of Athens, supposedly one of the three groups issued from Theseus's division of the population (along with the *geomoroi* and the *demiourgoi*),<sup>27</sup> were probably nothing more than a political group of opponents to tyranny formed toward the end of the sixth century—it was only subsequently that their name assumed a new meaning independent of any political and historical context.<sup>28</sup>

Within a social framework like the one established by recent historiography, the Solonian reform cannot represent the transition from a gentilician order to a more open organization of the Athenian city. At the very most, its division of the citizen body into four property classes might be seen as an initial attempt to fix the economic norms of citizen status—unless it was driven by a desire to concretely define a particularly rich and exclusive citizen community via the criterion of land ownership. This attempt would correspond to a kind of “top-down” organization of the citizen body and the elites through the medium of law, modulating access to specific institutions (especially public offices) according to groups defined by property ownership. Finley insisted that the result of such a division of the Athenian citizen body should be understood not as “classes” (which are self-forming), but as “orders” in the Weberian sense (which rely on strong legal and institutional foundations).<sup>29</sup> Be they “classes” or “orders,” however, the definition of these property-based groups—referred to as *telē* by the author of the *Athenian Constitution*<sup>30</sup>—is supposed to have marked a major step in the political organization of the Athenian state, intended to put its citizen body in order and to clarify each individual's rights and duties. This interpretation is far from unequivocal, however, and the institutionalist approach is not necessarily a given for the Archaic period. Indeed it is possible to interpret the “Solonian property classes” in an entirely different way if we reopen the debate on the nature of our sources and how they should be handled.

## A Historiographical and Critical Approach

Solon is one of the best-known figures of the Archaic period. In recent years, however, increasing numbers of questions have been raised about the nature and value of the ancient testimonia and about the authenticity of the surviving fragments of his work. Heated debates continue between specialists, who cannot agree on several crucial points. This is clear in a recent volume on Solon, where the

27. Plutarch, *Life of Theseus* 25.2.

28. Alain Duplouy, “Les Eupatrides d’Athènes, ‘nobles défenseurs de leur patrie,’” *Cahiers du Centre Gustave Glotz* 14 (2003): 7-22; *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, ed. Roger Bagnall (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), “Eupatridai,” 2565-66.

29. Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 48.

30. The word *telos* is never used with this meaning in other contexts, except to designate the Roman equestrian order. See Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 48.45.7.

editors Josine Blok and André Lardinois do not even attempt to reconcile differences or offer a consensual view but, on the contrary, seek to emphasize the points of controversy.<sup>31</sup> It is interesting to note that there are now more philologists than historians among the skeptics and the (hyper)critics; conversely (and almost paradoxically), historians tend to value even the indirect Solonian testimonia and to accept as fact what specialists in the literary tradition themselves cast doubt on. Strangely enough, however, the historiographical approach—which attempts to explain the genesis of the Solonian tradition and would probably enable both perspectives to be reconciled—is no longer really popular.

This approach was explored by Claude Mossé in an article published in the *Annales* and somewhat forgotten today, especially outside the French-language historiography.<sup>32</sup> Mossé was interested in the way that societies of the past constructed and transmitted particular images of their history, and in this article she focused on how the image of Solon as a founding father of the Athenian democracy was created from the end of the fifth century BCE on. Recalling the traumatic impact that the two oligarchic revolutions of the end of the fifth century had on the development of the fourth-century Athenian democracy, Mossé stressed the extent to which the restored democracy was deliberately associated with the tradition of Solon's reforms. From this perspective, she raised several questions about the content and the Solonian origin of the laws that were reworked by a committee of *nomothetai* in the late fifth and early fourth centuries. Given the extent of these revisions and Solon's important place in the democratic imagination of fourth-century Athens, Mossé adopted a skeptical position: "If ... there is no doubt that Athenian society underwent profound changes in the course of the sixth century and if moreover it is possible to connect certain of these changes with Solon's work in the social sphere, in contrast it seems more difficult to fit them into a consistent system developed by the legislator." She continues: "This evaluation of income in measures of grain or liquids lends Aristotle's information an archaizing tone which can only authenticate its source. Nevertheless, ... the names borne by the four classes raise many problems." *Hippeis* and *zeugitai* apparently refer to "military categories," even though the Solonian division of the citizen body did not imply any military obligations and was simply intended to define conditions of access to public offices. In addition, "accepting for the archaic period that a drachma is equivalent to a *medimnos*, might it not be supposed that the term *pentakosiomedimnoi* designated at first, not those who had five hundred measures of produce, but those who, at a given time, had been liable to a contribution of five hundred measures?"

31. Josine H. Blok and André P. M. H. Lardinois, eds., *Solon of Athens: New Historical and Philological Approaches* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

32. Claude Mossé, "Comment s'élabore un mythe politique : Solon, 'père fondateur' de la démocratie athénienne," *Annales ESC* 34, no. 3 (1979): 425-37. An English translation was published twenty-five years after the original French article: Claude Mossé, "How a Political Myth Takes Shape: Solon, 'Founding Father' of the Athenian Democracy," in *Athenian Democracy*, ed. Peter J. Rhodes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 242-59. See also Mossé, "Due miti politici: Licurgo e Solone," in Settis, *Formazione*, 1325-35.

(Mossé here thinks particularly of the “tithe established by Pisistratus.”) In this regard, “one may wonder whether the heterogeneous nature of the names applied to these four classes, far from relating to a systematic redistribution brought about by Solon, did not in fact transmit a reality which was quite different: superimposing, in the course of the sixth century, on [de facto] distinctions linked to military roles a new redistribution based on wealth, and leading to setting apart amongst the ‘cavalry’ those who were liable to the tithe of five hundred measures.” As for the systematic coding of the division, Mossé was tempted to attribute it to Cleisthenes, suggesting that the authorship and the nature of such a system of property classes may have been reinterpreted and modified in the historical discourse of fourth-century Athens, the image of a moderate legislator being preferable to that of a revolutionary reformer. In other words, by placing this system at the core of the ancestral constitution (*patrios politeia*)—which corresponded to the moderate democracy that various fourth-century philosophers and historians were calling for—the historical vulgate relayed by the author of the *Athenian Constitution* simply confirmed the image of Solon as the “founding father of Athenian democracy,” a “wise and moderate democracy in which the power of the *demos* was tempered by the recruitment of magistrates on a basis of assessment of wealth.”<sup>33</sup>

As Louis Gernet once observed about a similar matter, “a text is always a testimony: if this one does not concern sixth-century constitutional history, it may concern the history of ideas in the fifth century.”<sup>34</sup> Mossé’s study did not simply aim to demonstrate the inner workings of a historiographical construction such as the “invention” (in the sense of Nicole Loraux’s *Invention of Athens*) of Solon’s character in the fourth century. Her goal was also to investigate Archaic *realia* by removing all the elements associated with reinterpretations introduced during the Classical period. This implies questioning the information provided in the *Athenian Constitution*, and not necessarily accepting it all as fact. I do not necessarily follow Mossé on all accounts: equating the five hundred *medimnoi* to a tithe (and not to total production), for example, would imply huge properties of approximately three hundred hectares.<sup>35</sup> However, her article continues to open up avenues of research on Archaic Athens that are particularly stimulating. More recently, Kurt Raaflaub has also adopted a critical position in regard to the Solonian tradition, drawing

33. Mossé, “How a Political Myth Takes Shape,” 249-54 and 259.

34. Louis Gernet, “Les dix archontes de 581,” *Revue de philologie* 12 (1938): 216-27, here p. 227.

35. According to the figures presented in Lin Foxhall, “A View from the Top: Evaluating the Solonian Property Classes,” in *The Development of the Polis in Archaic Greece*, ed. Lynette G. Mitchell and Peter J. Rhodes (London: Routledge, 1997), 113-36, especially pp. 130-31. The fiscal interpretation has recently been taken up again in Christophe Flament, “Classes censitaires soloniennes et impôt sur les produits agricoles. Réflexions sur l’organisation sociale et financière d’Athènes au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère,” *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 90, no. 1 (2012): 57-76. Even so, the author finds himself obliged to “question the accuracy of the numbers cited by Pseudo-Aristotle” (p. 62), with the exception of the qualification threshold of the *pentakosiomedimnoi*, evidently inherent in their name.

attention to the numerous inconsistencies in the ancient sources and the complicated issues raised by readings that take them at face value. Like Mossé (whom he does not cite), Raaflaub observes that “for the time of Solon ... all four census categories pose difficulties.” He therefore suggests attributing the authorship of the four “Solonian” classes—and in particular the definition of the property qualification and the political rights associated with each class—to Ephialtes or Pericles, in other words, to the political reforms of the mid-fifth century. “Before 462 or 450,” he concludes, “*pentakosiomedimnoi* did not exist, while *zeugitai* and *hippeis* were informal categories, based on military capacity and the concomitant social status and prestige, and on self-declaration.”<sup>36</sup> Everything else was the addition of later historiographical constructions.

Few historians have accepted Mossé’s approach, which is considered “post-modern” or “pessimistic,”<sup>37</sup> and in general this kind of method is stigmatized as a form of “hypercritical rejection of textual sources.”<sup>38</sup> However, it does not imply an admission of failure before an Archaic society that is difficult to understand, nor a retreat into the hypothetical adopted because of the lateness of the sources (more than 250 years passed between the so-called Solonian reforms and the writing of the *Athenian Constitution*). In fact, it responds to the need for rigorous analysis when faced with a complex historical tradition that has been constantly reinvented by both ancient and modern historiography. These are the very principles of German *Quellenkritik* or source criticism, at the core of my training and my practice as a historian. Such principles sometimes force us to question facts that we thought were well established. To put it another way, during the first stage of the investigation, there is no historical approach other than a critical one.

## The Nature of the Solonian Property Classification

To understand the nature of the “Solonian system,” it must first be stressed that Solon probably did not create these social groups. The author of the *Athenian Constitution* is clear about this: he states that Solon divided the citizen body into four classes “as it was previously divided,” and also mentions the existence of *pentakosiomedimnoi*, *hippeis* and *zeugitai* (as well as fines associated with these groups) in his description of Draco’s constitution.<sup>39</sup> If the existence of the latter is hypothetical,<sup>40</sup> there is no doubt that the author of the *Athenian Constitution* did

36. Kurt A. Raaflaub, “Athenian and Spartan *Eunomia*, or: What to Do with Solon’s Timocracy?,” in Blok and Lardinois, *Solon of Athens*, 390-428, here pp. 407 and 417.

37. Mossé’s 1979 article is never cited in Blok and Lardinois, *Solon of Athens*, except by Peter J. Rhodes, “The Reforms and Laws of Solon: An Optimistic View,” 248-60, who criticizes this “postmodern” and “pessimistic” approach to Archaic history.

38. These words are taken from Zurbach, “The Formation of Greek City-States,” 628.

39. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 4.3.

40. In this case, historians admit that this constitution was a later invention by Athenian historiographers, probably in connection with the census reform implemented by Demetrius of Phaleron. See Hans van Wees, “Demetrius and Draco: Athens’ Property Classes and Population in and before 317 BC,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 131 (2011): 95-114.

not consider Solon to be the originator of these groups. Although the legislator is credited with establishing a new definition of property classes, then, it does not necessarily follow that he radically changed the structure of Athenian society by forming new groups. Most historians agree that the *pentakosiomedimnoi*, whose name itself appears to be associated with a reform of property classes, could not have existed before Solon. Despite the text of the *Athenian Constitution*, and without necessarily trying to contradict it, Peter Rhodes considers that “the nomenclature suggests that the πεντακοσιμέδωνοι [*pentakosiomedimnoi*] are a later addition to a structure in which ἵππεες, ζευγῆται and θῆτες [*hippeis*, *zeugitai*, and *thetes*] already existed ... probably what Solon did was to distinguish the very richest citizens from the other ἵππεες [*hippeis*], and for the first time give the classes a precise definition and a political function.”<sup>41</sup> If the situation of the *pentakosiomedimnoi* remains ambiguous, it is nevertheless likely that the *hippeis*, *zeugitai*, and *thetes* already existed in one form or another in pre-Solonian Athenian society. The lack of consistency in the names chosen for the four Solonian categories also makes it difficult to grasp, from a purely terminological perspective, the intellectual logic of the whole nomenclature. What was the true nature of the Solonian classification? Was it based on an evaluation of wealth, thus founding a timocracy, as explained by the author of the *Athenian Constitution*? Or was it based on a military organization reflecting the fact that every citizen was also a warrior, as many modern historians think?

Despite the apparent archaism of evaluating property classes according to agricultural produce, a number of historians have explained this as a later rationalization that extended the principle behind the naming of the *pentakosiomedimnoi* to the other three classes.<sup>42</sup> More radically, Geoffrey de Ste. Croix considered that the whole system, from the sixth to the fourth century, never involved any kind of quantitative assessment of property.<sup>43</sup> It should also be emphasized, following Ismard, that “the Solonian public organization is only imperfectly based on the assessment of property: the lack of a division based on property qualification in the courts, at the *ecclēsia*, or at the *boulē* explicitly defined a citizen identity that excluded any type of division based on property qualification.”<sup>44</sup> The Solonian property classification thus only had any real effect on the attribution of public offices, from which the *thetes* were permanently excluded.

41. Peter J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 137. The same position is taken in Mogens H. Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes: Structure, Principles, and Ideology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 30, and in Robin Osborne, *Greece in the Making: 1200-479 BC* (London: Routledge, 1996), 221.

42. Foxhall, “A View from the Top,” 129 and n. 97: “later writers extrapolated the quantitative qualifications for the bottom three classes from the name (*pentakosiomedimnoi*) of the top class”; Raaflaub, “Athenian and Spartan *Eunomia*,” 410: “it seems to me easier to assume ... that at some time the original military *telē* were redefined in quantitative terms.”

43. De Ste. Croix, “The Solonian Census Classes.”

44. Paulin Ismard, *La cité des réseaux. Athènes et ses associations, VI<sup>e</sup>-I<sup>er</sup> siècle av. J.-C.* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010), 71.

Beyond political distinctions based on property qualification, for many historians the Solonian categories corresponded above all to a military organization of society.<sup>45</sup> This explanation is especially valid for the *hippeis* and the *zeugitai*, whose names seem to refer to the two main army corps of Archaic Greek cities: horsemen and hoplites. The links between land ownership and the organization of the army can be observed in many ancient sources—Aristotle notably remarked that “it often happens for the same men to be both soldiers and farmers”<sup>46</sup>—and they lie at the core of any historical analysis of the Greek city. Although the author of the *Athenian Constitution* privileges a quantitative definition of *hippeis*, linked to the evaluation of their agricultural capacity at three hundred *medimnoi*, he also records another explanation, according to which their name and identity were based on their ability to raise a horse (τοὺς ἵπποτροφεῖν δυναμένους). Indeed, according to Aristotle, “the earliest form of constitution among the Greeks after the kingships consisted of those who were actually soldiers, the original form consisting of the cavalry.”<sup>47</sup> If the author of the *Athenian Constitution* does not provide any explanation for the name of the *zeugitai*, scholars since the late nineteenth century have equated them with hoplites. Relying on a metaphor as old as the *Iliad* that emphasized the cohesion of a pair or a line of warriors,<sup>48</sup> they argue that the *zeugos* (or yoke) that gave this Solonian property class its name referred to the link that united the warriors within the hoplitic phalanx. The Solonian property classification would therefore overlap with the military organization of the Archaic city.

Accepted for a long time as fact, the military dimension of the *zeugitai* has recently been questioned in several studies, paving the way for a third interpretation of the Solonian categories. Without casting doubt on the existence of a coherent system, Hans van Wees has argued against the military dimension of the property classes.<sup>49</sup> For him, their names reflect first and foremost an agricultural hierarchy. If *hippeis* were seen as horse-owners in the ancient tradition cited but rejected by the author of the *Athenian Constitution*, van Wees concedes that “*zeugitai* may have been farmers prosperous enough to cultivate their land with a yoke of plough-oxen or mules.”<sup>50</sup> This would result in a clear hierarchy, based on agricultural labor and land ownership, between the Solonian classes: those who had

45. Since at least Conrad Cichorius, “Zu den Namen der attischen Steuerklassen,” in *Griechische Studien Hermann Lipsius zum sechzigsten Geburtstag dargebracht* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1894), 135–40. See, notably: Marcel Detienne, “La phalange. Problèmes et controverses,” and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, “La tradition de l’hoplite athénien,” both in *Problèmes de la guerre en Grèce ancienne*, ed. Jean-Pierre Vernant (Paris: Le Seuil, 1999), respectively 157–88 and 213–41; David Whitehead, “The Archaic Athenian ZEYGITAI,” *Classical Quarterly* 31 (1981): 282–86; De Ste. Croix, “The Solonian Census Classes”; Raaflaub, “Athenian and Spartan *Eunomia*.”

46. Aristotle, *Politics* 4.1291a30–31.

47. Aristotle, *Politics* 4.1297b16–19.

48. Homer, *Iliad* 13.701–08.

49. Hans van Wees, “Mass and Elite in Solon’s Athens: The Property Classes Revisited,” in Blok and Lardinois, *Solon of Athens*, 351–89. See also Vincent J. Rosivach, “Zeugitai and Hoplites,” *Ancient History Bulletin* 16 (2002): 33–43 and “The Thetes in Thucydides 6.43.1,” *Hermes* 140, no. 2 (2012): 131–39.

50. Van Wees, “Mass and Elite in Solon’s Athens,” 353.



enough land to produce five hundred *medimnoi* per year, then those who were able to raise a horse, those who could keep a pair of oxen, and finally the *thetes*, who did not own enough land to be autonomous (or even any land at all), and were therefore compelled to place their labor at the service of the richer categories. Instead of likening the *zeugitai*, as earlier scholars did, to a hoplite “middle class,” van Wees ranks them among the Athenian elite: “Those who owned a pair of oxen—and probably no more than a single pair—formed a first narrow stratum of leisured landowners, followed by those who also owned horses and presumably more than one span of oxen, and those who owned so much land that it could only be expressed in measures of produce.” He concludes that “Solon’s property-class system did not enfranchise a middle class of independent owner-cultivators and hoplites, but confined certain rights and obligations to a small, strictly defined elite.”<sup>51</sup> In sum, he considers that the enrollment of hoplites in the Athenian army was not associated with Solon’s reform, but simply depended on the financial capacity of each individual to afford the necessary equipment, valued at at least thirty drachmas toward the end of the sixth century.<sup>52</sup>

Van Wees makes a convincing argument, yet the systemic nature of a reform concerning the whole Athenian citizen body nevertheless raises some difficulties. Was it, strictly speaking, a partitioning of the citizen body, as explained by the author of the *Athenian Constitution*? Did Solon implement a “reorganization” of the citizen body (διέταξε τὴν πολιτείαν) through a “division” (διέλεν) into four classes? The words clearly recall the political thought of the Classical period, but is such a global organization not foreign in spirit to the Archaic period? Whether based on property qualification or on military or agricultural criteria, these interpretations of the Solonian property classes imply the existence of a clearly defined citizen body, within which a political division based on land revenues, military involvement, or agricultural capacity could be used to define four clearly distinguished subgroups with precise political and legal attributions. In my opinion, such a Solonian constitution—held up as an ideal by a juridical and institutional approach to the Greek city—does not correspond to the customs of Archaic Greece in either its fundamental nature or its principles. In the first place, the French anthropological approach has shown that Archaic Greece, unlike Classical Athens, did not restrict the political sphere to its institutions, but rather extended it to multiple social activities.<sup>53</sup> Second, although much credit has been given to legislators such as Zaleucos, Solon, Charondas, Draco, and Lycurgus, (echoing the emphasis placed on them in ancient sources), a renewed juridical approach has shown that, aside from a few late seventh-century Cretan texts, “the age of the lawmakers” did not correspond with the period for which most legal inscriptions are documented, i.e., the late sixth and early fifth centuries (around 500 BCE). As Van Effenterre and

51. Ibid., 365 and 367.

52. *Inscriptiones Graecae* (hereafter *IG*) I<sup>3</sup>.1.

53. For an early example, see Pauline Schmitt Pantel and Alain Schnapp’s article “Image et société en Grèce ancienne: les représentations de la chasse et du banquet,” *Revue archéologique* 1 (1982): 57-77. See also note 114.



Ruzé have pointed out, even this later period does not correspond with “the methodical creation of new structures, like the progressive organization of a status for the city.”<sup>54</sup> In the same way, according to Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, one should not expect an Archaic law code to represent a global organization of society, but on the contrary see it as a series of disjointed elements that do not necessarily form a system, responding first and foremost to isolated and concrete individual preoccupations.<sup>55</sup>

In this respect, I remain convinced, along with Mossé and Raaflaub, that the organization of these categories with different names and attributes—some of which may have existed before Solon—is the result of a rationalization that took place later, perhaps at the same time as the generalization of a quantitative evaluation of these social groups. The lack of conclusive evidence means that it is pointless to argue about the exact moment when a “Solonian property-class system,” reflecting both a specific political vision of the city and a historical reinterpretation of its evolution, was invented. Only the reference to both the *zeugitai* and the *thetes* in the foundation decree of the Athenian *apoikia* at Brea ca. 445 (or 426/5) shows—in all likelihood—the existence of a system dividing the Athenian citizen body, providing a *terminus ante quem* for its creation.<sup>56</sup> However, reflection on the so-called “Solonian property classes” must not stop with the difficult questions of when, how, and why such a system was established. For such a system also reflects the emergence, within the Athenian political debate, of a property-based and fiscal approach to citizenship and the responsibilities associated with it. The overarching structure reported by the author of the *Athenian Constitution* and, after him, Plutarch in the *Life of Solon*, is probably nothing other than the projection of a political perspective typical of the fifth and fourth centuries onto the Archaic period, reasoning in terms of successive constitutions and regulating all aspects of citizen life. In early sixth-century Athens, it was no doubt more pressing to define the actual contours of citizenship—in other words, to determine the various methods or strategies for participating in the citizen community.

In his major study on Athenian associations, Ismard recently provided an insight into the diversity of the communities gathered together within a civic entity whose contours were still loosely defined at the beginning of the sixth century.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, it was through a series of associations (in the broadest sense of the term) that an initial and specifically Archaic form of Athenian citizenship and its related rights appeared: “infra-*polis* communities were often the mediators that ensured

54. Van Effenterre and Ruzé, *Nomima*, 1:392.

55. Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, “What’s in a Code? Solon’s Laws between Complexity, Compilation and Contingency,” *Hermes* 133, no. 3 (2005): 280-93.

56. *IG* I<sup>3</sup>.46: ἐς δὲ [B]ρέαν ἐχθετον καὶ ζε[υ]γίτων ἵεναι τὸς ἀπο[ε]κός. On this point, see Raaflaub, “Athenian and Spartan *Eunomia*,” 417. And if we want to be (hyper)-critical—that is, to follow the order of the sources and accept what they say—, there is nothing in this text to suggest that such a system for dividing the citizen body was based on property qualification from that moment on.

57. Ismard, *La cité des réseaux*, 44-83.

such rights could be exercised.”<sup>58</sup> Acting as vectors of integration into the city, these communities were not, however, formal subdivisions of a preexisting city or of a citizen body that was otherwise being defined. Based on parallels with late Archaic Crete, Ismard observes that “the structure of integration into the citizen body is clear: in each case, it is via the intermediary of a given community within the city that an individual is enfranchised.”<sup>59</sup> Among these “infra-*polis* communities” which could play a part in the definition or the activation of Archaic citizenship, Ismard cites the groups mentioned in a law on associations attributed to Solon—*demes*, *phratries*, participants in sacred orgia, sailors, participants in dining or burial groups (*homotaphoi*), members of a *thiasos*, or “persons who go away for plunder or trade”—but he also admits that these represented “only a part of the communities existing in the Archaic period”<sup>60</sup> and stresses the “variety of names characterizing the communities of the sixth century.”<sup>61</sup> In addition, Ismard points to the existence of an Archaic law on citizenship attributed by Plutarch to Solon, which “defines groups based on their practices,” as with those migrants “who ... moved to Athens with their entire families to ply a trade.”<sup>62</sup> Ismard’s interpretation is very stimulating, for he shows how all participation in the citizen community of Archaic Athens passed through its multiple associations, thus defining a loose and unstable form of citizenship whose variability and instability only subsided with the Clisthenian reforms. In other words, far from reinforcing a unitary conception of citizenship, individuals’ participation in the Archaic city actually implied multiple forms of social groups. This conclusion is both deeply original and essentially important for our understanding of the Archaic city.

Nevertheless, adopting a rather conventional approach to the Solonian property classes, Ismard refuses to include the Solonian categories (*telē*) in his reflection on “infra-*polis* communities”: “it would obviously be absurd ... to deny the structuring role of the Solonian property classes in sixth-century Athens, even though many aspects related to their genesis remain very obscure.”<sup>63</sup> Apart from an overly reverential approach to the *Athenian Constitution* in our understanding of the Archaic city, I cannot see any reason why the groups of *hippeis*, *zeugitai*, or even *pentakosio-medimnoi* and *thetes*, would not have claimed their place (for most of them as land-owners) in the city of Athens by promoting intrinsic features of their identity through their lifestyles. As Ismard himself has shown, a whole series of “infra-*polis* communities” played a part in defining Archaic Athenian citizenship and in constructing the citizen body.

58. Ibid., 74.

59. Ibid., 75.

60. Ibid., 57. *Digest* 47.22.4.

61. Ismard, *La cité des réseaux*, 83.

62. Ibid., 73. Plutarch, *Life of Solon* 24.2.

63. Ismard, *La cité des réseaux*, 70. Similarly, Zurbach, “The Formation of Greek City-States,” 651: “Nowhere else in Greece did such elaborate distinctions between property classes exist, but the reality of this system in Archaic Athens is beyond dispute.”

## Occupational Groups

Even though she chose to understand the “Solonian property classes” in military terms, Mossé referred to them as “de facto distinctions.”<sup>64</sup> According to Raaflaub, *hippeis* and *zeugitai* were “informal categories,” while for Rhodes the word *thetes* was an “undoubtedly economic and occupational” name.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, for de Ste. Croix, “*hippeis* and *zeugitai* (and therefore *thetes*) corresponded with military and social groups that already existed in Solon’s day,” while according to Vincent Rosivach the *thetes* represented a “socioeconomic group” without any particular military character.<sup>66</sup> In sum, the idea of defining these groups in terms of their lifestyles is not foreign to historical analysis, but compared with a well-ordered, conceptually fine-tuned institutional machinery it no doubt seemed too elementary to lead to a true historical interpretation of the Solonian *telē*. However, together with kinship groups, long recognized as an essential factor in the shaping of the Greek city,<sup>67</sup> occupational groups—organized on the basis of religion, war, institutions, banquets, and, more globally, lifestyles—in fact played a primary role in structuring the Greek city.<sup>68</sup> The Solonian logic shows all signs of being a rationalization dating from the Classical period, and was probably reworked several times before assuming its definitive form. If we set it aside in favor of a behavioral or even functionalist approach to these social categories, we can begin to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of the groups that bore these names within Archaic Athenian society, both before and after Solon.

### The *Pentakosiomedimnoi*

The word *pentakosiomedimnoi* is of course meaningless outside of the “Solonian system.” It is futile to seek its antecedent, as Evelyn Lord Smithson once suggested, in the extraordinary fivefold-granary-shaped pyxis found in the famous tomb of the “Rich Lady” of the Areiopagos and dating from the transition between the Early and the Middle Geometric period (around 850 BCE), more than two

64. Mossé, “How a Political Myth Takes Shape,” 254. [Translation amended to reflect p. 432 of the original French paper, “distinctions de fait.”]

65. Raaflaub, “Athenian and Spartan *Eunomia*,” 417; Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia*, 138.

66. De Ste. Croix, “The Solonian Census Classes,” 48; Rosivach, “The Thetes in Thucydides,” 6.43.1, 135.

67. From Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City. A Study on the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome* [1864] (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) to Félix Bourriot, *Recherches sur la nature du génos. Étude d'histoire sociale athénienne, périodes archaïque et classique* (Lille: Atelier de reproduction des thèses, Université Lille III, 1976) and Denis Roussel, *Tribu et cité. Études sur les groupes sociaux dans les cités grecques aux époques archaïque et classique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1976).

68. On occupational groups, see Nicholas F. Jones, *The Associations of Classical Athens: The Response to Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), without necessarily accepting the author’s main thesis on the opposition between associations and city.

hundred and fifty years before Solon's reforms.<sup>69</sup> Many historians consider the *pentakosiomedimnoi* to be the only addition that Solon actually made to preexisting groups—unless this group was in fact created at a later date by Pisistratus, Ephialtes, or Pericles. The meaning and the nature of the five hundred *medimnoi* can also be disputed, though this too is generally unproductive.

However, it is undeniable that the *pentakosiomedimnoi* were landowners, and probably the most important in Athens. In this sense, their equivalents can easily be found in other Archaic cities; for example, the *geomoroi* of Samos or the *gamoroi* of Syracuse.<sup>70</sup> Whether they represented a small elite or, as Bravo suggested for the *gamoroi* of Syracuse,<sup>71</sup> the entire body of citizens claiming descent from the first settlers (with a reference to the initial sharing out of the territory), these were groups of citizens involved in political rivalries. More specifically, one might follow Marcello Lupi in identifying the *geomoroi* of Samos precisely as “a class of citizens that defined itself by land ownership.”<sup>72</sup> Bravo also recalls that “in a passage from Aeschylus's *Suppliants*—an excerpt loaded with political and legal terms—the entire citizen body of Argos is referred to as τῶνδε γαμύρων, ‘these landowners.’”<sup>73</sup> Similarly, the five thousand and forty citizens that make up Plato's ideal city and each receive an equal plot of land are called “*geomoroi*.”<sup>74</sup>

It should be stressed that the *geomoroi* were also known in Athens. For Plutarch, they were one of the three groups that resulted from the initial division of the Athenian citizen body by Theseus, “the first to separate the people into *eupatridai* and *geomoroi* and *demiourgoi*.”<sup>75</sup> This division into three parts, which is drawn directly from the Attidographic tradition, appears to have been known to Aristotle, as suggested by an allusion preserved in a fragment mentioning three ancient “peoples” (*ethnē*) bearing these names.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, it is strange that

69. Evelyn Lord Smithson, “The Tomb of a Rich Athenian Lady, ca. 850 B.C.,” *Hesperia* 37, no. 1 (1968): 77-116, especially pp. 83 and 96-97; revisited by J. Nicolas Coldstream, “The Rich Lady of the Areiopagos and Her Contemporaries: A Tribute in Memory of Evelyn Lord Smithson,” *Hesperia* 64, no. 4 (1995): 391-403, especially p. 395.

70. For Samos, see Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 8.21 and Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae* 57 (*Mor.* 303E-304C). For Syracuse, see Herodotus, *Histories* 7.155. See also Adolf Boerner, *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 7.1 (1910), s.v. “Geomoroi,” col. 1219-21; Hans-Joachim Gehrke, *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, vol. 4 (1998), s.v. “Geomoroi,” col. 938. On the *geomoroi* of Samos, see Graham Shipley, *A History of Samos, 800-188 BC* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 39-41.

71. Benedetto Bravo, “Citoyens et libres non-citoyens dans les cités coloniales à l'époque archaïque,” in *L'étranger dans le monde grec*, ed. Raoul Lonis (Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy, 1992), 2:43-85.

72. Marcello Lupi, “Il duplice massacro dei Geomoroi,” in *Da Elea a Samo. Filosofi e politici di fronte all'impero ateniese*, ed. Luisa Breglia and Marcello Lupi (Naples: Arte Tipografica Editrice, 2005), 259-86, here p. 281. Lupi author ultimately defines them as a “classe di censo,” based on the model of the Solonian classes (p. 283).

73. Bravo, “Una società legata alla terra,” 538. Aeschylus, *Suppliants* 613.

74. Plato, *Laws* 737E.

75. Plutarch, *Life of Theseus* 25.1: εὐπατρίδας καὶ γεωμύρους καὶ δημιουργούς.

76. Aristotle, fr. 385 Rose, *apud* Pollux, *Onomastikon* 8.111: τρεῖς δ' ἦν τὰ ἔθνη πάλοι, εὐπατρίδαι γεωμύροι δημιουργοί.

the author of the *Athenian Constitution*, who alludes to Theseus's threefold division and retains the names of two of the three groups (*eupatridai* and *demiurgoi*), does not use the term *geomoroi* for the third group, replacing it with a much less specific and much less positive word: *agroikoi*. He explains that ten years after the death of Solon, during a period of political instability, the people named ten archons: "five from the *eupatridai*, three from the *agroikoi*, and two from the *demiurgoi*."<sup>77</sup> As we know from the summary written by Heraclides Lembus and various fragments, the beginning of the *Athenian Constitution* evoked Theseus's synoecism and recounted a division of the citizen body into three groups, meaning that this allusion would have been clear to its readers.<sup>78</sup> Despite these terminological variations, Solon's property-based classification into four *telē*, which restricted public offices to citizens of the first three "classes," could evidently be compatible with the vestiges of a Thesean constitution dividing the population into three *ethnē*, according to the Atthidographic and Aristotelian tradition. However, if Plutarch is to be believed, this constitution attributed public offices exclusively to the *eupatridai*, to the exclusion of the *geomoroi* and the *demiurgoi*.<sup>79</sup> In this regard, it made sense, in the rational and continuous account presented by the *Athenian Constitution*, for the *geomoroi* of Theseus to be differentiated—at least in name—from the *pentakosiomedimnoi* of Solon, even though both names probably referred, from a strictly functional point of view, to landowners and possibly even to the very same individuals.

Of course, the *pentakosiomedimnoi* were not simply landowners like the *geomoroi*. The words themselves had a different meaning: the *pentakosiomedimnoi* produced an agricultural output of five hundred *medimnoi*, making them large-scale landowners, while the *geomoroi* received part of the city's territory when the land was divided out. It nevertheless seems that the term "*geomoroi*" itself could have a more precise meaning and a fiscal sense. According to the lexicographer Hesychius, it applied equally to "those who work hard on the land," to "those who received a parcel of land," and to "those who, due to their property class, manage public affairs."<sup>80</sup> In this case, even if the definition is not explicitly related to Athens, the term "*geomoroi*" was also associated with a property class. Is it possible that the lexicographer mentions the *geomoroi* instead of and in the place of the *pentakosiomedimnoi*? Or does this mean that these two terms were analogous, if not interchangeable? In sum, it is not absolutely inconceivable that the same Athenian community, whose form was probably loosely defined and fluctuating, could be known under slightly different names over the course of time, providing that we do not take these names as technical designations used within the context of precise constitutions, referring to groups with particular rights and duties.

77. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 13.2: πέντε μὲν εὐπατριδῶν, τρεῖς δὲ ἀ[γ]ροίκων, δύο δὲ δημιουργῶν.

78. Rhodes, *Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia*, 71-74 and 183.

79. Plutarch, *Life of Theseus* 25.2: εὐπατρίδαις [...] παρέχειν ἄρχοντας ἀποδοῦς.

80. Hesychius, s.v.: γαμόροι οἱ περὶ τὴν γῆν πονούμενοι. ἢ μοῖραν εἰληχότες τῆς γῆς. ἢ οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐργείων τιμημάτων τὰ κοινὰ διεπόντες.

## The *Hippeis*

The essential information seems to have been related by the author of the *Athenian Constitution* in the context of a tradition that is not accepted into his systemic analysis, while Plutarch did not know how to choose between the alternatives provided by his source.<sup>81</sup> In Archaic Athens, the *hippeis* were first and foremost individuals who were able to raise one or more horses (τοὺς ἵπποτροφεῖν δυνάμενους). To this already explicit designation, the ancient tradition added the existence of an inscribed statue offered by Anthemion, son of Diphilos, at the Athenian Acropolis on the occasion of his transfer from the thetic to the hippic class, apparently avoiding the intermediary category of *zeugites*.<sup>82</sup> If, as has been supposed, Anthemion was indeed the father of Anytos, an Athenian democrat who lived in the late fifth century and was one of the accusers of Socrates, this promotion must date back to the middle of the century. It is also unlikely that the author of the *Athenian Constitution* would describe an offering that predated the sacking of the Acropolis by the Persians in 480 BCE.<sup>83</sup>

Without going so far as evoking the Roman equestrian order—defined de facto toward the end of the second century BCE as all non-senators possessing a fortune of at least 400,000 sesterces—it is evident that the name of the Athenian *hippeis* refers not only to Homeric texts and their vocabulary (despite changes in military practice since the world of Odysseus),<sup>84</sup> but also to an affluent elite of horse breeders that can be observed in many cities of Archaic Greece: Boeotia, Crete, Thessalia, and Cyprus, as well as Eretria, Chalcis, Cyrene, Magnesia on the Meander, Colophon, Sparta, Leontinoi, and so on.<sup>85</sup> Here I shall limit myself to a single example that is clearly related to the expression of citizenship. In his summary of the *Constitution of the Kymeans*, attributed to the Aristotelian school, Heraclides Lembus notes that in a time before the conquest of Aeolis by the Persians, a certain “Pheidon, an esteemed man, gave more men a share in the citizenship, establishing a law which compelled everyone to raise a horse.”<sup>86</sup> The measure, no doubt reworded in fourth-century vocabulary, thus provided a simple criterion for citizenship: raising (at least) one horse was one way of joining the

81. Plutarch, *Life of Solon* 18.1.

82. Unless we disregard the connection to property qualification and follow the order of classes given by Aristotle in *Politics* 2.1274a18-21.

83. Antony E. Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Akropolis: A Catalogue of the Inscriptions of the Sixth and Fifth Centuries B. C.* (Cambridge: Archaeological Institute of America, 1949), 206.

84. For example, Homer, *Iliad* 4.297 and 301; 11.151 and 529.

85. Edmund Lammert, *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, vol. 8 (1913), s.v. “Ἱππεῖς,” col. 1689-1700. See also: Peter A. L. Greenhalgh, *Early Greek Warfare: Horsemen and Chariots in the Homeric and Archaic Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Leslie J. Worley, *Hippeis: The Cavalry of Ancient Greece* (Boulder/Oxford: Westview Press, 1994).

86. Heraclides Lembus, § 39 Dilts: φεῖδων ἀνὴρ δόκιμος πλείοσι μετέδωκε τῆς πολιτείας, νόμον θεῖς ἕκαστον ἐπάναγκες τρέφειν ἵππον.



Archaic citizen community of Aeolian Kyme. A brief mention should also be made of the *hippobotes* of Chalcis, who constituted an important part of the aristocracy, if not the whole citizen community.<sup>87</sup>

One cannot exclude, of course, the military dimension of this activity, but it is also very clear that in terms of their lifestyle, horse breeders formed a perfectly identifiable category within the city, which was probably also very demonstrative. Numerous images exist on Archaic and Classical Athenian vases, and François Lissarrague has shown that a specific iconography depicting Athenian horsemen in Thracian clothes enabled this elite to mark out the particular status that they wanted to demonstrate, while still being considered at the heart of the city: “the Thracian (or partially Scythian) costume, associated with equestrian practice, is a clear sign of membership in a technically specialized group—horsemen—and of a social class—*hippeis*.”<sup>88</sup> Even though the relation between image and reality is never immediate, it is not surprising that various individuals in Archaic Athens chose to emphasize their mounts to prove their participation—or at least to assert that they participated—in a citizen community in the making.

### The *Zeugitai*

Almost everything there is to be said about the *zeugitai* has already been said, and I will simply agree with van Wees’s agricultural interpretation, as well as with the Hesiodic model put forward as evidence for this category. If the *hippeis* could boast connections to a Homeric practice and designation, the Athenian *zeugitai* could draw without any doubt on the moral paradigm provided by Hesiod.<sup>89</sup> In contrast to the *thetes*, *zeugitai* owned a team of oxen that allowed them to be independent when working in the fields. This was an indisputable sign of social status in many societies, including Archaic Greece. Describing the ideal household, Hesiod recommended having a wife and an “ox for the plough,” and stigmatized the “man who has no oxen.” He also incited men to start work at dawn, which “puts yokes on many oxen.”<sup>90</sup> The meaning is clear: the *zeugitai*, first and foremost, were men who owned a team of oxen. This was not simply the marker of a certain agricultural capacity and an undeniable economic autonomy, but also a strategy for gaining social recognition and, in the case of Archaic Athens, recognition as a citizen.

To this we must add the value of an ox in the religious organization of the Athenian *polis*, which extended beyond symbolism. As demonstrated by Jean-Louis Durand, the relation between sacrifice and plowing was at the root of the

87. Herodotus, *Histories* 5.77, among others. I will discuss these examples of citizen *hippotrophia* in greater detail in a forthcoming article: Alain Duplouy, “*Hippotrophia* as a Citizen Behaviour,” originally presented at the Celtic Conference in Classics, Edinburgh, June 25-28, 2014 (Leiden: Brill, to be published).

88. François Lissarrague, *L'autre guerrier: archers, peltastes, cavaliers dans l'imagerie attique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1990): 191-231, here p. 227.

89. Van Wees, “Mass and Elite in Solon’s Athens,” 355-56.

90. Hesiod, *Works and Days* 405, 451, and 581.



sacred covenant between the gods and the whole community, just as it underpinned the organization of the city itself. The anthropologist associates the genesis of the city with the introduction of the blood sacrifice, observing that “the new group is now defined as a group of plowmen who use the ard and the ox,” and, further on, “the Greek city can only establish itself through its relation to the land and, by extension, the mediation of the ox.”<sup>91</sup> In this sense, the owner of a plowing ox possessed a double richness that he could put at the service of his community through both agricultural production and the sacrifice of the animal. Durand explains that “one way or another, sacrificing an ox amounts to sacrificing the plowing ox so that the city can exist,” stressing that the animal is, strictly speaking, sacrificed because of this very quality: “the sacrificed ox is inevitably the plowing ox.”<sup>92</sup> As owners of teams of oxen, working animals that also provided meat because they were sacrificial beasts, the *zeugitai* could contribute to the organization of the city’s most important sacrifices and ritual meals, and thus justify their participation in the emerging citizen community.<sup>93</sup> This would become even more evident in certain Hellenistic cities which institutionalized a specific liturgy, the *boutrophia*, asking individuals to take charge of raising—or more exactly fattening—oxen for public sacrifices.<sup>94</sup>

It is in this double sense, linking agriculture and religious practice, that I believe we should interpret the only offering made on the Acropolis that documents an Athenian *zeugites*: a marble basin probably dedicated shortly after 480 BCE.<sup>95</sup> According to Anthony Raubitschek, who draws a parallel with the dedication of Anthemion described in the *Athenian Constitution*, “the occurrence of the word ζευγίτες [*zeugites*] suggests that the dedication was made when the family of the dedicator left the τέλος θητικόν [*telos thētikon*] to join the ζευγίται [*zeugitai*].”<sup>96</sup> This interpretation is not evident, however, for the inscription on Anthemion’s offering explicitly recounts a transition from one category to another, while this last example does not. Being a *zeugites* was a quality in itself, which definitely deserved to be mentioned.

91. Jean-Louis Durand, *Sacrifice et labour en Grèce ancienne. Essai d'anthropologie religieuse* (Paris/Rome: La Découverte/École française de Rome, 1986), 58 and 188.

92. *Ibid.*, 191 and 66.

93. On the importance of sacrifices and ritual meals for the formation of the *poleis* via integration into a cultural community (from the Protogeometric period on), see Duplouy, “Culti e cultura nella Grecia,” 125-27.

94. Christophe Chandezon, “L’*hippotrophia* et la *boutrophia*, deux liturgies dans les cités hellénistiques,” in *Institutions, sociétés et cultes de la Méditerranée antique. Mélanges d'histoire ancienne rassemblés en l'honneur de Claude Vial*, ed. Claire Balander and Christophe Chandezon (Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2014), 29-50.

95. *IG* I<sup>3</sup>.831.

96. Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Akropolis*, pp. 400-1, no. 372.

## The *Thetes*

This is not the place to enter into the debate about the political and legal rights granted to the *thetes* by the Solonian constitution, on which scholars continue to disagree. The bibliography is plethoric and the political function attributed to the *thetes* ultimately depends on whether the system put in place by Solon is considered to be a democracy based on property qualification or merely an oligarchy. If we set such an institutionalist approach aside, we must then turn to the question of who the *thetes* were and why they were known under a name bearing such a negative connotation.<sup>97</sup>

The term *thetes* usually refers to wage laborers, who do not own any property and who rent out their labor force. As Bravo has shown, the word already had a long history by the time it was supposed to have occurred in Solon's constitution. It typically referred to a "free man who puts himself at the service of another individual after agreeing on a remuneration."<sup>98</sup> In particular, the term regularly appears in Homer's poems to qualify those who work for others in exchange for a wage and on a completely free basis.<sup>99</sup> Addressing Apollo, Poseidon evokes "all the ills that we two alone of all the gods suffered at Ilios, that time when we came at the command of Zeus and served the lordly Laomedon for a year at a fixed wage," adding that at the end of the year, Laomedon "did ... defraud us two of all hire, and send us away with a threat."<sup>100</sup> Eurymachus sardonically asks a beggar (the disguised Odysseus): "Stranger, would you have a mind to serve for hire (θητευέμεν), if I should take you into service on an outlying farm—your pay (μισθός) will be assured—gathering stones for walls and planting tall trees? There I would provide you with food the year through, and put clothes upon you and give you sandals for your feet."<sup>101</sup> Speaking to Odysseus from the kingdom of Hades, Achilles describes the situation of a *thēs* as the worst condition on earth, though still better than his own: "Never try to reconcile me to death, glorious Odysseus. I should choose, so I might live on earth, to serve as the hireling of another (ἐπάρουρος ἐὼν θητευέμεν), some landless man with hardly enough to live on, rather than to be lord over all the dead that have perished."<sup>102</sup> In his description of the ideal household, Hesiod urges his interlocutor, having obtained a wife, oxen, and slaves, "to engage a man with no household of his own (θῆτά τ' ἄλοικον) and seek a servant-girl with no children."<sup>103</sup> In other words, despite their free status, the situation of the *thetes* was not enviable.

97. Raaflaub, "Athenian and Spartan *Eunomia*," 411.

98. Benedetto Bravo, "I *thetes* ateniesi e la storia della parola *thes*," *Studi classici. Annali della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università degli Studi di Perugia* 29 (1991-93): 69-97, here p. 95.

99. Moses I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (New York: New York Review Books, 1954), 53-55 and 70-71.

100. Homer, *Iliad* 21.441-52.

101. Homer, *Odyssey* 18.357-61.

102. Homer, *Odyssey* 11.488-91.

103. Hesiod, *Works and Days* 602 [translation modified]. The translation proposed in the Loeb edition is also possible: "put your bondman out of doors."

If the models provided by Homer and Hesiod explain the use of such an ignoble designation, one should also note that no individual took pride in being a *thēs*. If Anthemion mentioned this condition in his dedication, it was precisely because he had managed to leave it behind him. The author of the *Athenian Constitution* insists that no one, when asked which property class he belonged to, would answer that he is a member of the *thetes*.<sup>104</sup> This seems to be an important indicator that the name “*thetes*” was not a label chosen by those it applied to, marking this group’s first step towards defining its own identity. It was more probably a somewhat pejorative designation used by all the individuals who particularly wanted to distinguish themselves from these wage laborers and to avoid being confused with the *thetes* themselves. As Bravo observes in the conclusion of his study: “if we suppose that the word  $\theta\eta\tau\epsilon\varsigma$  was used in Archaic Athens as has been indicated, it is easy to understand how it may have become a term designating Athenian citizens whose property qualification was inferior to that of the *zeugitai*.”<sup>105</sup>

In short, the so-called “Solonian property classes” do not necessarily imply that a clearly defined citizen body was divided up according to property qualifications. Rather, we see how occupational differences or, more broadly, distinct lifestyles associated with land ownership, raising horses, owning a pair of oxen, or working for a wage may have led to the formation—more or less informal—of occupational groups that constructed their identity within Archaic Athens in relation to a specific economic activity. If, as Ismard has shown, integration in Archaic Athens implied a very specific pattern of participation in “*infra-polis* communities” that were diverse in both name and nature, there is no reason to think that the *pentakosiomedimnoi*, *hippeis*, *zeugitai*, and *thetes* could not have played a role in this process of community construction during the seventh and sixth centuries, before or after Solon’s archonship.

Solonian *telē* were neither “orders” nor “classes.” They were unlikely to have been “property classes” or “military entities,” and were in no way structures imposed “from above,” subdivisions of a theoretical citizen body mirroring a hypothetical Solonian constitution. The groups mentioned by the author of the *Athenian Constitution* were above all occupational groups that defined themselves on a day-to-day basis and constructed their identity via various practices of Archaic Athenian society, just like the groups mentioned in the law on associations attributed to Solon. As Ismard has demonstrated, the various associations of sailors in Athens—like the *ainautai* of Miletus and Eretria—were precisely communities formed around a professional activity that afforded them a particular place in the city.<sup>106</sup> Even before they were transcribed in law, all these communities or associations relied on a collective recognition granted by the community on the basis of specific lifestyles acknowledged as ways of participating in the citizen group.

104. Pseudo-Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 7.4.

105. Bravo, “I *thetes* ateniesi e la storia della parola *thes*,” 96.

106. Ismard, *La cité des réseaux*, 51 and 55-56.

Without more abundant documentation, it is extremely difficult to understand and analyze the mechanisms, the conditions, and the exact chronology of the establishment—whether total or partial—of the “Solonian system” within the Athenian institutions. The low visibility of these groups, which never appear in the Archaic sources and are only rarely mentioned throughout the entire Classical period, is surprising.<sup>107</sup> If the *pentakosiomedimnoi*, *hippeis*, *zeugitai*, and *thetes* were among the many “infra-*polis* communities of Archaic Athens” (themselves hardly more present in the sources), they were nonetheless brought into the spotlight during a subsequent phase of political reflection, in which they were used to represent a systematic division of the citizen body based on the principle of property qualification and accompanied by a framework for evaluating incomes inspired by the name of one of these groups. This was undoubtedly the result of the political thought and historical vision of Classical Athens, which culminated in the *Athenian Constitution*.

The “Solonian system” is probably nothing more than the product of a process of conceptualizing and writing Athenian history in which the historical framework is reduced to institutional changes. In the *Athenian Constitution*, the constitution of Theseus is followed in succession by the reforms of Draco and Solon, the tyranny of Pisistratus, the reforms of Cleisthenes and Ephialtes, the government of Pericles, and the oligarchic revolutions of the end of the Peloponnesian War, which immediately precede a definition of the citizen based on *ius sanguinis*—citizen ancestry on both sides—and on registration in the rolls of the *deme*. Without negating the historical reality of these figures and their activities (a position that would evidently be unjustifiable), it is important to understand the political principles at work in this particular way of writing Athenian history. It is also important to nuance ancient reconstructions in the light of recent historiography and our current knowledge of Archaic Athens. If we can cast doubt on “Draco’s constitution” (the work of a “bad forger,” according to Ruzé)<sup>108</sup> without calling every Draconian law into question, it would nevertheless be “absurd,” according to Ismard, to deny the structuring principles of Solon’s census reform. But should we really place more historical value on Solon’s work, as presented by the Aristotelian school, than on the activities of the “mythical” Theseus or the “obscure” Draco, on the pretext that Solon is, in Ruzé’s words once again, the “only great Archaic lawmaker whose historicity cannot be called into doubt”?<sup>109</sup>

In this historiographical process, one must also stress the place given to groups associated with land or agriculture to the exclusion of all other occupational groups, notably those associated with maritime trade (the “sailors” and other

107. The few occurrences of the “Solonian property classes” known for the fifth and fourth centuries have been gathered by Vincent Gabrielsen, “The Impact of Armed Forces on Government and Politics in Archaic and Classical Greek Poleis: A Response to Hans van Wees,” in *Army and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. Angelos Chaniotis and Pierre Ducrey (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2002), 95. They are discussed in detail in de Ste. Croix, “The Solonian Census Classes,” 8–14.

108. Françoise Ruzé, *Délibération et pouvoir dans la cité grecque de Nestor à Socrate* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1997), 345.

109. *Ibid.*, 314 (Solon), 318 (Draco), and 347 (Theseus).

“persons who go away for plunder or trade” mentioned in the Solonian law on associations) or with craft (like “those ... who moved to Athens with their entire families to ply a trade” or the *demiourgoi* of Theseus’s constitution). Aside from the undeniable importance of land ownership for accessing citizenship, I also see here an emblematic choice in the political and ideological representations constructed by the theorists of the Greek city. In all likelihood, this selection reflects the well-known biases of Classical thinkers regarding economic activity. Moreover, these are the same preconceptions that led to Finley’s primitivist approach and accentuated (perhaps excessively) the exclusive link between land and citizenship in the Archaic period. This would explain why the “Solonian system” makes no room for wealth originating in trade or craft, even though scholars usually see it as marking the substitution of a landed aristocracy by new social classes whose wealth came precisely from trade. If we step back from the “Solonian constitution” for a moment and disregard primitivist preconceptions in order to consider these occupational groups from every angle, it becomes clear that specific economic activities were not reserved to a particular political and legal status, as Aristotle or Finley considered them to be. It was also the relationships that individuals maintained with different economic sectors that enabled them, in the context of a Greek civilization characterized by a generalized culture of competition, to construct their place in the city.<sup>110</sup>

Let us return to where we started, the nature of citizenship in Archaic Greece. It is usually associated with the enjoyment of a hereditary legal status that was opposed to those of slave and foreigner, as well as a political and legal authority exercised within the framework of the city’s institutions. This definition of a legal and institutional citizenship harks back to both ancient political thought and late nineteenth-century German scholarship, essentially relayed today in the works of Hansen. However, such a definition is not at all satisfactory, since it relies on a certain vision of the Classical city while completely discounting the long and drawn-out process that shaped Greek cities.

As I have tried to show in several studies, the question of lifestyles provides another way of thinking about citizenship in ancient Greece, one that seems particularly adapted to Archaic cities.<sup>111</sup> Unlike a legal or institutionalist perspective, this behavioral approach to Archaic citizenship—understood as a *performance*<sup>112</sup>—

110. On these historiographical questions, see Duplouy, “*Ploutos e cittadinanza in Grecia arcaica*.”

111. Alain Duplouy, “Les Mille de Colophon. ‘Totalité symbolique’ d’une cité d’Ionie (VI<sup>e</sup>-II<sup>e</sup> s. av. J.-C.),” *Historia* 62, no. 2 (2013): 146-66; Duplouy, “Citizenship as a Performance,” in Duplouy and Brock, *Defining Citizenship in Archaic Greece*. For a critical approach to the institutional model, see Duplouy, “Deux échelons de citoyenneté ? En quête de la citoyenneté archaïque,” in *Clisthène et Lycargue d’Athènes. Autour du politique dans la cité classique*, ed. Vincent Azoulay and Paulin Ismard (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011), 89-106.

112. A number of anglophone studies can be cited here, including Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne, eds. *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Vincent Farenga, *Citizen and Self in Ancient Greece: Individuals*

comes with its own interpretative frameworks, according to which the prestige associated with specific behaviors and the esteem granted by the members of the citizen community probably had as much value as participation in the political decisions taken by bodies that were still relatively unformalized. As we strive to define citizenship specifically for the Archaic period, taking an anthropological approach to “the political” means recognizing the importance of adopting behaviors that were expected, or at least accepted, by the whole citizen community as worthy of the status of citizen. With no register certifying the legal status of individuals (there is no evidence that Archaic cities kept anything resembling the *lexiarchikon grammateion* of the Clisthenian *demes* or the ephebic catalogs of the Hellenistic cities), citizens constantly had to prove their condition in order to be recognized and accepted by the other members of the group.<sup>113</sup> As Aristotle remarked of the founders of a city, it was the mere fact of participating in politics that made them citizens.<sup>114</sup>

Since the 1980s, Pauline Schmitt Pantel has stressed the importance of collective activities such as athletics, education, banquets, or hunting in the construction of “the political” in Archaic cities, demonstrating the extent to which they all participated in the creation of a political space and contributed to defining citizenship, despite their diversity. By providing equal access to a common experience, these activities made it possible to determine who could participate in it and, therefore, who was a citizen. In Schmitt Pantel’s own words, “participation in a set of collective activities is the sign of membership in the group of citizens, without of course being the only requirement for membership.”<sup>115</sup> From this point of view, activities such as hunting or banquets reinforced the feeling of belonging to the city and were just as important as participation in the Assembly—well before this became a key aspect of exercising citizenship in the Classical period.

Beyond these collective activities, many individual behaviors seem to have been just as important, because they too were expected by the community and were woven into social practice through the continuous reproduction of attitudes and dispositions specific to the citizen community. By adopting a particular lifestyle that was valued by the citizens as a group, individuals provided themselves with the means of gaining acceptance into it, while at the same time reinforcing the

*Performing Justice and the Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See also Pauline Schmitt Pantel, *Hommes illustres. Mœurs et politique à Athènes au V<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Aubier, 2009).

113. On the importance of testimonials as a proof of citizenship, including in Classical Athens, see Jean-Marie Bertrand, “À propos de l’identification des personnes dans la cité athénienne classique,” in *Individus, groupes et politique à Athènes de Solon à Mithridate*, ed. Jean-Christophe Couvenhes and Silvia Milanezi (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2007), 201-14.

114. Aristotle, *Politics* 3.1275b31-32.

115. Pauline Schmitt Pantel, “Collective Activities and the Political in the Greek City,” trans. Lucia Nixon, in *The Greek City From Homer to Alexander*, ed. Owen Murray and Simon Price (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 199-213, here p. 200; Schmitt Pantel, “Entre public et privé, le politique ?,” *Ktèma* 23 (1998): 407-13.



values that the group saw as its own. Over time, this kind of system becomes self-maintaining and self-reinforcing. Christophe Pébarthe recently expressed regret that the concept of *habitus*, made popular by the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, has not been sufficiently used by French historians specializing in antiquity,<sup>116</sup> and in this case it certainly provides a stimulating interpretative key. This “system of regulated dispositions,” acquired via education and incorporated by each member of a group as the matrix through which he or she interprets the world, generates the specific lifestyles and behaviors that individuals adopt and that are expected by the social group to which they belong or are seeking to belong. Similarly, one could say that in Archaic Greece there were “citizen behaviors” that were specific to citizens and expected from fellow citizens, and which signified their participation in the citizen body. Of course, each city had its own *habitus*, and behaviors appreciated in one were not necessarily recognized in another. Moreover, beyond simply demonstrating participation in a particular citizen community, these lifestyles were probably also strategies for achieving enfranchisement or for progressively advancing toward it. In other words, to be accepted as a citizen it was necessary—in all places and at all times that were tied to the life of the citizen community—to behave like a citizen.

Of course, I do not mean that citizenship in Archaic Greece was only accessed through collective activities or individual behaviors, excluding all other factors, nor that citizens’ lifestyles contributed to defining the status of citizen in all cities. Such a definition of Archaic citizenship as a performance is not necessarily valid in all places or at all times, and it does not imply excluding other criteria of citizenship. My point is rather to insist on the importance of behaviors in Archaic Greece and to show, through the case of the “Solonian property classes,” how specific lifestyles may have played a part in the construction of citizen status. It is also a matter of emphasizing the fact that there was no single criterion that determined “membership” in the citizen body of Archaic cities, and there were probably numerous ways to become enfranchised. These could be complementary or competing, but they all resulted in the definition of groups of citizens who recognized themselves as such within the city. In this regard, the aim of an anthropological approach to Archaic citizenship is to study the various ways of participating in the community.

In terms of our case study, it is entirely possible to imagine that it was at least partially through their lifestyles that the *pentakosiomedimnoi*, *hippeis*, and *zeugitai* justified their right to participate in the Athenian *polis*, in all matters of the “common” across a broad range of fields. Making it possible to immediately distinguish a citizen from a non-citizen, these lifestyles also played an active part in the definition and recognition of an explicit citizen status. While Archaic Athens was initially a fragmented social and political entity, it progressively evolved by aggregating preexisting groups, which thus gained a political existence and eventually became homogenized into a single citizen body. Research on citizenship in

116. Christophe Pébarthe, “*Sur l’État... grec ?* Pierre Bourdieu et les cités grecques,” *Revue des études anciennes* 114, no. 2 (2012): 543–65, here p. 543.



Archaic Greece has often been restricted to legal and political categories, or at least refers back to them. Alongside these categories, however, it is imperative to broaden our conception of citizenship in Archaic Greece and to integrate this other aspect of participation in the citizen community, involving attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles.

*Alain Duplouy*  
*Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne*

