

Pnyx: Journal of Classical Studies

Vol 3 (2024)

Pnyx: Journal of Classical Studies



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doi: [10.55760/pnyx.2024.35260](https://doi.org/10.55760/pnyx.2024.35260)

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To cite this article:

Gallego, J. (2024). Land for the Athenian Poor: The Politics of Redistribution Outside Attica During the Fifth Century BCE. *Pnyx: Journal of Classical Studies*, 3, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.55760/pnyx.2024.35260>

Land for the Athenian Poor: The Politics of Redistribution Outside Attica During the Fifth Century BCE

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Submitted	18/08/2023
Accepted (Internal Review)	06/10/2023
Revised (External Review)	08/11/2023
Published	30/06/2024

Abstract

The main concern of this research is the distribution of land carried out by Athens outside Attica during the fifth century BCE, which mostly favoured poor Athenians according to the perspective held in this article. The basic assumption is that most of the colonists and cleruchs came from the Athenian lower classes, which encompassed all the *thetes* and the bulk of the *zeugitai*, keeping in mind the Solonian census classes. It is argued that in the colonisation process, a hoplite farm model operated as a reference pattern for the Athenian state to distribute plots and/or collect rents in favour of its citizens. In order to sustain this, it is first defined the situation of the *zeugitai* and the *thetes* during the sixth and fifth centuries; secondly, it is presented some rough figures of the total male citizen population and of the number of Athenian hoplites, to imagine the possible number of citizens available to emigrate; thirdly, it is analysed three situations that show, in one way or another, the validity of the hoplite farm model for land allocations in Athenian settlements and the beneficiaries of this founding policy: the colony of Brea, the cleruchy on Lesbos, and the colony of Melos; finally, it is proposed some concluding remarks about the Athenian land distribution policy that favoured the lower classes.

Keywords

Athens; Empire; Colonisation; Land; Distribution; *thetes*; *zeugitai*; hoplites

Acknowledgements

I thank Miriam Valdés Guía for her contributions to the development of many of the ideas contained in this paper based on our collaboration over many years. Likewise, I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable suggestions and corrections. Of course, any inaccuracies are my sole responsibility. Finally, I express my entire gratitude to Manolis Pagkalos for the meticulousness and quality of the editing process, his corrections and suggestions, and I congratulate him and Stefanos Apostolou for the wonderful editing and academic project they are carrying out.

Introduction

The main concern of this research is the distribution of land carried out by Athens outside Attica during the fifth century BCE, which mostly favoured poor Athenians according to the perspective held in this article. Just after the end of the Persian wars, Athens implemented a policy of founding colonies and cleruchies through which she established more than thirty settlements down to the last years of the Peloponnesian War.¹ The basic assumption is that most of the colonists and cleruchs came from the Athenian lower classes, which encompassed all the *thetes* and the bulk of the *zeugitai* keeping in mind the Solonian census classes. In this sense, it seems to have been working a gap between *pentakosiomedimnoi* and *hippeis*, on the one hand, and *zeugitai* and *thetes*, on the other, as two sections that distinguished one from the other, as Simon Hornblower has suggested.² This would suppose the dividing line organising the groups would lie between the *hippeis* and the *zeugitai*, not between the latter and the *thetes*. Therefore, the alignment of these two classes defined by the Solonian census would define the concept of *demos* as the “lower classes” of the citizenry, not the complete body politic.

In formulating this colonisation policy, Athens seems to have followed a land allocation pattern according to which the settlers received lots that presumably equated them with hoplite farmers based on the allotted farm size and/or the income obtained. In order to sustain this, first, the situation of the *zeugitai* and the *thetes* during the sixth and fifth centuries is defined; second, some rough figures of the total male citizen population and the number of Athenian hoplites are presented to theorise the possible number of citizens available to emigrate; third, three situations that show, in one way or another, the validity of the hoplite farm model for land allocations in Athenian settlements and the beneficiaries of this founding policy are analysed: the colony of Brea, the cleruchy on Lesbos, and the colony of Melos; finally, some concluding remarks about the Athenian land distribution policy that favoured the lower classes are proposed.

A Broad Attic Peasantry: The Bulk of the *Zeugitai* and the Rural *Thetes*

I would like to begin with the socio-economic and political conditions of the *zeugitai* of the Archaic and Classical periods, taking advantage of a paper published some years ago.³ It offers some remarks in favour of the idea supporting the *zeugitai*'s importance as a broad group of middling peasants.⁴ According to modern calculations, the *zeugitai* reached the level of hoplites, owned a yoke of oxen, and possessed a certain level of income derived from an average landholding of about 4 to 6 ha.⁵

¹ On the figures of Athenian foundations, their locations and dates, the situation of the natives, the number of affected citizens, and the available evidence, see the complete record by Figueira, 1991: 217–225 (Table 4).

² Hornblower, 1991: 399–400.

³ Valdés Guía and Gallego, 2010 [= Gallego and Valdés Guía, 2014: 151–186 (expanded Spanish translation)].

⁴ On the concepts of peasant and farmer to refer to the independent small and middling rural holders: Gallego 2001; 2007; 2009a: 181–230.

⁵ A collection of literary, epigraphical and archaeological evidence has led many scholars to consider that in ancient Greece the holdings of self-sufficient peasants, which would form the bulk of the *poleis*, varied between 40 and 60 *plethra*, that is, between 3.6 and 5.4 ha (for a more complete analysis: Gallego, 2009a: 162–166, with bibliography). The average size between the two would be the one that would operate as a reference for a hoplite farm. Burford (1977/78: 168–172; 1993: 27–28, 67–72, 113–116) has associated this type of property with the hoplite or *zeugite* farm, highlighting the importance of draught animal power for working the land and relating the term *zeugites* with the farm worked with one yoke of oxen; see recently Valdés Guía, 2019. With different emphasis and not always alluding to the *zeugitai*, many scholars

In principle, the *zeugitai* were a census class defined based on economic criteria based on property or income, which, however, had significant implications in the political and military arenas. Consequently, they could have been broadly identified with most of the hoplite class, perhaps from the fifth century.⁶ This does not mean that the “military” etymology for the word *zeugites* has to be accepted instead of that which relates it to the yoke of oxen since it is likely that the demarcation of the *zeugite* class in Solon’s times would have been done considering the ownership of oxen.⁷

It is challenging to analyse the situation of the Athenian peasantry in the sixth century (and in general for the whole of the Archaic period) because most of the sources, for example, Aristotle and his school, date to the fourth century. Moreover, Attica is a region where practically no land surveys have been carried out, apart from in the south and on the frontier with Boiotia.⁸ However, it can be assumed that a broad group of middling peasants developed, many of whom may have started to arm themselves as hoplites throughout the sixth century since it is known that some 9,000 hoplites took part in the battle of Marathon in 490.⁹ This implies an even greater number considering the total of hoplites that could be mobilised at any time, as in the case of the 13,000 hoplites at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, when the total would have been 18,000 to 24,000.¹⁰

This broad class of hoplite-farmers may well have increased its ranks after Solon’s reforms and, in particular, under Peisistratos’ tyranny, who encouraged the development of agriculture and helped many small peasants by providing low-interest loans.¹¹ Their ranks further increased after Cleisthenes’

have adopted this perspective (Jameson, 1977/78: 125 n. 13; 1992: 137, 142; 1994: 58–59; Boyd and Jameson, 1981; Hodkinson, 1988: 39–40; Isager and Skydsgaard, 1992: 78–79; Alcock, Cherry and Davis, 1994: 148; Hanson, 1995: 181–201; Bintliff, 2006b: 328; Nagle, 2006: 71; for a critical view, Gabrielsen, 2002b: 214 and n. 69), except those who argue there was a divergence between the “hoplite farm” and the “*zeugite* farm”, since they suppose the latter to be larger than the former (Foxhall 1997: 130–132; van Wees 2001; 2006; 2013: 236; 2018: 135). Even if the evidence quoted by Burford is scarce and says nothing about either hoplites or *zeugitai*, it is possible to maintain her remarks on the basis of the following criteria: a third-century BCE inscription from Pharsalos (IG IX² 234) analysed by Andreyev (1974: 14–16), which indicates that “those who fought at our side”, i.e. beside the Pharsalians, were given full citizenship and 60 *plethra* of arable land; archaeological information from the Khersonesos Taurike on fourth-century and later farms averaging 43–55 *plethra*; the Athenian *rationes centesimarum* dated by Lewis (1973) in the 320s; Thucydides (3.50.2) on the Lesbian cleruchy of 427, which is examined below; modern estimates about using a yoke of oxen, which would need an average area of about 5 ha for the work to be done properly (Halstead, 1987: 84; 2014: 42–47, 61; Hodkinson, 1988: 39–40; Burford, 1993: 67; Forbes, 2000: 63–64; Nagle, 2006: 71; see the complete analysis by van Wees, 2006: 382–385, with bibliography and sources).

⁶ Particularly if it is assumed that the qualification for being on a hoplite list was belonging to the *zeugite* class or a higher one; cf. Hansen, 1981: 24–29; 1988: 83–89.

⁷ For the identification of the Solonian census classes with military categories, Whitehead (1981) undertook an analysis in-depth of the etymology of *zeugites* in its military sense. Hansen (1991: 30, 43–46, 106–109, 329) prefers the etymology of “owner of a yoke of oxen” for *zeugites*, but he accepts its use as the basis for recruiting in the fifth century. Rosivach (2002b) rejects the military etymology. On his part, van Wees (2006: 353–357) has now accepted and developed the etymology relating the name *zeugitai* to the ownership of oxen, rejecting in this way his previous view; cf. van Wees, 2001: 46. Various authors, finally, doubt the credibility of Aristotle’s account of the measures ascribed to Solon’s classes and emphasise the author’s ignorance concerning the membership qualification for each of them; cf. Gabrielsen, 2002a: 96–97. For a critical review of the “Solonian census system”, see Duplouy 2014, *passim* and esp. 642, 650–651, about the *zeugitai* and the possession of oxen. See recently Valdés Guía, 2019 (with bibliography).

⁸ See Lohmann, 1992 (South Attica); Steinhauer, 2001 (Mesogeia); cf. Hansen, 2004: 625–626; Gallego, 2005: 34–41; Forsdyke, 2006; Moreno, 2007: 37–76.

⁹ Nepos, *Milt.* 5.1; Paus. 10.20.2; Justin, 2.9.9; 8,000 hoplites in Plataiai, according to Herodotos (9.28.6); cf. Plut. *Aris.* 11.1; de Ste. Croix, 2004: 48. According to van Wees (2004: 241–243), these 9,000 hoplites represent the same proportion as the hoplites of 431. See the next section for further information.

¹⁰ Cf. Thuc. 2.13.6–7; D.S. 12.40.3.

¹¹ On Solon’s law protecting property given in litigation: Ruschenbusch, 1966: F 36a; Gagarin, 2006: 264–265; Leão and Rhodes, 2015: 55–56 (with further bibliographical references). On Solon’s law prohibiting grain exports: Plut. *Sol.* 24.1–2;

reforms, which implied the promotion of many peasant village communities in Attica to the condition of *demoi* or civic subdivisions, as political and territorial powers of local self-government linked to the central government through a whole system of *phylai* and *trittyes*.

So, the *zeugitai* in the fifth century were mostly a class of middling peasants that made up the bulk of the Athenian hoplites. They were not members of the “leisured” class, as Lin Foxhall and Hans van Wees have respectively proposed.¹² On occasions, they aligned themselves with the *thetes*. There is a collection of sources that enable us to consider the fifth-century *zeugitai* as the greater part of the Athenian hoplites and, therefore, as a broad group of middling peasants, most of whom worked their plots with their family – and possibly slave(s)–, although they did not constitute an utterly homogeneous class. Hence, they did not generally belong to the Athenian wealthy class, except perhaps for a minority.¹³

Below the *zeugite* class were all those who owned 2/3 ha or less or did not own land at all, the landless poor, who all together constituted the census class of the *thetes*.¹⁴ Likely, in the fifth century, the *thetes* did not usually fight as hoplites. This does not mean no *thetes* were serving occasionally as hoplites, as in the case of the *epibatai*,¹⁵ but in general, they would not accomplish that military role. This means that most, if not all, of the hoplites registered on a list would have come solely from the three first Solonian census classes: *pentakosiomedimnoi*, *hippeis*, and *zeugitai*. Of course, neither all the hoplites were *zeugitai*,¹⁶ nor the latter were necessarily a military category *per se*. However, this indicates that all the *zeugitai* were hoplites, and they made up the bulk of the Athenian infantry.

The *zeugitai* differed from the *pentakosiomedimnoi* and the *hippeis* in terms of how the state treated them in various recruiting situations, and from the *thetes*, who were not on the list of hoplites. Yet, occasionally, the *zeugitai* might serve on the triremes together with the *thetes* if needed. Sometimes, the alignment of these two classes is given by the concept of *demos* when it refers to the “lower classes” of the citizenry.¹⁷ Of course, it is to be expected that some well-off *zeugitai* had more than 6 ha, which

this law has been interpreted as favouring Attic peasants: Mele, 1979: 41; Baccarin, 1990. Solon did not share the land in equal plots but probably permitted a distribution of marginal or public land and land to be returned to ancient debtors: Arist. *Pol.* 1266a–b; Plut. *Sol.* 13.6; Rosivach, 1992; Isager and Skydsgaard, 1992: 128. On Solon’s law limiting the amount of land each person could acquire, Arist. *Pol.* 1266b 13–14. On Peisistratos’ measures about agriculture: Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 16.2; Dio Chrys. 25.3; Aelian, *V.H.* 9.25; D.L. 1.53; Valdés Guía, 2003. On Athens as a society of small and middling peasants, Wood, 1988; Gallego, 2005: 89–132; Valdés Guía, 2006; 2008: 47–87; Gallego and Valdés Guía, 2014.

¹² Foxhall, 1997; van Wees, 2001; 2006.

¹³ Recently, see the complete analysis by Valdés Guía, 2022b (with evidence and bibliography).

¹⁴ This is a schematic formulation that must be qualified by the existence of landless Athenians whose economic capacity placed them in an intermediate *stratum*, not among the poor. But it is still difficult to know whether these Athenians were ascribed to the *zeugite* or the *thetic* class if it is accepted that the possession of a yoke of oxen (and a suitable property for this) was the defining trait of the *zeugitai*.

¹⁵ On this point, see now the insightful argumentation by Valdés Guía, 2022a.

¹⁶ Some hoplites belonged to the two upper classes, and there were also some metics and a few *thetes*.

¹⁷ For instance, as stated by Thucydides (3.16, and *schol.* at 3.16.1), in the general levy of citizens for the fleet of 428, the *pentakosiomedimnoi* and the *hippeis* were exempted but not the *zeugitai*, who had to man the ships together with the *thetes*. Many *pentakosiomedimnoi* and *hippeis* would have been excluded from the lists of hoplites, either because they belonged to the cavalry (1,000), or because they performed liturgies, or else through string-pulling (by the *stratego*i who made the decisions), as can be surmised from Aristophanes (*Eq.* 1370 ff.). These and other situations would demonstrate how the first two classes, on the one side, and the *zeugitai* and the *thetes*, on the other, could appear aligned, at least in practical terms, even ideologically. If so, it can be said that the bulk of hoplites would be made up of *zeugitai*, since the *thetes* were not on the hoplite lists either.

could have made their association with the *pentakosiomedimnoi* and the *hippeis* possible in certain circumstances.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the main point is that sixth- and fifth-century Athens had a broad class of middling peasants that were politically recognised and formed the Solonian *zeugite* class. Up to a point, this group would be equivalent to, or at least coincide with, most of the hoplites. On the other hand, the existence of the *thetic* class supposes a continuum of strata from the small peasants with 3 ha or less to the landless poor, which included both rural and urban workers.

The previous remarks illustrate some economic, social, military, political, and even ideological conditions that characterised the situation of non-rich Athenians. Taken as a whole, both *thetes*, rural as well as urban ones, and *zeugitai*, perhaps leaving the wealthy ones aside, make up the group that would benefit the most from the land distributions outside Attica. In settlements near Athens, such as those on the islands of Aigina or Euboia, however, it is likely that rich Athenians from the first two Solonian census classes could also have received lots.¹⁹

Some Rough Figures on Population, Hoplites and Settlers

In comparing the agrarian conditions in Athens during the early fifth and fourth centuries, the examination of the allocation of land and the wealth of the peasantry has allowed us to surmise that distribution patterns remained roughly stable and equitable.²⁰ Despite the socio-economic, demographic and political changes between the Persian Wars and the Peloponnesian War, particularly the great increase in the citizen population, Athens would not have suffered a significant modification of the indicated conditions (most of the productive land would already be assigned). Many Athenians would be landless people living on the *arkhe's* resources, or as craftsmen, market hucksters, porters, etc.,²¹ or on the lots obtained in the cleruchies and the colonies that the imperialist policy made available to them. The war against Sparta produced a significant demographic decline that balanced the previous growth, affecting the *thetes* more than other sectors and bringing the number of citizens to a level similar to that of the early fifth century.

At the beginning of the fifth century, it has been estimated that there would be between 20,000 and 30,000 adult male citizens.²² Arnold Jones assumed the higher figure and proposed that about 10,000 people would be hoplites, a third of the total population including the cavalry.²³ Hans van Wees infers the lower figure from the so-called Decree of Themistocles and concludes that the proportion between hoplites and total adult citizens would be 40%, or about 8,000 men.²⁴ It is not easy to deduce how many

¹⁸ This situation could explain why some writings of the late fifth or early fourth century used the term *georgos* in a partial and specific sense. A point made by the so-called “Old Oligarch” could be interpreted in this light ([X.] *Ath. Pol.* 2.14: οἱ γεωργούντες καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι). Aristophanes also uses the word *georgos* to refer to the peasants aligned with the *plousioi* and against the *penetes* (*Ar. Ec.* 198: τοῖς πλούσιος καὶ γεωργοῖς).

¹⁹ For the case of Aigina, see the complete analysis by Figueira, 1991: 5–128; for the case of Euboia, see Moreno (2007: 77–143), who, in my opinion, totally exaggerates and overestimates the number of lots of wealthy Athenians in the settlements of this island.

²⁰ I refer here to the analyses developed by Gallego (2016; 2017), where the relevant evidence and bibliography are comprehensively reviewed and the quantification criteria adopted are provided. Cf. Morris, 2000: 140–142; Bresson, 2007: 150–151; Ober, 2010: 257–259; 2016: 138–139; 2018: 20–22.

²¹ See *Xen. Mem.* 3.7.5–6, on the non-agricultural citizens who attended the Assembly.

²² For calculations on the Athenian population at the beginning of the fifth century: Gomme, 1933: 25–26; Patterson, 1981: 48–56; Morris, 1987: 99–100; Garnsey, 1988: 89–91; Raaflaub, 1996: 165 n. 65; Osborne, 2010: 246.

²³ Jones, 1957: 8, 161.

²⁴ *SEG* 22.274 [= Meiggs and Lewis, 1989: 48–52 (*ML* 23)]; van Wees, 2004: 241–243. On the Decree of Themistocles:

hoplites came from the *pentakosiomedimnoi* and the *hippeis*. However, according to later information, it is suitable to guess that the two upper classes would not add together more than 2,000 or probably less (for the sake of calculation, the guess is 1,000). Following one or another estimate, the number of hoplites from the zeugite class would have been between 7,000 and 9,000 (or maybe a little more). As stated earlier, the conditions usually required to be a hoplite, which were in force at least since the end of the Archaic era, were those involved in being a *zeugites*. However, neither status was necessarily correlative. This implies landownership of at least 4 up to 6 ha or a little more, a yoke of oxen (but not horses), and, of course, hoplite weapons. Smallholders or the landless poor below the *zeugitai* were part of the *thetes*.

During the so-called *Pentecontaetia* in the fifth century, the significant growth in the citizen population meant a notable increase in resource demand. Scholars hypothesise that just before the start of the Peloponnesian War, the total number of adult male citizens would have reached 40,000, 45,000, 60,000, or even more.²⁵ With most of Attica's productive land already allocated, how did the Athenians deal with the changes that occurred during this period? As is well known, many poor Athenians, with little or no land, lived from the distribution of the League's revenues that Pericles' policy made available to them through various channels. Such was the extent that there has been talk of community patronage.²⁶ However, a substantial part of the landless poor citizens found the possibility of obtaining lots in the colonies and cleruchies established by Athens.

Thus, in a very schematic way, the Athenian citizen population grew from around 20,000 or 30,000 adults at the beginning of the fifth century to 40,000 or 60,000 or even more in 431, to fall again to 25,000 people just after the war and, then, reaching a stable number of 30,000 adult citizens residing in Attica during most of the fourth century. The remarkable demographic increase during the *Pentecontaetia* coincides with the development of the Athenian *arkhe*. The democratic response decided by Athens to provide resources to this growing population was the colonisation of new territories. Athens indeed controlled settlements outside Attica before and after the development of her fifth-century hegemony (i.e. Chalcis and Salamis at the end of the sixth century or Lemnos, Imbros, and Skyros during the fourth century). However, the number of new foundations after the Persian Wars is unparalleled due to the political and military strategies and the need to obtain land for a large (landless) population.

Jameson, 1960; 1963. In favour of the veracity of the decree: Hammond, 1982; 1986; 1988: 558–563; *contra*, considering it a fabrication: Johansson, 2001; Blösel, 2004: 247–254. But see recently the arguments by Chaniotis (2013: 746), who thinks that it is a text from the mid-fourth century by Cleidemos based on a true incident.

²⁵ For different calculations: Jones (1957: 8–9), about 20,000 hoplites plus 20,000 *thetes* in 431; according to Thomsen (1964: 162–166), there may have been 22,000 hoplites and 15,000 or 20,000 *thetes* at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War; Garnsey (1988: 89–91) allows us to infer about 62,500 citizens and between 18,000 and 25,000 hoplites; Rhodes (1988: 274–275) estimates a total hoplite number of between 21,000 and 29,000 in 431 and a total of adult male citizens of between 45,000 and 60,000; van Wees (2001: 51) speaks of 18,000 hoplites, but in a later calculation the number rises to 24,000 (van Wees, 2006: 374 n. 90); Hansen (1988: 8–11, 23–28) estimates a minimum of 60,000 citizens at 431 (and perhaps 20,000 or 25,000 hoplites, including metics) which at the end of the Peloponnesian War would decrease to approximately 25,000 to stabilise at about 30,000 adult citizens during the fourth century, according to Hansen (1982; 1985: 26–64; 1991: 93–94; 2006: 19–60), which means about 100,000 people with women and children, plus the metics, some 10,000 (only male adults), and slaves 150,000 (male adults). Recently, testing Hansen's arguments, Akrigg (2019: 38–88, 139–170) reaches similar conclusions, but pays more attention to the fifth century and the changes that occurred.

²⁶ This issue has been analysed in a series of studies devoted to the problem of patronage in classical Athens: Gallego, 2008; 2009b [= Gallego and Valdés Guía, 2014: 187–211].

Table 1: Distribution of Citizens According to Census Classes in the Fifth Century

Dates	490/480	490/480	431	431	431	431
Estimates	van Wees	Jones	van Wees	Rhodes	van Wees	Rhodes
(Upper classes)	1,000	1,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
(<i>Zeugitai</i>)	7,000	9,000	16,000	19,000	22,000	27,000
Total of hoplites	8,000	10,000	18,000	21,000	24,000	29,000
Total of <i>thetes</i>	12,000	20,000	22,000	24,000	36,000	31,000
Total population	20,000	30,000	40,000	45,000	60,000	60,000

Estimates of the numbers of adult male citizens are inferred from van Wees (2004: 241–243), Jones (1957: 8–9, 161), van Wees (2001: 51–53) and Rhodes (1988: 274–275), respectively. The parameters considered by van Wees are modified assuming that the hoplites are all the *zeugitai*, plus the two upper classes, and that the *thetes* are subhoplites.

Without pretence of accuracy, in the span of two generations in which the population would have grown by a third, or 50% and above, in line with a set of explanations that ranges from cautious to daring estimates, it can be inferred in a moderate calculation that Athens would have assigned lots of land outside Attica to between 11,000 and 13,000 Athenians.²⁷ At the same time, the number of hoplites would have risen from a third to 40% or 50% of all the adult citizens available, according to different calculations (although after 431 there must have been some decline due to the casualties of war, perhaps mitigated during the peace of Nicias).²⁸

Therefore, the number of Athenians who obtained land outside Attica and may not have resided entirely in Athens should also be considered to calculate the total citizen population. However, not all the Athenians who migrated indeed remained in the places where they were transferred, and some of them were even able to stay in Athens, although they received lots in other communities. In this sense, there is an important debate regarding the permanent nature or not of the types of settlements and their settlers based on the different status of *kleroukhoi* and *epoikoi* – this has consequences that it is not possible to analyse here.²⁹

In any case, what is relevant for this paper is that, in the context of sustained population growth, there was at the same time an increase in the proportion of available hoplites, setting up the material conditions for many of them to obtain an income according to current standards regarding the wealth required to be a hoplite. In most cases, this was achieved through land distribution in the areas the Athenians controlled during their hegemony. This distribution of wealth was enabled by ways of equalisation among the Athenians that democracy put into practice, which, at the same time, generated disparities for their subjects due to the impositions that the Athenians put on them. We can think of: (1) the dislodgment of native populations to occupy their territories, as happened during the foundation of Brea; or (2) the submission of direct producers to ways of economic exploitation by extracting rent from them, as happened in Lesbos after the revolt led by the Mytileneans; or (3) the elimination of an entire city population through carnage and *andrapodismos*, as occurred in the case of Melos.

²⁷ Around 16,000 as discussed by Figueira, 1991: 171–172; between 15,000 and 20,000 according to Morris, 2009: 148.

²⁸ See van Wees, 2006: 374 n. 90: 40%; Hanson, 1995: 114, 366, 478–479 n. 6: 50%. Cf. Christ, 2001: 401. The total number of hoplites may have included the cleruchs, who would not be distinguished from the Athenians residing in Attica but were still included in the original tribes, and perhaps some colonists, who appeared instead as separate contingents according to their ethnic designations; cf. Figueira, 1991: 216 (Table 3); 2008: 459; see also Pébarthe, 2009: 383.

²⁹ On both types of foundations, see Figueira (1991: 66–73; 2008: 448–452), who maintains that both the cleruchs and the colonists retained full Athenian citizenship.

In this context, I would like to focus on these three cases in the analysis proposed here about land distribution to poor Athenians during the fifth century BCE. As I shall try to demonstrate, there was a pattern of land distribution applied in the colonised areas according to which the plot allocation system would have been organised keeping the 5-ha hoplite farm model in mind, compatible with the size of most of the zeugite properties in Attica.

The Colony at Brea

During the 440s or 430s,³⁰ an amendment to the decree of the foundation of the colony at Brea in Thrace, whose exact location cannot be determined,³¹ pointed out *thetes* and *zeugitai* as those favoured by the distribution of land in the new colony: “and the colonists to go to Brea shall be from the *thetes* and *zeugitai*” (IG I³ 46, ll. 43-46).³² Arnold Jones and Geoffrey de Ste. Croix had interpreted the decree not to exclude the first two classes of the Solonian census. Instead, no citizen from these classes would wish to emigrate due to their significant properties in Attica. They also concluded that the mention of the *thetes* and, subsequently, of the *zeugitai* would imply that the latter would have been added to the former in the amendment, assuming that a reference to the *thetes* as the only beneficiaries was made in the lost initial paragraphs of the decree.³³ According to Vincent Rosivach,

³⁰ The dating of the founding decree of the colony of Brea has generated controversy. Just to cite the most relevant positions: Meritt, Wade-Gery and McGregor, 1950: 286–288 (c. 446); Woodhead, 1952: 60 (c. 438); Mattingly, 1963: 258–261; 1966 (c. 426/5); the author later modifies his position: Mattingly, 1974: 53–56 (c. 435/433); all these articles are now collected in Mattingly, 1996, 87–106 (at 88–92), 117–146, and 361–385 (at 381–385), respectively. Cf. Rhodes, 2008: 505 (in the 440s or 430s). Recently, Psôma, 2009: 270–274 (c. 434–432); 2016 (July 433). The dating of this document is relevant for the history of Athenian imperialism, but it does not change the discussion about this colony and the selection of its members. On the importance of epigraphy for understanding of Athenian imperialism based on the issues indicated here: see Kallet, 2009; cf. Low, 2005; Papazarkadas, 2009.

³¹ In Bisaltia or in the Chalcidice peninsula. The first possibility is raised by those who associate the founding of Brea with the information from Plutarch (*Per.* 11.5), about the thousand Athenians sent to Thrace to live together with the Bisaltians; in favour of this possibility: Gomme, 1945: 373; Meritt, Wade-Gery and McGregor, 1950: 60–61; Meritt, 1967: 49–50; Meiggs, 1972: 158–159, 602. The second possibility follows from a correction to Thuc. 1.61.4: ἐς Βρέαν (instead of ἐς Βέροιαν), proposed by Bergk, 1865; Woodhead (1952: 62) follows this amendment; Alexander, 1962: 282–285; Asheri, 1969 (the author develops his argument from a fragment of Theopompus to reinforce the amendment to Thucydides); Malkin, 1984: 47 n. 20 (who also seems to accept this localisation). Another, flimsier attempt indicates the possibility that Brea has been absorbed by Amphipolis: Hansen, 1999. Cf. Isaac, 1986, 51–52; Flensted-Jensen, 2004, 848–849 (“624: Brea”). Recently, Psôma (2009) offers new arguments about the location of Brea, taking up the idea that the correct reference in Thuc. 1.61.4 is actually Brea and not Beroia; the site of this ancient colony would be close to Nea Syllata, where the modern Verghia is located, a toponym that would derive from the old name; the foregoing supposes that the location of Brea is on the western coast of Chalcidice, north of Potidaea.

³² ἐς δὲ [B]ρέαν ἐχ θετῶν καὶ ζε[υ]γιτῶν ἰέναι τὸς ἀπο[ί]κους. Cf. the information gathered in the AIO website (<https://www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/IGI3/46>), with English translation by S. Lambert and P. J. Rhodes, access to the Greek text, notes and several of the available editions. For different translations of this text, with analysis of the decree, see also Graham, 1964: 59–64, 228–229; Austin and Vidal-Naquet, 1977: 323–325 (No. 99; this evidence is not included in the first French original edition); Fornara, 1983: 110–111 (No. 100); Bertrand, 1992: 60–61 (No. 24); Arnaoutoglou, 1998: 113–115 (No. 96). A decree of 387/6 BCE on the cleruchy of Lemnos (IG II² 30 = *Agora* XIX, L3) would have apparently contained a clause similar to that of the founding decree of Brea. Following the previous restoration by S. Luria, from the provision on *thetes* and *zeugitai* of the Brea decree (IG I³ 46, ll. 43–46), Stroud (1971: 162–173, N° 23 [plate 30], at 171–172) retains for the decree on the cleruchy of Lemnos the reading [πλήν ἰππέων καὶ ἰ πεντακοσιομεδίμων], “[except *hippeis* and] *pentakosiomedimnoi*”, who would therefore have been excluded from the assignment of land; although, given the fragmentary condition of the stele, the mention of the *pentakosiomedimnoi* could mean both their exclusion from participating in the cleruchy and their inclusion with a specific role. Cf. de Ste. Croix, 2004: 11–12; Rosivach, 2002a: 43 n. 29.

³³ Jones, 1957: 168, mentioning a direct suggestion by de Ste. Croix; cf. de Ste. Croix, 2004: 11 and n. 27.

this would be a decision “to ensure that the new colony would benefit those at the lower end of the social scale”.³⁴ However, if the explanation put forward by Hans van Wees is taken into account,³⁵ the *zeugitai* would be landowners who took part of the Athenian leisured class because they had at least 8 or 16 ha of land (depending on whether or not fallow land is considered). Therefore, they would not have participated in the new foundations or would have done so in a minimal way. Indeed, if the *zeugitai* consisted solely of those who owned more than 8 ha of land, as van Wees claims, it would be difficult to understand why they would have participated in the colonisation and moved to Brea. Unless Alfonso Moreno’s view is accepted, who proposes that lots distributed outside Attica were mostly in the hands of wealthy Athenians, which I will immediately return to.³⁶ If, instead, the argument that the bulk of the fifth-century *zeugite* class was made by peasants with plots of around 40 to 60 *plethra* (3.6 to 5.4 ha) is accepted, it is understandable that some of them would have decided to move to new colonies. Perhaps they did so in the hope of obtaining larger plots than those they held in Attica or to provide land to individuals from families of *zeugite* status, thereby increasing their assets and/or alleviating the typical pressures for inheritance partitions. This would, thus, suggest that the *zeugitai*, or at least a large proportion, were not rich and could have been aligned with the *thetes* in the distributions of land.

Since the selection of colonists from *thetes* and *zeugitai* appears in the *addendum*, Russell Meiggs and David Lewis point out that the beneficiaries were not originally restricted to these classes,³⁷ and, if there had been an initial restriction, the *thetes* and not the *zeugitai* would have been those excluded, taking into account the mention of the *stratiotai* (at l. 31), “since the soldiers who were to go as *epoikoi* are likely to have belonged to that [*zeugite*] class”, as Robin Osborne and Peter Rhodes have correctly pointed out.³⁸ For Thomas Figueira, the amendment in the decree on the colony at Brea restricting participation only to *thetes* and *zeugitai* puts into practice, in this case, the criteria usually applied for the cleruchies, since there would be no such restrictions in the case of *apoikiai*.³⁹

In any case, the problem that underlies these debates is to determine the beneficiaries of this policy of founding cleruchies and colonies, which Arnold Jones associated with the transformation of poor *thetes* into *zeugitai* as a general rule and Alfonso Moreno has recently inverted to state that the vast majority of cleruchs would have been the wealthy *pentakosiomedimnoi*.⁴⁰ Several authors have scrutinised these categorical positions, recognising that there may have been both needy and wealthy citizens among the cleruchs. However, much of the evidence on this comes from the fourth century.⁴¹ Nevertheless, a significant aspect unifies Jones’s and Moreno’s perspectives: the cleruchs would have been recipients of land that would act as absentee *rentiers*.⁴² The next case study focuses on this issue.

³⁴ Rosivach, 2002a: 36–37.

³⁵ van Wees, 2001; 2006.

³⁶ Moreno, 2007: 77–143; 2009.

³⁷ Meiggs and Lewis, 1989: 128–133 (*ML* 49), at 132 (στρατιωτῶν appears at l. 31, no at l. 27).

³⁸ Osborne and Rhodes, 2017: 238–245 (*OR* 142), at 245. Cf. Brunt, 1966: 71 = 1993: 113; Meiggs, 1972: 158–159, 260.

³⁹ Figueira, 1991: 60.

⁴⁰ Jones, 1957: 168–169, 173, 176 (absentee landlords); Moreno, 2007: 94–96 (absentee owners, absentee *rentierism*), 102 (*rentiers*); 2009: 213–214 (*rentiers*).

⁴¹ Cargill, 1987; 1995: 196; Salomon, 1997: 154–155; cf. Migeotte, 2010, 29 and n. 10; Burke, 2010: 409 n. 78.

⁴² Jones’ perspective is accepted, albeit with reservations, by Brunt, 1966: 81 (*rentiers*), 84 (absentee *rentiers*) = 1993: 125, 128. See references in n. 40 above.

The Cleruchy on Lesbos⁴³

The situation of Lesbos after the revolt of Mytilene in 427 BCE is the representative case to support the idea that most of the Athenian cleruchs were absentee landowners, based mainly on the information given by Thucydides (3.50.2):⁴⁴

ὕστερον δὲ φόρον μὲν οὐκ ἔταξαν Λεσβίοις, κλήρους δὲ ποιήσαντες τῆς γῆς πλὴν τῆς Μηθυμναίων τρισχιλίους τριακοσίους μὲν τοῖς θεοῖς ἱεροὺς ἐξείλον, ἐπὶ δὲ τοὺς ἄλλους σφῶν αὐτῶν κληρούχους τοὺς λαχόντας ἀπέπεμψαν· οἷς ἀργύριον Λέσβιοι ταξάμενοι τοῦ κλήρου ἑκάστου τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ δύο μνᾶς φέρειν αὐτοὶ εἰργάζοντο τὴν γῆν.⁴⁵

After that, they did not impose tribute on the Lesbians but instead divided the island (apart from the territory of Methymna) into three thousand allotments, of which they dedicated three hundred to the gods; for the rest, they sent out [ἀπέπεμψαν] individual landlords [κληρούχους] from their own citizens, choosing them by lot. The Lesbians agreed to pay the landlords a yearly rent of two minas for each allotment and worked the land themselves.

Thuc. 3.50.2 (Trans. Hammond)

The acceptance of the two minas per annum rent as the required income to be part of the hoplite status has generated scholarly discussion. This involves the question of whether the cleruchs actually settled in Lesbos and formed a military garrison there or, on the contrary, they received their allotments without leaving Athens in order to increase the number of hoplites. The latter assumption is based on the rental nature of the exploitation system imposed on the Lesbians, which would allow the cleruchs to be absent from the island. Almost a century and a half ago, Paul Foucart was perhaps the first to suggest that the cleruchs might not have lived in Lesbos.⁴⁶ Arnold Jones stated categorically and as a general rule that, because of the need of hoplites, the cleruchs did not reside at the place where they received lots but remained in Athens; he based his argument mainly on the case of Lesbos related by Thucydides.⁴⁷ Faced with the use of the verb ἀποπέμπω (to send out or to send off), Jones indicated that ἀπέπεμψαν entails here a “term of art”, a technicality used in the framework of the installation of a cleruchy without necessarily implying the concrete displacement of the settlers.⁴⁸ Peter Brunt accepted Jones’ vision as a possible Athenian practice since the cleruchs would have no incentive to remain on their land as settlers because of the lack of local autonomy.⁴⁹ However, he clarified the case of Lesbos, admitting that the cleruchs established themselves effectively there and focusing

⁴³ A complete analysis of this case has been developed in Gallego, 2022. Certain aspects are taken up again depending on the argument presented here.

⁴⁴ D.S. 12.55.10: τὴν Λέσβον ὄλην πλὴν τῆς Μηθυμναίων χώρας κατεκληρούχησαν; the verb ‘κατεκληρούχησαν’ can perfectly be rendered as “they distributed to the cleruchs”. Cf. Antiph. 5.76–80. On the revolt in Mytilene and its context, Gillis, 1971; Karavites, 1979; cf. Quinn, 1971; 1981: 24–38; Westlake, 1976; Wilson, 1981. Recently, see Harris (2013), whose main concern is not the revolt itself but the debate held in the Athenian Assembly.

⁴⁵ Edited by Jones and Powell, 1942.

⁴⁶ Foucart, 1878: 347, 407. Busolt (1904: 1033 and n. 1) argued, quoting Foucart among others, that the cleruchs did indeed go to Lesbos, but then they returned to Athens.

⁴⁷ Jones, 1957: 174–176.

⁴⁸ A few lines earlier (Thuc. 3.50.1), the same verb ἀπέπεμψεν is used to indicate Paches’ decision to send the leaders of the rebellion to Athens.

⁴⁹ Brunt, 1966: 81–84 = 1993: 125–128.

the discussion on the moment when the Athenians left the island.⁵⁰ Also commenting on Jones' approach, Alexander Graham showed that significant evidence reveals the cleruchs' residence in the settlements outside Athens. In some cases, it could happen that colonists did not live in the allotted land but in Athens.⁵¹ Sometimes, the cleruchs were sent to populate places from which the previous population had been dislodged, as in the cases of Histiaia, Aigina, and Melos. Finally, Alfonso Moreno has returned to Jones's and Brunt's hypotheses but without providing any new argument for the case of Lesbos. According to Moreno, the cleruchs should not be associated with the poorest Athenians because they obtained an annual income of two minas, which set these 2,700 men within the hoplite status.⁵² Criticising the understanding that most of the cleruchs were absentee landlords, based on her detailed works on the Athenian cleruchies, Enrica Culasso Gastaldi has reaffirmed the idea that cleruchs were actual residents settled in the cleruchies.⁵³ So, in the case of Lesbos, absenteeism is related to production and not necessarily to residence on the island to which the expedition was sent to subdue the rebellious Lesbians.

What criteria were used to delimit the 3,000 lots, and what Athenians were granted land?⁵⁴ The distribution of lots may have taken the areas already exploited by the Lesbians into account because according to Thucydides: "they (the Lesbians) worked the land themselves" (αὐτοὶ εἰργάζοντο τὴν γῆν). Thus, to establish the annual rent related to the usual hoplite income, the Athenians would probably have considered the land previously distributed among the Lesbians. Therefore, the idea that may have been assumed to determine the amount and the size of the allotments would have been to consider the standard income of 200 drachmas associated with the hoplite status and, in addition, the typical 5-ha hoplite farm size as a notional parameter.

The proposed analysis allows us to understand a possible way of exploiting the populations and the resources of the dominated Lesbian communities, through which Athenian citizens increased their income and/or property from land distribution. Consequently, if Athens did not stipulate their expulsion, the inhabitants of the conquered areas could become leaseholders or hired workers who were exploited in what had previously been their possessions, a situation that they could see as a form of slavery, as indicated by Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Cf. Gomme, 1959: 64; Calder III, 1959: 141; Meiggs, 1972: 261–262, 316–317. What happens later with the cleruchs of Lesbos revolves around the interpretation of other passages by Thucydides (4.52; 8.22) and, above all, of IG I² 60 [= IG I³ 66], an inscription preserved only fragmentarily and whose dating is not clear, in which the autonomy of the Mytileneans is indicated at a date subsequent to the installation of the cleruchy: see Gomme, 1953; 1956: 329–331; Meritt, 1954; Gauthier, 1966: 82–88; Cataldi, 1976; 1983: 251–285; Hornblower, 1991: 440–441; Kallet, 1993: 144–147; Salomon, 1997: 198–200; Fornara, 2010.

⁵¹ Graham, 1964: 181, 189.

⁵² Moreno, 2007: 94–95, 98–99; 2009: 214.

⁵³ Culasso Gastaldi, 2009, 135–137.

⁵⁴ According to the inscription (IG I² 60 = IG I³ 66), Hansen, Spencer and Williams (2004: 1026–1030) seem to deduce from what happened later with Mytilene ("798. Mytilene") that the land distributed among the Athenian cleruchs belonged to this community, which became a dependent *polis*. Since Mytilene had previously tried to carry out a *synoecism* to make Lesbos a single *polis*, Antissa, Eresos and Pyrrha seem to have been controlled by the Mytileneans, thus being *poleis* which in turn were dependent on Mytilene (cf. Hansen, 1998: 55, with a critique of Hampl, 1939: 1–2, who believed that Mytilene had become a *polis* without territory). Although in the entries "794. Antissa" (1021–1022, at 1022), "796: Eresos" (1023–1024, at 1023) and "799. Pyrrha" (1030–1031, at 1030), Hansen, Spencer and Williams repeat an identical formula ("The territory, or at least a part of it, was surrendered to Athenian cleruchs"), their approach is not clear. This issue has been extensively addressed in Gallego, 2022.

⁵⁵ Zelnick-Abramovitz, 2004.

The Colony of Melos

The hoplite pattern that follows from the case of Brea, and certainly from that of Lesbos too, for land distributions outside Attica would have operated as a model among the Athenians. The example of Melos allows us to reaffirm its presence:

καὶ οἱ Μήλιοι περὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς χρόνους αὐθις καθ' ἕτερόν τι τοῦ περιτειχίσματος εἶλον τῶν Ἀθηναίων, παρόντων οὐ πολλῶν τῶν φυλάκων. καὶ ἐλθούσης στρατιάς ὕστερον ἐκ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ἄλλης, ὡς ταῦτα ἐγίγνετο, ἧς ἦρχε Φιλοκράτης ὁ Δημέου, καὶ κατὰ κράτος ἤδη πολιορκούμενοι, γενομένης καὶ προδοσίας τινός, ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν ξυνεχώρησαν τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις ὥστε ἐκείνους περὶ αὐτῶν βουλευῶσαι. οἱ δὲ ἀπέκτειναν Μηλίων ὅσους ἠβῶντας ἔλαβον, παῖδας δὲ καὶ γυναῖκας ἠνδραπόδισαν· τὸ δὲ χωρίον αὐτοὶ ᾤκισαν, ἀποίκους ὕστερον πεντακοσίους πέμψαντες.⁵⁶

At about this time the Melians once more took another part of the Athenian wall which was scantily guarded. In response a further force was sent out from Athens, commanded by Philocrates the son of Demeas. Now under tight siege, and also betrayed by some internal treachery, the Melians volunteered surrender to the Athenians at their absolute discretion. Of the Melian population the Athenians executed all the grown men who came into their hands and enslaved the children and women. Later they colonised [ᾤκισαν] the place themselves, sending out five hundred settlers [ἀποίκους] of their own.

Thuc. 5.116.2-4 (Trans. Hammond)

Thus, as stated by Thucydides, after the defeat of the Melians, the Athenians killed the captured adult men while reducing to slavery infants and women.⁵⁷ The Melian territory was then inhabited by 500 Athenian settlers who exploited it directly. Therefore, the passage indicates that the Athenian colonists established themselves in Melos. Alfonso Moreno points out that only 500 Athenians settled on an island capable of holding up to 5,000 people,⁵⁸ but Malcolm Wagstaff and John Cherry's estimates are arbitrarily taken. While Melos could support a maximum population of up to 5,000 inhabitants, the authors suggest that the Classical era population would probably be around 2,000 or 3,000.⁵⁹ As hypothetical as these figures may be, they give an idea that Moreno seems to lose sight of when he affirms that "it would be difficult to argue that the number of Melians displaced was similar to what was installed in its place: a group of just 500 Athenian cleruchs". In order to reproduce the 500 households involved in the lots distributed, the settlers should be the 500 landowners and the members of each family, in a hypothetical calculation allowing for a wife, a son and a daughter. In these circumstances, the population would be around 2,000 people, to which one should add the dependent labour force and foreigners who could reside on the island. Of course, Moreno cannot consider this calculation because he adheres to a kind of orthodoxy that firmly believes all cleruchs were absentee owners originating from the wealthiest Athenian classes.

The number of settlers sent to this island seems to have followed the pattern of land distribution linked to hoplite farm size, as in the cases of Brea and Lesbos. In effect, the island of Melos has an area

⁵⁶ Edited by Jones and Powell, 1942.

⁵⁷ On the Athenian attack and invasion against Melos, Seaman, 1997.

⁵⁸ Moreno, 2007: 317 (see quotation below); 2009: 215.

⁵⁹ Wagstaff and Cherry, 1982: 144–145.

of 151 km² under a single *polis*.⁶⁰ Extending Alison Burford's survey regarding the size of 60 *plethra* or 5.4 ha for the traditional peasant farm according to Greek standards,⁶¹ Michael Jameson highlighted precisely the case of Melos where, according to contemporary records, there would be 23.2 km² of cultivable land, a number below the full potential. From Burford's demonstrations, Jameson surmises an equation that fits the number of Athenian settlers into the arable area: 27 km² is the area occupied by 500 lots of 5.4 ha, that is, on average, 60 *plethra* each, distributed among a similar number of settlers.⁶² Recent observations, congruent with the underestimation of the amount of arable land indicated by Jameson, suggest that the land suitable for agriculture would reach 3,000 ha, that is, one-fifth of the total area,⁶³ a calculation perfectly compatible with the 2,700 ha conjectured by Jameson, to which one-tenth reserved for the gods could be added, assuming the same criterion applied as in the case of Lesbos (a usual practice). All facts fit perfectly well with the conditions for the typical hoplite-farmer lot. These estimates are also consistent with the calculations made regarding the area under cereal cultivation around the *asty* of ancient Melos, and the number of people that could be fed from it. It is possible to admit the rationality of the number of Athenian settlers sent to Melos because not only the pattern of the 5-ha hoplite farm model but also the amount of affordable population based on the island's productive potential would have been contemplated, taking the reproduction of the households settled in Melos into account as well as an additional population that could accommodate resident foreigners and dependent labourers.

Conclusion

Finally, let us try to answer the initial question: what Athenians benefited from the allotments? Arnold Jones claimed that not only were the *thetes* converted into *zeugitai*, but the latter were prevented from sinking to thetic status,⁶⁴ in a way putting into practice Antiphon's statement in his *Against Philinus*: "to make all the *thetes* hoplites".⁶⁵ As Thomas Figueira argues:

While a thetic monopoly may have prevailed for cleruchies, anecdotal evidence shows wide eligibility for colonies. (...) [But] even with the availability of colonial allotments to all census classes, those presenting themselves were perhaps disproportionately *thetes*, motivated by limited property holdings and restricted economic prospects at home.⁶⁶

Accepting that most of the land distributed in cleruchies and colonies favoured the Athenian poor, generally from the thetic class,⁶⁷ the point to consider is the participation of *zeugitai* in the colonisation.

⁶⁰ Cf. Sparkes, 1982; Reger, 2004: 758–760 ("505. Melos").

⁶¹ Burford, 1977/78; 1993: 27–28, 67–72, 113–116.

⁶² Jameson, 1977/78: 125 n. 13. The author supported his calculations in the records displayed in the *Αποτελέσματα της απογραφής γεωργίας-κτηνοτροφίας της 19 Μαρτίου 1961*, Athēnai: Έθνική Στατιστική Υπηρεσία της Ελλάδος, 1964. Cf. also Jameson, 1992: 137, 142; 1994: 58. On the Melian environmental and ecological conditions for the development of agrarian activities, see the chapters compiled by Renfrew and Wagstaff, 1982: 73–180, 245–290.

⁶³ Cf. Dawson, 2014: 217.

⁶⁴ Jones, 1957: 169.

⁶⁵ This assertion is recorded by Harpocration, *s.v.* θῆτες (= fr. 61 Thalheim; fr. 63 Sauppe; fr. 6 Maidment).

⁶⁶ Figueira, 2008: 441–442.

⁶⁷ It is difficult to determine whether the *thetes* who participated in colonising expeditions came from rural or urban activities. For Figueira (1991: 180), it is possible that they were agricultural workers and temporary agrarian labour force that would cultivate marginal plots more than *thetes* from the *asty*; cf. Pébarthe, 2009: 383.

Suppose we admit that in the fifth century, the *zeugite* class comprised farmers who mostly owned lots of 40-60 *plethra*. In that case, that is, hoplite farms of 4/5 ha on average, it is possible to explain why there were *zeugitai* who agreed to move to new colonies, with the prospect of obtaining larger lots than those they already owned in Attica,⁶⁸ or more likely, to provide land to members of *zeugite* families with several male descendants, given the problem of inheritance partition. This practice probably shows an increase during the Archidamian War, affecting a vital part of the *zeugite* class, due to the Athenian strategy of sheltering rural inhabitants within the city walls during the Spartan devastation of the Attic fields.⁶⁹

Then, land distribution in colonies and *cleruchies* points to the effective displacement of benefited Athenians to the new settlements, both in the cases of Brea and Melos and in that of Lesbos as well, whose members are mentioned as *apoikoi* and *kleroukhoi*, respectively. The possible differences between these types of settlers, that is, up to what point the former did not retain Athenian citizenship while the latter did,⁷⁰ do not seem to have been relevant to the effective migration: both left Athens to take advantage of lots of land distributed outside Attica. Even though we cannot make an exact, quantitative estimate, it is reasonable to postulate that the land ownership structure in fifth-century Attica would not have been so different from the better-known situation of Athens in the fourth century.⁷¹ In this context, the *cleruchic* and colonial distributions increased the number of hoplite farmers from an Athenian origin by transferring a significant citizen population, mostly from the lower classes, to the *cleruchies* and colonies. Despite this, of course, a greater number of landless Athenians will most likely still have resided in Athens from the mid-fifth century up to the last years of the Peloponnesian War than during the fourth century.⁷²

The hoplite farm model as a reference for plot distribution and/or rent collection that is perceived from the cases of Lesbos and Melos, and indeed also in Brea, should have operated as a pattern for the Athenian state. In principle, the *thetes* were the primary beneficiaries of this colonising policy, but, as far as it is possible to discern, certain segments of the *zeugite* class could also take advantage of it. Thus, the characteristic pattern of the hoplite-*zeugite* status in terms of ownership and/or income appears to have been used as a criterion. Thomas Figueira puts it clearly:⁷³ the *thetes'* aspiration to access hoplite status was based on a socially accepted norm, which added the material improvement inherent in the promotion into the *zeugite* class. To the extent that the link between hoplite status and *zeugite* ownership was in force, the *thetes* could only improve their situation through the promotion into the immediate upper class, not through subsidies. Since lot allocation had the *zeugite* income as a reference, the distributed plots allowed the beneficiaries to emulate hoplite farmers, thereby increasing

⁶⁸ Valdés Guía and Gallego, 2010: 261–262; Gallego and Valdés Guía, 2014: 157–158.

⁶⁹ Cf. Figueira, 1991: 31–32; 2008: 459.

⁷⁰ Cf. Figueira, 1991: 66–73; 2008: 448–452.

⁷¹ Cf. Gallego, 2016; 2017.

⁷² This sector of landless Athenians involved in non-agricultural tasks included thousands of citizens, which is evident from the hypothetical figures of the total adult male citizen population of land-owning Athenians and migrants to the colonies and *cleruchies* that have been discussed in this paper. The labor specialization of these Athenians not linked to agriculture shows an enormous variety that leads us to think about the development of an important and diversified demand. On this point, see the complete study by Lewis, 2020. The evidence at our disposal does not allow us to answer adequately. Still, I would be inclined to think that a part of these Athenians specialized in non-agricultural tasks could have been linked to domestic units with small plots of land in the vicinity of Athens, as can be inferred from the hypothesis of Bintliff (2006a: 16–17) on the density of demes in the *asty* region and the continuous communities around the walled city practising market-gardening.

⁷³ Figueira, 1991: 182–183; 2008: 438, 458–459.

the number of troops. At the same time, this was articulated with a strong social prejudice that equated full political empowerment with *zeugite* status. Ultimately, the populations dominated by Athens' hegemony were those that paid for this promotion of the Athenian poor, not only transferring their lands due to the conquest but also as a dependent labour force insofar as they were compelled to remain in their former plots and be subjected to some form of exploitation.

Thus, the pattern of the hoplite farm should have been a stimulus for the effective migration of poor Athenians, improving their situation and, at the same time, raising their status. Simultaneously, the communities affected by this imperial policy suffered the development of inner disparities employing the seizure of lands and/or exploitation of the population that subsidised democratic equalisation among the Athenians. As Ian Morris has pointed out in "The Greater Athenian State",⁷⁴ this was a one-way process; by appropriating all or part of the lands of other communities, Athens came to produce one of the most serious attempts against the principle of city-state autonomy, opening the essential economic resources of the *arkhe* to centralised exploitation, which largely favoured the poorest Athenians.

⁷⁴ Morris, 2009: 149.

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Abstract (Spanish) | Resumen

El objetivo principal de esta investigación radica en la distribución de tierras llevada a cabo por Atenas fuera del Ática durante el siglo V a.C., que favoreció mayoritariamente a los atenienses pobres según la perspectiva que se sostiene en este artículo. Apenas finalizadas las Guerras Médicas, Atenas comenzó a implementar una política de fundación de colonias y cleruquías mediante la cual llegó a establecer más de treinta asentamientos hasta los últimos años de la Guerra del Peloponeso. La suposición básica es que la mayoría de los colonos y clerucos procedían de las clases bajas atenienses, que abarcaban a todos los thêtes y a la mayor parte de los zeugítai, tomando en cuenta las clases censitarias establecidas por Solón. Al formular esta política de colonización, Atenas parece haber seguido un patrón de asignación de tierras según el cual los beneficiarios recibían lotes que presumiblemente los equiparaban con los agricultores hoplitas conforme al tamaño de las explotaciones asignadas y/o a los ingresos obtenidos. Para sustentar esto, primero se define la situación de los zeugítai y los thêtes durante los siglos VI y V a.C.; en segundo lugar, se presentan algunas cifras aproximadas de la población total de ciudadanos varones adultos y el número de hoplitas atenienses, para imaginar el posible número de ciudadanos disponibles para emigrar; en tercer lugar, se analizan tres situaciones que muestran, de una forma u otra, la validez del modelo de la granja hoplita como patrón para las asignaciones de tierras en los asentamientos atenienses y los posibles beneficiarios de esta política de colonización: la colonia de Brea, la cleruquía de Lesbos y la colonia de Melos; finalmente, se proponen algunas conclusiones sobre la política ateniense de distribución de tierras que favoreció a las clases bajas.