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ESSAYS IN BIBLIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

XL. TECHNOLOGY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD*

By M. I. FINLEY

In 1940 Lynn White began his contribution to a series of articles 'designed to direct the attention of scholars towards neglected aspects of medieval civilization' with these blunt words: 'The history of technology and invention, especially that of the earlier periods, has been left strangely uncultivated'.[1] The extensive, crisply annotated bibliography which makes up the larger part of his article would suggest that, in fact, the subject has been neither neglected nor uncultivated. Certainly neither word can be applied to the study of technology in the ancient world. But other, equally serious criticisms can be levelled: above all, the history of technology and economic history have tended to go their separate ways, so that the students of each are often astonishingly unaware of the work of the other. More serious still, important questions are not asked (or are not asked earnestly enough) if they require a co-operative solution.

Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity is a model monograph, the best I can remember in any branch of ancient technology for at least a generation. Dr Moritz is a classical scholar who has learned everything he had to know about the technical side of his subject, and also how to present his material so that any reader can follow his argument without knowledge of either the sciences involved or the classical languages. He has complete control of the literary and archaeological evidence, which he presents in detail, and he knows what the history of a technology means. Some of his results are spectacular in their impact on current doctrine, notably his demonstration, which I find conclusive, that there was 'immense progress' in classical antiquity in both the quality of grain and the technical processes of bread-production. His book renders everything that has been written on these subjects (including the other works here under review) completely out of date.

In the past twenty-five years, Professor R. J. Forbes of Amsterdam has written far more about ancient technology than anyone else, and the quantity of his output is all the more remarkable for the fact that during much of this period he was employed by a petroleum company and was not a full-time scholar. Two concerns pervade his work: the need for proper technical analysis of materials and processes, and an understanding of the interrelationships between technology and society. The *Studies in Ancient Technology* he is now publishing (of which six volumes have already appeared) range very widely: from bitumen and pitch (a slightly corrected re-publication of an older work),

* L. A. Moritz, *Grain-Mills and Flour in Classical Antiquity*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 1958. Pp. xxvii + 230. 50*s*.)

R. J. Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology*. Volumes I–IV. (Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1955–56. Pp. ix + 194; vi + 215; vi + 268; vii + 257. *f*. 16.50; 16.50; 19.–; 20.–.)

Charles Singer, E. J. Holmyard, A. R. Hall, and Trevor I. Williams (Eds.), *A History of Technology*. Vol. II. *The Mediterranean Civilizations and the Middle Ages c. 700 B.C. to c. A.D. 1500*. (Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. 1956. Pp. lix + 802. 168*s*.)

[1] 'Technology and Invention in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, XV (1940), 141–59.

cosmetics and perfumes, fibres and other materials, processes such as crushing and distilling, to broader complexes like power and land transport. The time range is also very great, embracing the ancient Near East, Byzantium and the early Middle Ages in the west as well as ancient Greece and Rome.

Though some of the individual studies are monographic in length, none is in any sense a complete survey. Forbes' first full-scale publication was called *Notes on the History of Ancient Roads and Their Construction*. In a favourable review, I. A. Richmond characterized the book correctly as 'the commentary of a practical scientist upon a large collection of archaeological material', 'an exceedingly interesting introduction to the original sources'.[1] The current series of studies are notes in the same sense. One cannot escape the feeling that the author is trying to do too much too quickly. For all his extensive reading, there are frequent gaps in both sources and modern works, and there is much carelessness. And for all his interest in the historical problems, he has not thought them out, so that on Lefebvre des Noëttes' thesis of the connection between slavery and the development of non-human power, to take the best test case, the views expressed at various points in the volumes are inconsistent. Nevertheless, the series is indispensable for anyone working on the economic, social, or technological history of antiquity.

Three of the chapters in the second volume of the *History of Technology* were written by Professor Forbes: on metallurgy, power and roads. Apart from these and two or three others, one regrets to say, the volume is in large part a demonstration of what is wrong with the present state of affairs in the history of technology, as suggested in the opening paragraph of this review. The fifth and final volume of the *History* has already appeared, and there has been adverse criticism in both the press and learned journals. Nevertheless, even in a review written after much delay (for which the reviewer must take sole responsibility), there is still warrant for a lengthier consideration of what is wrong with the older volume, and of some of the causes. (In what follows, only the sections on the ancient world are considered.)

To begin with, there are altogether too many errors in fact, many of them plain howlers. On p. 58 we read that Athenian 'armour-factories existed at Pasion and Kephalos' and both names are duly enshrined in the index of place names. Pasion and Kephalos were men, not places, the latter well enough known as the host in whose home Plato had Socrates and his friends conduct the conversation of the *Republic*. On pp. 398–9 we are told that the 'marble most often used in Greek buildings' was Pentelic marble; and that when 'the Greeks . . . employed any other variety . . . it was generally white Parian marble from the island of Paros'. This is nonsense, explained, I presume, by the author's failure to distinguish between the Athenians and all Greeks (cf. his phrase, p. 404, 'the ordinary Greek dwelling-houses, such as those of Delos [second century B.C.]'—anyone who has seen these houses or read about them should know that they were built for Romans and Italians, in what appears to be a style of its own).

As a third example, here in one short paragraph are a number of inexcusable mistakes. 'Many facts about aqueducts and water-supply are given in the *De Aquis* (*c* A.D. 100) of Frontinus . . ., a municipal water-engineer of Rome . . . . Greece became a Roman province in the time of Augustus, and Greek building-methods exerted a powerful influence on Roman construction' (p. 405). The facts are as follows. Frontinus was *curator aquarum* in 97–98, and he wrote his

[1] *Journal of Roman Studies*, XXV (1935), 114. Cf. Forbes' *Metallurgy in Antiquity* (Leiden, 1950), sub-titled *A Notebook for Archaeologists and Technologists*.

De aquae ductu then. He was a senator and office-holder of more than average importance, and he was no more a water-engineer than Pompey was a master-baker or miller when he was given charge of the *annona*. Finally, Greece became a Roman province (to repeat that imprecise formulation) in 146 B.C., more than a century before the beginning of Augustus' reign (as can be seen in the chronological table on p.lv), and that event is of no significance whatever for Greek influence on Roman building-methods (or on anything else). A different, and essentially correct, account of Frontinus appears on p. 671. One may legitimately ask, therefore, what were the large editorial staff doing, who are thanked in the preface, among other things for their 'close attention to points of detail'?

Superficially, the volume is very fussy about dates. They are pinned on to most references to people (in both text and index) and they remind me of nothing so much as the labels in museums: Euripides (?485–?406 B.C.), for example. The reader thus feels that the chronology has been worked out with great care, knowledge, and respect for evidence. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Not only are there inconsistencies, already exemplified, but there are major errors, which lead not merely to wrong dates but also to false inferences about connections and influences, in short, about the *history* of technology. Perhaps the most serious is the following. A special 'chronological note' on p. 708 (in the chapter on military technology) says: 'The dates of the Greek mechanicians—Ctesibius, Philo of Byzantium, and Hero of Alexandria—are all very uncertain . . . . In order not to attribute to them an excessive antiquity, we may cautiously assume that Ctesibius lived about the beginning of the first century B.C. . . . . Older historians accepted dates about a century earlier than these, but we shall not be far out if we regard the peak of inventiveness with regard to war-machines as coinciding with the most vigorous age of the Roman Empire'. Now Ctesibius was the most famous inventor of antiquity, and there is some reliable information about his life and career (unlike those of Philo and Hero). It is virtually certain that he worked under the direct patronage of Ptolemy Philadelphus (and perhaps of his successor, Euergetes I), so that his approximate dates were 300–230 B.C., nearly two centuries earlier than he is placed in this volume 'in order not to attribute to them an excessive antiquity', a most curious ground for dating anyway.[1] Neither in time nor in place does his work connect with 'the most vigorous age of the Roman Empire', or, indeed, with Rome or the Roman Empire at all.

In the chapter on machines Ctesibius is drawn into a different, and in its own way false, historical sequence. There we are told (p. 633) that the 'lead given by Archytas and Archimedes towards the more accurate study of machines was followed by others, particularly at Alexandria', a statement for which there is no evidence and which is unlikely for Ctesibius, since he was at work when Archimedes was still a child. In the paragraph summarizing his work, his military technology is completely overlooked, but he is correctly called 'an early Alexandrian', which an editor promptly rendered nonsensical by inserting a cross-reference to the chronological note placing him in the early first century B.C. Then Hero is called 'the most famous follower of Ctesibius' (again with a cross-reference to the chronological note), which in the correct chronology is a difficult concept, since three centuries or so intervened

[1] See A. G. Drachmann, *Ktesibios, Philon and Heron: A Study in Ancient Pneumatics* (Copenhagen, 1948), pp. 1–3. It is to be regretted that the services of Drachmann, one of the two or three best experts on ancient mechanics, were not employed in this volume for anything more than a four-page note on ancient cranes.

between the two men. Two pages later we read that among the 'constructors of war-engines' were 'Philo of Byzantium (*c.* 200 B.C.) . . ., Apollodorus (second century A.D.), and the Roman Vegetius (*c* A.D. 383–*c* 450)'. The tireless cross-referencers neglected this sentence, for the chronological note says that 'Philo flourished about A.D.1'. As for Vegetius, finally, he was a mediocre compiler of one work on military affairs (and perhaps of another on veterinary medicine), excerpted from writings of the late first and early second centuries, whose date is very uncertain and who is not known to have 'constructed' anything.

There is no need, I trust, to continue with examples of howlers and contradictions. It is necessary to say next that there are many statements, presented as uncontested facts, which are either only partly true, or are uncertain, or are misleading as they stand. Thus, on the first page we read, regarding the Laurion mines in Attica: 'Athenian working began about 600 B.C. Silver was scarce in Athens in the time of the laws given by Solon (594 B.C.), but by 500 B.C. royalties on Laurion appear in the Athenian budget'. What non-knowledgeable reader could guess from these two sentences that (1) nothing is known about early working of the mines; (2) nothing is known about the availability of silver in Solon's time; and (3) the final clause rests solely on the story that in 483/2 B.C. new mines were discovered in the region, which produced a windfall of 100 talents, and that Themistocles persuaded the Athenians to use the money for a fleet instead of distributing it among the citizens? (Even the reader with very little knowledge might know that 'Athenian budget' is not a defensible phrase in this context.) An example of another kind will be found on p. 8, regarding Roman mines: 'Gradual improvement was largely due to the replacement of slave-labour by skilled artificers, who were still supplemented by condemned criminals'. That single dubious sentence, given without date or evidence (which is unavailable), coupled with the following one mentioning 'strictly regulated arrangements for the supply of hot water for the miners' baths' in the time of Hadrian, is the whole story of labour in Roman mines from beginning to end. (I cannot refrain from quoting another sentence from this section: 'The Roman invasion of Britain was no doubt mainly designed to tap the island's mineral wealth, though perhaps also to deprive refugees from Gaul of harbourage'.)

The plain fact is that the majority of contributors to this volume and of the editorial personnel are men who, on both external and internal evidence, have never studied, in a systematic way, the ancient world or any specific problems of ancient history. They are wholly unfamiliar with the sources, cannot evaluate sources to which they have picked up references in modern authors (and seem largely unaware of the existence of a source-problem), have only a random knowledge of modern literature, cannot judge how authoritative or representative a work may be, and far too often misunderstand something they have read (or, at best, overlook the limits of any given statement). All this is immediately obvious from the bibliographies, most of which are haphazard and some ludicrous. The one on machines consists of two items for antiquity: the Daremberg-Saglio *Dictionnaire des antiquités* (1873–1919), an estimable and massive five-volume work now hopelessly outdated for the historian of technology, and a useless reference anyway unless the relevant articles are indicated; and Schuhl's *Machinisme et philosophie*, which is an interesting philosophical discourse but is not informative on ancient machine *technology*. For shipbuilding there is one three-page article by a specialist and otherwise books with such illuminating titles as *The Sea. Its History and Romance*. These are the

two worst, but there are not half a dozen which any competent research student in ancient history could not improve radically in two hours in a reasonable library.

I am not suggesting that only professional ancient historians can write seriously and accurately on ancient subjects: there are enough well-known examples of the fallacy of such a guild approach. The trouble here is that too many of the contributors are either indifferent to history and the work of historians, or they are openly contemptuous. 'The days have passed in which critics wasted their lives trying to reduce the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into the work of fifteen or twenty different poets. It is now assumed that these great poems give a reasonable picture of life in one cultural period which, archaeologically, was the Late Bronze Age' (p. 563). Both statements are dead wrong as matters of fact, they reveal a total ignorance of the historical problem which is involved, and they inevitably lead to the confusion in interpretation of the evidence (on shipbuilding) which follows. Or when we read (p. 561) that 'horseshoes seem to have been a Roman innovation', this is more than just another howler (as can be seen by comparing p. 515, to which there is a cross-reference): it reveals an unwareness of the whole discussion, now a generation old, of the problem of why the Romans failed for so long to adopt the horseshoe which was known to the Gauls probably as early as 400 B.C.[1]

That discussion was stimulated above all by the work of Lefebvre des Noëttes, and his name is taboo in this book (except for Professor Forbes). 'Our work', the editors write in the preface, is 'concerned mainly with the nature and evolution of processes, techniques, and devices—in fact with technology proper and not with its social and economic repercussions'. Hence, too, there is a 'looseness' in the 'chronological framework of these volumes. There is no way by which the different branches of technology can be fitted into a chronological series of the type familiar in the political histories of nations and empires'. This approach, I presume, explains the choice of contributors. What was apparently sought were men who were experts in objects and their construction, whether they were fashioned in 600 B.C. or in 1500 A.D., and who could order them in a series according to their technology, and put the correct tags under each of them. And so we have a work by museum-keepers and technicians. 'These volumes', the preface continues, 'are perhaps more in the nature of annals than of history proper'. In that case, one may reply, the work should have been properly entitled, and it should have been *good* antiquarianism. Every temptation to slide into brief social and economic comments, into 'true history', should have been systematically eliminated, and the rest, the annals, should have been far more accurate and intelligent than they are. The editors of this volume (and the press) have themselves produced work of the greatest distinction. I fail to understand how, even on their premises, they have put out, under their names, a volume which is in places so careless and inaccurate that one is compelled to warn the non-expert reader that he cannot rely, without further checking, on anything he may read in many portions of it.

Nor can the premises go unchallenged. I quote the preface again: 'Each technique develops in relation to specific economic needs, social conditions, or local opportunities'. In that case, how is it possible, logically, to consider the 'evolution of processes, techniques, and devices' in any significant way without continuous, systematic concern for 'social and economic repercussions' and

[1] See the references given by F. M. Heichelheim in *Kyklos IX* (1956), p. 325 n. 38. It is characteristic of this volume that I could not find any reference to Heichelheim's many publications on economic history.

conditions? Had there been such concern, furthermore, the difficulty in finding a chronological framework (which is almost an obsession with the editors) would have disappeared. The framework is already there, in economic history, and a historian would find no difficulty in fitting the development of technology into it. The trouble comes from the artificial insistence on isolating technology as an autonomous subject. That this cannot be done is evident on nearly every page of the volume, but because there is the pretence that it can be done, and is being done, we are given too little economic history (not no history), and bad economic history at that. Nor is it a defence to imply, as the editors do, that the knowledge is not yet available for a 'true history'. We know a good deal more about ancient technology, at least, than the preface, and the volume itself, and the bibliographies might lead one to believe. There is much more to be learned, but progress requires boldness and a broad horizon. The plea that the time is not yet here, a familiar plea in many fields, is in the end nothing but a stimulus to more and more specialization, more and more antiquarianism, and an abdication of all responsibility to try seriously to understand human behaviour, past or present.[1]

Jesus College, Cambridge

[1] There are some chapters in which the technical competence and accuracy, within the limits imposed by the editors, are of a high order. However, I have refrained throughout this review from invidious comments on individual contributors, and I have singled out Forbes only because his work is separately under consideration. In his chapters, I may add, there is no nonsense about trying to divorce such subjects as power and roads from labour and trade and political organization.

Polanyi

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WAS GREEK CIVILIZATION BASED ON SLAVE LABOUR?[1]

I.

Two generalizations may be made at the outset. First: at all times and in all places the Greek world relied on some form (or forms) of dependent labour to meet its needs, both public and private. By this I mean that dependent labour was essential, in a significant measure, if the requirements of agriculture, trade, manufacture, public works, and war production were to be fulfilled. And by dependent labour I mean work performed under compulsions other than those of kinship or communal obligations.[2] Second: with the rarest of exceptions, there were always substantial numbers of free men engaged in productive labour. By this I mean primarily not free hired labour but free men working on their own (or leased) land or in their shops or homes as craftsmen and shopkeepers. It is within the framework created by these two generalizations that the questions must be asked which seek to locate slavery in the society. And by slavery, finally, I mean roughly the status in which a man is, in the eyes of the law and of public opinion and with respect to all other parties, a possession, a chattel, of another man.[3]

How completely the Greeks always took slavery for granted as one of the facts of human existence is abundantly evident to anyone who has read their literature. In the Homeric poems it is assumed (correctly) that captive women will be taken home as slaves, and that occasional male slaves – the victims of Phoenician merchant-pirates – will also be on hand. In the seventh century B.C., when Hesiod, the Boeotian "peasant" poet, gets down to practical advice in his *Works and Days*, he tells his brother how to use slaves properly; that they will be available is simply assumed.[4] The same is true of Xenophon's

[1] This is a slightly enlarged and revised version of a paper read at the triennial meeting of the Joint Committee of Greek and Roman Societies in Cambridge on 11 August 1958. No effort has been made to annotate fully or to provide more than a handful of modern references. I am grateful to Professors A. H. M. Jones and M. Postan in Cambridge, and Mr G. E. M. de Ste. Croix of New College and Mr P. A. Brunt of Oriel College, Oxford, for much helpful criticism.

[2] I also exclude the "economic compulsion" of the wage-labour system.

[3] It is obviously not a valid objection to this working definition to point out either that a slave is biologically a man none the less, or that there were usually some pressures to give him a little recognition of his humanity, such as the privilege of asylum or the de facto privilege of marriage.

[4] I believe that the ἔριθος and perhaps the θῆς of Il. 602–3 were slaves, from the context, peculiar as that use of the two words may be. But even if one rejects my interpretation of these two lines, slaves are so repeatedly taken for granted in the poem that it is incorrect to

manual for the gentleman farmer, the *Oeconomicus*, written about 375 B.C. A few years earlier, an Athenian cripple who was appealing a decision dropping him from the dole, said to the Council: "I have a trade which brings me in a little, but I can barely work at it myself and I cannot afford to buy someone to replace myself in it."[5] In the first book of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*, a Peripatetic work probably of the late fourth or early third century B.C., we find the following proposition about the organization of the household, stated as baldly and flatly as it could possibly be done: "Of property, the first and most necessary kind, the best and most manageable, is man. Therefore the first step is to procure good slaves. Of slaves there are two kinds, the overseer and the worker."[6] Polybius, discussing the strategic situation of Byzantium, speaks quite casually of "the necessities of life – cattle and slaves" which come from the Black Sea region.[7] And so on.

The Greek language had an astonishing range of vocabulary for slaves, unparalleled in my knowledge.[8] In the earliest texts, Homer and Hesiod, there were two basic words for slave, *dmos* and *doulos*, used without any discoverable distinction between them, and both with uncertain etymologies. *Dmos* died out quickly, surviving only in poetry, whereas *doulos* remained the basic word, so to speak, all through Greek history, and the root on which were built such words as *douleia*, "slavery". But Homer already has, in one probably interpolated passage, the word (in the plural form) *andrapoda*, which became very common, and seems to have been constructed on the model of *tetrapoda*.[9] Still another general word came into use in the Hellenistic period, when *soma* ("body") came to mean "slave" if not otherwise qualified by an adjective.

These words were strictly servile, except in such metaphors as "the Athenians enslaved the allies". But there was still another group which could be used for both slaves and freemen, depending on the context. Three of them are built on the household root, *oikos – oikeus*, *oiketes*, and *oikiatas* – and the pattern of usage is variegated, complicated, and still largely unexamined. In Crete, for example, *oikeus* seems to have been a technical status term more like "serf" than any other instance known to me in Greek history. It was archaic even in Crete, however, and it dropped out of sight there in post-fifth-century documents. Elsewhere these *oikos*-words sometimes meant merely "servant" or "slave" generically, and sometimes, though less often, they indicated narrower

imply a balanced alternative, as does W. L. Westermann, The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity (Philadelphia 1955), 4, when he writes: "The peasant of modest means of the type of Hesiod might well have slaves but he also used hired labour."

[5] Lysias 24.6.

[6] Ps.-Aristotle, Oec. 1.5.1,1344a22.

[7] Polyb. 4.38.4.

[8] I am not considering the local helotage words here, although the Greeks themselves customarily called such people "slaves".

[9] Homer, Il. 7.475.

distinctions, such as house-born slave (as against purchased) or privately owned (as against royal in the Hellenistic context).[10]

If we think of ancient society as made up of a spectrum of statuses, with the free citizen at one end and the slave at the other, and with a considerable number of shades of dependence in between, then we have already discovered two lines of the spectrum, the slave and the serf-like *oikeus* of Crete. At least four more can easily be added: the helot (with such parallels as the *penestes* of Thessaly); the debt-bondsman, who was not a slave although under some conditions he could eventually be sold into slavery abroad; the conditionally manumitted slave; and, finally, the freedman. All six categories rarely, if ever, appeared concurrently within the same community, nor were they equal in importance or equally significant in all periods of Greek history. By and large, the slave proper was the decisive figure (to the virtual exclusion of the others) in the economically and politically advanced communities; whereas helotage and debt-bondage were to be found in the more archaic communities, whether in Crete or Sparta or Thessaly at an even late date, or in Athens in its pre-Solonian period. There is also some correlation, though by no means a perfect one, between the various categories of dependent labour and their function. Slavery was the most flexible of the forms, adaptable to all kinds and levels of activity, whereas helotage and the rest were best suited to agriculture, pasturage, and household service, much less so to manufacture and trade.

II.

With little exception, there was no activity, productive or unproductive, public or private, pleasant or unpleasant, which was not performed by slaves at some times and in some places in the Greek world. The major exception was, of course, political: no slave held public office or sat on the deliberative and judicial bodies (though slaves were commonly employed in the "civil service," as secretaries and clerks, and as policemen and prison attendants). Slaves did not fight as a rule, either, unless freed (although helots apparently did), and they were very rare in the liberal professions, including medicine. On the other side, there was no activity which was not performed by free men at some times and in some places. That is sometimes denied, but the denial rests on a gross

[10] The terminology needs systematic investigation in terms of a range of unfree and semi-free statuses. I have given only some examples. On the regional and dialectal variations, see Erika Kretschmer, "Beiträge zur Wortgeographie der altgr. Dialekte. 1. Diener, Sklave", Glotta XVIII (1930), 71–81. On the interchangeability of the terms in classical Athenian usage, see Siegfried Lauffer, Die Bergwerkssklaven von Laureion (2 vols., Akad. Wiss. Mainz, Abh. Geistes- u. Sozialwiss. Kl. 1955, no. 12; 1956, no. 11), I 1104–8; cf. E. L. Kazakevich, "The Term δοῦλος and the Concept 'Slave' in Athens in the Fourth Century B.C." (in Russian), VDI (1956), no. 3, pp. 119–36, summarized in Bibl. Class. Or. II (1957), 203–205. (A former student, Mr. Jonathan Frankel, kindly abstracted the latter article for me.)

error, namely, the failure to differentiate between a free man working for himself and one working for another, for hire. In the Greek scale of values, the crucial test was not so much the nature of the work (within limits, of course) as the condition or status under which it was carried on.[11] "The condition of the free man," said Aristotle, "is that he does not live under the restraint of another."[12] On this point, Aristotle was expressing a nearly universal Greek notion. Although we find free Greeks doing every kind of work, the free wage-earner, the free man who regularly works *for* another and therefore "lives under the restraint of another" is a rare figure in the sources, and he surely was a minor factor in the picture.[13]

The basic economic activity was, of course, agriculture. Throughout Greek history, the overwhelming majority of the population had its main wealth in the land. And the majority were smallholders, depending on their own labour, the labour of other members of the family, and the occasional assistance (as in time of harvest) of neighbours and casual hired hands. Some proportion of these smallholders owned a slave, or even two, but we cannot possibly determine what the proportion was, and in this sector the whole issue is clearly not of the greatest importance. But the large landholders, a minority though they were, constituted the political (and often the intellectual) elite of the Greek world; our evidence reveals remarkably few names of any consequence whose economic base was outside the land. This landholding elite tended to become more and more of an absentee group in the course of Greek history; but early or late, whether they sat on their estates or in the cities, dependent labour worked their land as a basic rule (even when allowance is made for tenancy).

[11] See A. Aymard, "L'idée de travail dans la Grèce archaïque", J. de Psych. XLI (1948), 29–45.

[12] Rhet. 1.9, 1367a32.

[13] This statement is not invalidated by the occasional sally which a smallholder or petty craftsman might make into the labour market to do three days' harvesting or a week's work on temple construction; or by the presence in cities like Athens of a substantial number of men, almost all of them unskilled, who lived on odd jobs (when they were not rowing in the fleet or otherwise occupied by the state), those, for example, who congregated daily at Κολωνὸς μίσθιος (on which see A. Fuks, in Eranos XLIX, 1951, 171–73). Nowhere in the sources do we hear of private establishments employing a staff of hired workers as their normal operation. Public works are frequently adduced as evidence to the contrary, but I believe without sufficient cogency. In the first place, the more common practice seems to have been a contract with an entrepreneur (even if he worked alone), not hire for wages; see P. H. Davis, "The Delian Building Accounts", Bull. Corr. Hell. LXI (1937), at pp. 110–20. Second, such evidence as we have – most fully from Delos – argues that such work was spasmodic and infrequent, and quite inconceivable as a source of livelihood for any but a handful of men. All this is consistent with the view that most of the craftsmen appearing in the accounts were independent masons and carpenters who occasionally accepted a job from the state just as they accepted orders from private clients. The key to the whole question is the absence of entrepreneurs whose regular labour force consisted of hired free men.

In some areas it took the form of helotage, and in the archaic period, of debt-bondage, but generally the form was outright slavery.

I am aware, of course, that this view of slavery in Greek agriculture is now strongly contested. Nevertheless, I accept the evidence of the line of authors whom I have already cited, from Hesiod to the pseudo-Aristotelian *Oeconomica*. These are all matter-of-fact writings, not utopias or speculative statements of what ought to be. If slavery was not the customary labour form on the larger holdings, then I cannot imagine what Hesiod or Xenophon or the Peripatetic were doing, or why any Greek bothered to read their works.[14] One similar piece of evidence is worth adding. There was a Greek harvest festival called the Kronia, which was celebrated in Athens and other places (especially among the Ionians). One feature, says the Atthidographer Philochorus, was that "the heads of families ate the crops and fruits at the same table with their slaves, with whom they had shared the labours of cultivation. For the god is pleased with this honour from the slaves in contemplation of their labours."[15] Neither the practice nor Philochorus' explanation of it makes any sense whatever if slavery was as unimportant in agriculture as some modern writers pretend.

I had better be perfectly clear here: I am not saying that slaves outnumbered free men in agriculture, or that the bulk of farming was done by slaves, but that slavery dominated agriculture insofar as it was on a scale that transcended the labour of the householder and his sons. Nor am I suggesting that there was no hired free labour; rather that there was little of any significance. Among the slaves, furthermore, were the overseers, invariably so if the property was large enough or if the owner was an absentee. "Of slaves," said the author of the *Oeconomica*, "there are two kinds, the overseer and the worker."

In mining and quarrying the situation was decisively one-sided. There were free men, in Athens for example, who leased such small mining concessions that they were able to work them alone. The moment, however, additional labour was introduced (and that was the more common case), it seems normally to have been slave. The largest individual holdings of slaves in Athens were workers in the mines, topped by the one thousand reported to have been leased out for this purpose by the fifth-century general Nicias.[16] It has been suggested, indeed, that at one point there may have been as many as thirty thousand slaves at work in the Athenian silver mines and processing mills.[17]

[14] Scholars who argue that slavery was unimportant in agriculture systematically ignore the *Hausvaterliteratur* and similar evidence, while trying to prove their case partly by weak arguments from silence (on which see G. E. M. de Ste. Croix in Class. Rev., n. s. VII, 1957, p. 56), and partly by reference to the papyri. One cannot protest strongly enough against the latter procedure, since the agricultural regime in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt was not Greek; see M. Rostovtzeff, The Social & Economic History of the Hellenistic World (3 vols., Oxford, repr. 1953), I 272–77.

[15] Philochorus 328 F 97, ap. Macrob. Sat. 1.10.22.

[16] Xenophon, Poroi 4.14.

[17] See Lauffer, op. cit., II 904–16.

Manufacture was like agriculture in that the choice was (even more exclusively) between the independent craftsman working alone or with members of his family and the owner of slaves. The link with slavery was so close (and the absence of free hired labour so complete) that Demosthenes, for example, could say "they caused the *ergasterion* to disappear" and then he could follow, as an exact synonym and with no possible misunderstanding, by saying that "they caused the slaves to disappear".[18] On the other hand, the proportion of operations employing slaves, as against the independent self-employed craftsmen, was probably greater than in agriculture, and in this respect more like mining. In commerce and banking, subordinates were invariably slaves, even in such posts as "bank manager." However, the numbers were small.

In the domestic field, finally, we can take it as a rule that any free man who possibly could afford one, owned a slave attendant who accompanied him when he walked abroad in the town or when he travelled (including his military service), and also a slave woman for the household chores. There is no conceivable way of estimating how many such free men there were, or how many owned numbers of domestics, but the fact is taken for granted so completely and so often in the literature that I strongly believe that many owned slaves even when they could not afford them. (Modern parallels will come to mind readily.) I stress this for two reasons. First, the need for domestic slaves, often an unproductive element, should serve as a cautionary sign when one examines such questions as the efficiency and cost of slave labour. Second, domestic slavery was by no means entirely unproductive. In the countryside in particular, but also in the towns, two important industries would often be in their hands in the larger households, on a straight production for household consumption basis. I refer to baking and textile making, and every medievalist, at least, will at once grasp the significance of the withdrawal of the latter from market production, even if the withdrawal was far from complete.[19]

It would be very helpful if we had some idea how many slaves there were in any given Greek community to carry on all this work, and how they were divided among the branches of the economy. Unfortunately we have no reliable figures, and none at all for most of the *poleis*. What I consider to be the best computations for Athens suggest that the total of slaves reached 80–100,000 in peak periods in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.[20] Athens had the largest population in the classical Greek world and the largest number of slaves.

[18] Dem. 27.19,26; 28.12; see Finley, Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens (New Brunswick 1952), 67. For another decisive text, see Xen. Memorab. 2.7.6.

[19] On the importance of the domestic slave as nursemaid and pedagogue, see Joseph Vogt's rectoral address, "Wege zur Menschlichkeit in der antiken Sklaverei", Univ. Tübingen Reden XLVII (1958), 19–38. (Dr V. Ehrenberg kindly called my attention to this publication.)

[20] Lauffer, op. cit., II 904–16.

Thucydides said that there were more slaves in his day on the island of Chios than in any other Greek community except Sparta,[21] but I suggest that he was thinking of the density of the slave population measured against the free, not of absolute totals (and in Sparta he meant the helots, not chattel slaves). Other places, such as Aegina or Corinth, may at one time or another also have had a higher ratio of slaves than Athens. And there were surely communities in which the slaves were less dense.

More than that we can scarcely say about the numbers, but I think that is really enough. There is too much tendentious discussion of numbers in the literature already, as if a mere count of heads is the answer to all the complicated questions which flow from the existence of slavery. The Athenian figures I mentioned amount to an average of no less than three or four slaves to each free household (including all free men in the calculation, whether citizen or not). But even the smallest figure anyone has suggested, 20,000 slaves in Demosthenes' time[22] – altogether too low in my opinion – would be roughly equivalent to one slave for each adult citizen, no negligible ratio. Within very broad limits, the numbers are irrelevant to the question of significance. When Starr, for example, objects to "exaggerated guesses" and replies that "the most careful estimates . . . . . reduce the proportion of slaves to far less than half the population, probably one third or one quarter at most",[23] he is proving far less than he thinks. No one seriously believes that slaves did all the work in Athens (or anywhere else in Greece except for Sparta with its helots), and one merely confuses the issues when one pretends that somehow a reduction of the estimates to only a third or a quarter of the population is crucial.[24] In 1860, according to official census figures, slightly less than one third of the total population of the American slave states were slaves. Furthermore, "nearly three-fourths of all free Southerners had no connection with slavery through either family ties or direct ownership. The 'typical' Southerner was not only a small farmer but also a nonslaveholder."[25] Yet no one would think of denying that slavery was a decisive element in southern society. The analogy seems obvious for ancient Greece, where, it can be shown, ownership of slaves was even more widely spread among the free men and the use of slaves much more diversified, and where the estimates do not give a ratio significantly below the

[21] Thuc. 8.40.2.

[22] A. H. M. Jones, Athenian Democracy (Oxford 1957), 76–79; cf. his "Slavery in the Ancient World", Econ. Hist. Rev., 2nd ser., IX (1956), at p. 187.

[23] C. G. Starr, "An Overdose of Slavery", J. Econ. Hist. XVIII (1958), at pp. 21–22.

[24] It is remarkable how completely Starr misses this point in his very belligerent article. Although he says over and over again that slavery was not "dominant" or "basic" in antiquity, I can find no serious argument in his article other than his disproof of the view that slaves did all the work.

[25] Kenneth M. Stampp, The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South (New York 1956), 29–30.

American one. Simply stated, there can be no denial that there were enough slaves about for them to be, of necessity, an integral factor in the society.

There were two main sources of supply. One was captives, the victims of war and sometimes piracy. One of the few generalizations about the ancient world to which there is no exception is this, that the victorious power had absolute right over the persons and the property of the vanquished.[26] This right was not exercised to its full extent every time, but it was exercised often enough, and on a large enough scale, to throw a continuous and numerous supply of men, women, and children on to the slave market. Alongside the captives we must place the so-called barbarians who came into the Greek world in a steady stream – Thracians, Scythians, Cappadocians, etc. – through the activity of full-time traders, much like the process by which African slaves reached the new world in more modern times. Many were the victims of wars among the barbarians themselves. Others came peacefully, so to speak: Herodotus says that the Thracians sold their children for export.[27] The first steps all took place outside the Greek orbit, and our sources tell us virtually nothing about them, but there can be no doubt that large numbers and a steady supply were involved, for there is no other way to explain such facts as the high proportion of Paphlagonians and Thracians among the slaves in the Attic silver mines, many of them specialists, or the corps of 300 Scythian archers (slaves owned by the state) who constituted the Athenian police force.

Merely to complete the picture, we must list penal servitude and the exposure of unwanted children. Beyond mere mention, however, they can be ignored because they were altogether negligible in their importance. There then remains one more source, breeding, and that is a puzzle. One reads in the modern literature that there was very little breeding of slaves (as distinct from helots and the like) among the Greeks because, under their conditions, it was cheaper to buy slaves than to raise them. I am not altogether satisfied with the evidence for this view, and I am altogether dissatisfied with the economics which is supposed to justify it. There were conditions under which breeding was certainly rare, but for reasons which have nothing to do with economics. In the mines, for example, nearly all the slaves were men, and that is the explanation, simply enough. But what about domestics, among whom the proportion of women was surely high? I must leave the question unanswered, except to remove one fallacy. It is sometimes said that there is a demographic law that no slave population ever reproduces itself, that they must always be replenished from outside. Such a law is a myth: that can be said categorically on the evidence of the southern states, evidence which is statistical and reliable.

[26] See A. Aymard, "Le partage des profits de la guerre dans les traités d'alliance antiques," Rev. hist. CCXVII (1957), 233–49.

[27] Herod. 5.6.

III.

The impression one gets is clearly that the majority of the slaves were foreigners. In a sense, they were all foreigners. That is to say, it was the rule (apart from debt bondage) that Athenians were never kept as slaves in Athens, or Corinthians in Corinth. However, I am referring to the more basic sense, that the majority were not Greeks at all, but men and women from the races living outside the Greek world. It is idle to speculate about proportions here, but there cannot be any reasonable doubt about the majority. In some places, such as the Laurium silver mines in Attica, this meant relatively large concentrations in a small area. The number of Thracian slaves in Laurium in Xenophon's time, for example, was greater than the total population of some of the smaller Greek city-states.

No wonder some Greeks came to identify slaves and barbarians (a synonym for all non-Greeks). The most serious effort, so far as we know, to justify this view as part of the natural arrangement of things, will be found in the first book of Aristotle's *Politics*. It was not a successful effort for several reasons, of which the most obvious is the fact, as Aristotle himself conceded, that too many were slaves "by accident," by the chance of warfare or shipwreck or kidnapping. In the end, natural slavery was abandoned as a concept, defeated by the pragmatic view that slavery was a fact of life, a conventional institution universally practised. As the Roman jurist Florentinus phrased it, "Slavery is an institution of the *ius gentium* whereby someone is subject to the *dominium* of another, contrary to nature."[28] That view (and even sharper formulations) can be traced back to the sophistic literature of the fifth century B.C., and, in a less formal way, to Greek tragedy. I chose Florentinus to quote instead because his definition appears in the *Digest*, in which slavery is so prominent that the Roman law of slavery has been called "the most characteristic part of the most characteristic intellectual product of Rome."[29] Nothing illustrates more perfectly the inability of the ancient world to imagine that there could be a civilized society without slaves.

The Greek world was one of endless debate and challenge. Among the intellectuals, no belief or idea was self-evident: every conception and every institution sooner or later came under attack – religious beliefs, ethical values, political systems, aspects of the economy, even such bedrock institutions as the family and private property. Slavery, too, up to a point, but that point was invariably a good distance short of abolitionist proposals. Plato, who criticized society more radically than any other thinker, did not concern himself much with the question in the *Republic*, but even there he assumed the continuance of slavery. And in the *Laws*, "the number of passages. . . that deal

[28] Dig. 1.5.4.1.
[29] W. W. Buckland, The Roman Law of Slavery (Cambridge 1908), v.

with slavery is surprisingly large" and the tenor of the legislation is generally more severe than the actual law of Athens at that time. "Their effect, on the one hand, is to give greater authority to masters in the exercise of rule over slaves, and on the other hand to accentuate the distinction between slave and free man."[30] Paradoxically, neither were the believers in the brotherhood of man (whether Cynic, Stoic, or early Christian) opponents of slavery. In their eyes, all material concerns, including status, were a matter of essential indifference. Diogenes, it is said, was once seized by pirates and taken to Crete to be sold. At the auction, he pointed to a certain Corinthian among the buyers and said: "Sell me to him; he needs a master."[31]

The question must then be faced, how much relevance has all this for the majority of Greeks, for those who were neither philosophers nor wealthy men of leisure? What did the little man think about slavery? It is no answer to argue that we must not take "the political theorists of the philosophical schools too seriously as having established 'the main line of Greek thought concerning slavery'."[32] No one pretends that Plato and Aristotle speak for all Greeks. But, equally, no one should pretend that lower-class Greeks necessarily rejected everything which we read in Greek literature and philosophy, simply because, with virtually no exceptions, the poets and philosophers were men of the leisure class. The history of ideology and belief is not so simple. It is a commonplace that the little man shares the ideals and aspirations of his betters – in his dreams if not in the hard reality of his daily life. By and large, the vast majority in all periods of history have always taken the basic institutions of society for granted. Men do not, as a rule, ask themselves whether monogamous marriage or a police force or machine production is necessary to their way of life. They accept them as facts, as self-evident. Only when there is a challenge from one source or another – from outside or from catastrophic famine or plague – do such facts become questions.

A large section of the Greek population was always on the edge of marginal subsistence. They worked hard for their livelihood and could not look forward to economic advancement as a reward for their labours; on the contrary, if they moved at all, it was likely to be downward. Famines, plagues, wars, political struggles, all were a threat, and social crisis was a common enough phenomenon in Greek history. Yet through the centuries no ideology of labour appeared,

[30] Glenn R. Morrow, Plato's Law of Slavery in Its Relation to Greek Law (Univ. of Illinois Press 1939), 11 and 127. Morrow effectively disproves the view that "Plato at heart disapproved of slavery and in introducing it into the *Laws* was simply accommodating himself to his age" (pp. 129–30). Cf. G. Vlastos, "Slavery in Plato's Thought", Philos. Rev. L (1941), 293: "There is not the slightest indication, either in the *Republic*, or anywhere else, that Plato means to obliterate or relax in any way" the distinction between slave and free labour.

[31] Diogenes Laertius 6.74. On the Cynics, Stoics, and Christians, see Westermann, op. cit., pp. 24–25, 39–40, 116–17, 149–59.

[32] Westermann, op. cit., p. 14 n. 48.

nothing that can in any sense be counterpoised to the negative judgments with which the writings of the leisure class are filled. There was neither a word in the Greek language with which to express the general notion of "labour", nor the concept of labour "as a general social function."[33] There was plenty of grumbling, of course, and there was pride of craftmanship. Men could not survive psychologically without them. But neither developed into a belief: grumbling was not turned into a punishment for sin – "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" – nor pride of craftsmanship into the virtue of labour, into the doctrine of the calling or anything comparable. The nearest to either will be found in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and in this context the decisive fact about Hesiod is his unquestioning assumption that the farmer will have proper slave labour.

That was all there was to the poor man's counter-ideology: we live in the iron age when "men never rest from toil and sorrow by day, and from perishing by night"; therefore it is better to toil than to idle and perish – but if we can we too will turn to the labour of slaves. Hesiod may not have been able, even in his imagination, to think beyond slavery as *supplementary* to his own labour, but that was the seventh century, still the early days of slavery. About 400 B.C., however, Lysias' cripple could make the serious argument in the Athenian *boule* that he required a dole because he could not afford a slave as a *replacement*.[34] And half a century later Xenophon put forth a scheme whereby every citizen could be maintained by the state, chiefly from revenues to be derived from publicly owned slaves working in the mines.[35]

When talk turned to action, even when crisis turned into civil war and revolution, slavery remained unchallenged. With absolute regularity, all through Greek history, the demand was "Cancel debts and redistribute the land". Never, to my knowledge, do we hear a protest from the free poor, not even in the deepest crises, against slave competition. There are no complaints – as there might well have been – that slaves deprive free men of a livelihood, or compel free men to work for lower wages and longer hours.[36] There is nothing

[33] See J.-P. Vernant, "Prométhée et la fonction technique", J. de Psych. XLV (1952), 419–29; "Travail et nature dans la Grèce ancienne", J. de Psych. LII (1955), 18–38.

[34] Lys. 24.6: τὸν διαδεξόμενον δ' αὐτὴν οὔπω δύναμαι κτήσασθαι.

[35] Xen. Poroi 4.33; cf. 6.1. The best examples of Utopian dreaming in this direction are, of course, provided by Aristophanes, in Eccl. 651–61 and Plut. 510–26, but I refrain from stressing them because I wish to avoid the long argument about slavery in Attic comedy.

[36] This generalization stands despite an isolated (and confused) passage like Timaeus 566 F 11, ap. Athen. 6.264D, 272B, about Aristotle's friend Mnason. Periander's prohibition of slave ownership (Nicolaus of Damascus 90 F 58) sounds like another of the traditional tyrant's measures designed (as Nicolaus suggests) to keep the citizens of Corinth occupied. If there is any truth in it, the "slaves" may actually have been debt-bondsmen, for the background of Periander's programme was an archaic rural one; see Édouard Will, Korinthiaka (Paris 1955), 510–12.

remotely resembling a workers' programme, no wage demands, no talk of working conditions or government employment measures or the like. In a city like Athens there was ample opportunity. The *demos* had power, enough of them were poor, and they had leaders. But economic assistance took the form of pay for public office and for rowing in the fleet, free admission to the theatre (the so-called theoric fund), and various doles; while economic legislation was restricted to imports and exports, weights and measures, price controls.[37] Not even the wildest of the accusations against the demagogues – and they were wholly unrestrained as every reader of Aristophanes or Plato knows — ever suggested anything which would hint at a working-class interest, or an anti-slavery bias. No issue of free versus slave appears in this field of public activity.[38]

Nor did the free poor take the other possible tack of joining with the slaves in a common struggle on a principled basis. The Solonic revolution in Athens at the beginning of the sixth century B.C., for example, brought an end to debt bondage and the return of Athenians who had been sold into slavery abroad, but not the emancipation of others, non-Athenians, who were in slavery in Athens. Centuries later, when the great wave of slave revolts came after 140 B.C., starting in the Roman west and spreading to the Greek east, the free poor on the whole simply stood apart. It was no issue of theirs, they seem to have thought; correctly so, for the outcome of the revolts promised them nothing one way or the other. Numbers of free men may have taken advantage of the chaos to enrich themselves personally, by looting or otherwise. Essentially that is what they did, when the opportunity arose, in a military campaign, nothing more. The slaves were, in a basic sense, irrelevant to their behaviour at that moment.[39]

In 464 B.C. a great helot revolt broke out, and in 462 Athens dispatched a hoplite force under Cimon to help the Spartans suppress it. When the revolt ended, after nearly five years, a group of the rebels were permitted to escape, and it was Athens which provided them refuge, settling them in Naupactus. A comparable shift took place in the first phase of the Peloponnesian War. In

[37] There is, of course, the argument of Plutarch, Pericles 12.4–5, that the great temple-building activity in fifth-century Athens was a calculated make-work programme. I know of no similar statement in contemporary sources, and the notion is significantly missing in Aristotle, Ath. Pol. 24.3. But even if Plutarch is right, public works at best provided supplementary income (see n. 13) and they made use of slave labour, thus serving as further evidence for my argument. Nor could Plutarch's thesis be applied to many cities (if any) other than Athens.

[38] I doubt if any point can be made in this context of the fact that citizens and slaves worked side by side in the fields and workshops and on public works, or that they sometimes belonged to the same cult associations. Such phenomena are widespread wherever slavery existed, including the American South.

[39] See Joseph Vogt, Struktur der antiken Sklavenkriege (Mainz Abh. 1957, no. 1), 53–57; cf. E. A. Thompson, "Peasant Revolts in Late Roman Gaul and Spain", Past & Present, no. 2 (1952), 11–23.

425 the Athenians seized Pylos, a harbour on the west coast of the Peloponnese. The garrison was a small one and Pylos was by no means an important port. Nevertheless, Sparta was so frightened that she soon sued for peace, because the Athenian foothold was a dangerous centre of infection, inviting desertion and eventual revolt among the Messenian helots. Athens finally agreed to peace in 421, and immediately afterwards concluded an alliance with Sparta, one of the terms of which was: "Should the slave-class rise in rebellion, the Athenians will assist the Lacedaemonians with all their might, according to their power."[40]

Obviously the attitude of one city to the slaves of another lies largely outside our problem. Athens agreed to help suppress helots when she and Sparta were allies; she encouraged helot revolts when they were at war. That reflects elementary tactics, not a judgment about slavery. Much the same kind of distinction must be made in the instances, recurring in Spartan history, when helots were freed as pawns in an internal power struggle. So, too, of the instances which were apparently not uncommon in fourth-century Greece, but about which nothing concrete is known other than the clause in the agreement between Alexander and the Hellenic League, binding the members to guarantee that "there shall be no killing or banishment contrary to the laws of each city, no confiscation of property, no redistribution of land, no cancellation of debts, no freeing of slaves for purposes of revolution."[41] These were mere tactics again. Slaves were resources, and they could be useful in a particular situation. But only a number of specific slaves, those who were available at the precise moment; not slaves in general, or all slaves, and surely not slaves in the future. Some slaves were freed, but slavery remained untouched. Exactly the same behaviour can be found in the reverse case, when a state (or ruling class) called upon its slaves to help protect it. Often enough in a military crisis, slaves were freed, conscripted into the army or navy, and called upon to fight.[42] And again the result was that some slaves were freed while the institution continued exactly as before.

[40] The relevant passages in Thucydides are 4.41, 55, 80; 5.14; 5.23.3; 7.26.2. The "slave-class" (ἡ δουλεία) here meant the helots, of course. In my text in the pages which follow immediately (on slaves in war), I also say "slaves" to include the helots, ignoring for the moment the distinction between them.

[41] Ps.-Demosthenes 17.15. For earlier periods, cf. Herod. 7.155 on Syracuse and Thuc. 3.73 on Corcyra (and note that Thucydides does not return to the point or generalize about it in his final peroration on *stasis* and its evils).

[42] See the material assembled by Louis Robert, Etudes épigraphiques et philologiques (Bibl. Éc. Hautes Ét. 272, Paris 1938), 118–26. Xenophon, Poroi 4.42, uses the potential value of slaves as military and naval manpower as an argument in favour of his proposal to have the state buy thousands of slaves to be hired out in the mines. Cf. Hypereides' proposal after Chaeronea to free all the Athenian slaves and arm them (see fragments of his speech against Aristogeiton, Blass no. 18, and Ps.-Plut., Hyper. 848F–849A).

In sum, under certain conditions of crisis and tension the society (or a sector of it) was faced with a conflict within its system of values and beliefs. It was sometimes necessary, in the interest of national safety or of a political programme, to surrender the normal use of, and approach to, slaves. When this happened, the institution itself survived without any noticeable weakening. The fact that it happened is not without significance; it suggests that among the Greeks, even in Sparta, there was not that deep-rooted and often neurotic horror of the slaves known in some other societies, which would have made the freeing and arming of slaves en masse, for whatever purpose, a virtual impossibility. It suggests, further, something about the slaves themselves. Some did fight for their masters, and that is not unimportant.

Nothing is more elusive than the psychology of the slave. Even when, as in the American South, there seems to be a lot of material – autobiographies of ex-slaves, impressions of travellers from non-slaveholding societies, and the like – no reliable picture emerges.[43] For antiquity there is scarcely any evidence at all, and the bits are indirect and tangential, and far from easy to interpret. Thus, a favourite apology is to invoke the fact that, apart from very special instances as in Sparta, the record shows neither revolts of slaves nor a fear of uprisings. Even if the facts are granted – and the nature of our sources warrants a little scepticism – the rosy conclusion does not follow. Slaves have scarcely ever revolted, even in the southern states.[44] A large-scale rebellion is impossible to organize and carry through except under very unusual circumstances. The right combination appeared but once in ancient history, during two generations of the late Roman Republic, when there were great concentrations of slaves in Italy and Sicily, many of them almost completely unattended and unguarded, many others professional fighters (gladiators), and when the whole society was in turmoil, with a very marked breakdown of social and moral values.[45]

At this point it is necessary to recall that helots differed in certain key respects from chattel slaves. First, they had the necessary ties of solidarity that come from kinship and nationhood, intensified by the fact, not to be underestimated, that they were not foreigners but a subject people working their own lands in a state of servitude. This complex was lacking among the slaves of the Greek world. The Peripatetic author of the *Oeconomica* made the sensible recommendation that neither an individual nor a city should have many slaves of the same nationality.[46] Second, the helots had property rights of a kind: the law, at least, permitted them to retain everything they produced beyond the fixed deliveries to their masters. Third, they outnumbered the free population on a scale without parallel in other Greek communities. These are the peculiar factors, in my opinion, which explain the revolts of the helots and the persistent

[43] See Stampp, op. cit., pp. 86–88.

[44] Ibid., pp. 132–40.

[45] Vogt, Sklavenkrieg.

[46] Ps.-Arist., Oec. 1.5,1344b18; cf. Plato, Laws 6.777C–D; Arist., Pol. 7.9.9, 1330a 25–28.

Spartan concern with the question, more than Spartan cruelty.[47] It is a fallacy to think that the threat of rebellion increases automatically with an increase in misery and oppression. Hunger and torture destroy the spirit; at most they stimulate efforts at flight or other forms of purely individual behaviour (including betrayal of fellow-victims), whereas revolt requires organization and courage and persistence. Frederick Douglass, who in 1855 wrote the most penetrating analysis to come from an ex-slave, summed up the psychology in these words:

"Beat and cuff your slave, keep him hungry and spiritless, and he will follow the chain of his master like a dog; but feed and clothe him well, – work him moderately – surround him with physical comfort, – and dreams of freedom intrude. Give him a *bad* master, and he aspires to a *good* master; give him a good master, and he wishes to become his *own* master."[48]

There are many ways, other than revolt, in which slaves can protest.[49] In particular they can flee, and though we have no figures whatsoever, it seems safe to say that the fugitive slave was a chronic and sufficiently numerous phenomenon in the Greek cities.[50] Thucydides estimated that more than 20,000 Athenian slaves fled in the final decade of the Peloponnesian War. In this they were openly encouraged by the Spartan garrison established in Decelea, and Thucydides makes quite a point of the operation. Obviously he thought the harm to Athens was serious, intensified by the fact that many were skilled workers.[51] My immediate concern is with the slaves themselves, not with Athens, and I should stress very heavily that so many skilled slaves (who must be presumed to have been, on the average, among the best treated) took the risk and tried to flee. The risk was no light one, at least for the barbarians among them: no Thracian or Carian wandering about the Greek countryside without credentials could be sure of what lay ahead in Boeotia or Thessaly. Indeed, there is a hint that these particular 20,000 and more may have been very badly treated after escaping under Spartan promise. A reliable fourth-century historian attributed the great Theban prosperity at the end of the fifth century to their having purchased very cheaply the slaves and other booty seized from the Athenians during the Spartan occupation of Decelea.[52] Although there is no

[47] Note that Thucydides 8.40.2 makes the disproportionately large number of Chian slaves the key to their ill-treatment and their readiness to desert to the Athenians.

[48] My Bondage and My Freedom (New York 1855), 263–64, quoted from Stampp, op. cit., p. 89.

[49] Stampp, op. cit., ch. III: "A Troublesome Property", should be required reading on this subject.

[50] I am prepared to say this despite the fact that the evidence is scrappy and has not, to my knowledge, been properly assembled. For mass flights in time of war, see e.g. Thuc. 7.75.5; 8.40.2.

[51] Note how Thucydides stressed the loss in anticipation (1.142.4; 6.91.7) before actually reporting it in 7.27.5.

[52] Hellenica Oxyrhynchia 12.4.

way to determine whether this is a reference to the 20,000, the suspicion is obvious. Ethics aside, there was no power, within or without the law, which could have prevented the re-enslavement of fugitive slaves even if they had been promised their freedom.

The *Oeconomica* sums up the life of the slave as consisting of three elements: work, punishment, and food.[53] And there are more than enough floggings, and even tortures, in Greek literature, from one end to the other. Apart from psychological quirks (sadism and the like), flogging means simply that the slave, as slave, must be goaded into performing the function assigned to him. So, too, do the various incentive plans which were frequently adopted. The efficient, skilled, reliable slave could look forward to managerial status. In the cities, in particular, he could often achieve a curious sort of quasi-independence, living and working on his own, paying a kind of rental to his owner, and accumulating earnings with which, ultimately, to purchase his freedom. Manumission was, of course, the greatest incentive of all. Again we are baffled by the absence of numbers, but it is undisputed that manumission was a common phenomenon in most of the Greek world. This is an important difference between the Greek slave on the one hand, and the helot or American slave on the other. It is also important evidence about the degree of the slave's alleged "acceptance" of his status.[54]

IV.

It is now time to try to add all this up and form some judgment about the institution. This would be difficult enough to do under ordinary circumstances; it has become almost impossible because of two extraneous factors imposed by modern society. The first is the confusion of the historical study with moral judgments about slavery. We condemn slavery, and we are embarrassed for the Greeks, whom we admire so much; therefore we tend either to underestimate its role in their life, or we ignore it altogether, hoping that somehow it will quietly go away. The second factor is more political, and it goes back at least to 1848, when the *Communist Manifesto* declared that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Free man and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another...." Ever since, ancient slavery has been a battleground between Marxists and non-Marxists, a political issue rather than a historical phenomenon.

[53] Ps.-Arist., Oec. 1.5.1344a35.

[54] The technical and aesthetic excellence of much work performed by slaves is, of course, visible in innumerable museums and archaeological sites. This is part of the complexity and ambiguity of the institution (discussed in the following section), which extended to the slaves themselves as well as to their masters.

Now we observe that a sizable fraction of the population of the Greek world consisted of slaves, or other kinds of dependent labour, many of them barbarians; that by and large the elite in each city-state were men of leisure, completely free from any preoccupation with economic matters, thanks to a labour force which they bought and sold, over whom they had extensive property rights, and, equally important, what we may call physical rights; that the condition of servitude was one which no man, woman, or child, regardless of status or wealth, could be sure to escape in case of war or some other unpredictable and uncontrollable emergency. It seems to me that, seeing all this, if we could emancipate ourselves from the despotism of extraneous moral, intellectual, and political pressures, we would conclude, without hesitation, that slavery was a basic element in Greek civilization.

Such a conclusion, however, should be the starting-point of analysis, not the end of an argument, as it is so often at present. Perhaps it would be best to avoid the word "basic" altogether, because it has been preempted as a technical term by the Marxist theory of history. Anyone else who uses it in such a question as the one which is the title of this paper, is compelled, by the intellectual (and political) situation in which we work, to qualify the term at once, to distinguish between *a* basic institution and *the* basic institution. In effect what has happened is that, in the guise of a discussion of ancient slavery, there has been a desultory discussion of Marxist theory, none of it, on either side, particularly illuminating about either Marxism or slavery. Neither our understanding of the historical process nor our knowledge of ancient society is significantly advanced by these repeated statements and counter-statements, affirmations and denials of the proposition, "Ancient society was based on slave labour." Nor have we gained much from the persistent debate about causes. Was slavery the cause of the decline of Greek science? or of loose sexual morality? or of the widespread contempt for gainful employment? These are essentially false questions, imposed by a naive kind of pseudo-scientific thinking.

The most fruitful approach, I suggest, is to think in terms of purpose, in Immanuel Kant's sense, or of function, as the social anthropologists use that concept. The question which is most promising for systematic investigation is not whether slavery was the basic element, or whether it caused this or that, but how it functioned.[55] This eliminates the sterile attempts to decide which was historically prior, slavery or something else; it avoids imposing moral judgments on, and prior to, the historical analysis; and it should avoid the trap which I shall call the free-will error. There is a maxim of Emile Durkheim's that "The voluntary character of a practice or an institution should never be

[55] Cf. Vogt, "Wege zur Menschlichkeit", pp. 19–20: "What we lack is a clear picture of the functions maintained by slavery in the organism of ancient society, and a critical evaluation of its role in the rise, development, and decline of the culture."

assumed beforehand."[56] Given the existence of slavery – and it is given, for our sources do not permit us to go back to a stage in Greek history when it did not exist – the choice facing individual Greeks was socially and psychologically imposed. In the *Memorabilia* Xenophon says that "those who can do so buy slaves so that they may have fellow workers."[57] That sentence is often quoted to prove that some Greeks owned no slaves, which needs no proof. It is much better cited to prove that *those who can*, buy slaves – Xenophon clearly places this whole phenomenon squarely in the realm of necessity.

The question of function permits no single answer. There are as many answers as there are contexts: function in relation to what? And when? And where? Buckland begins his work on the Roman law of slavery by noting that there "is scarcely a problem which can present itself, in any branch of law, the solution of which may not be affected by the fact that one of the parties to the transaction is a slave."[58] That sums up the situation in its simplest, most naked form, and it is as correct a statement for Greek law as for Roman. Beyond that, I would argue, there is no problem or practice in any branch of Greek life which was not affected, in some fashion, by the fact that many people in that society, even if not in the specific situation under consideration, were (or had been) slaves. The connection was not always simple or direct, nor was the impact necessarily "bad" (or "good"). The historian's problem is precisely to uncover what the connections were, in all their concreteness and complexity, their goodness or badness or moral neutrality.

I think we will find that, more often than not, the institution of slavery turned out to be ambiguous in its function. Certainly the Greek attitudes to it were shot through with ambiguity, and not rarely with tension. To the Greeks, Nietzsche said, both labour and slavery were "a necessary disgrace, of which one feels *ashamed*, as a disgrace and as a necessity at the same time."[59] There was a lot of discussion: that is clear from the literature which has survived, and it was neither easy nor unequivocally one-sided, even though it did not end in abolitionism. In Roman law "slavery is the only case in which, in the extant sources...., a conflict is declared to exist between the *Ius Gentium* and the *Ius Naturale*."[60] In a sense, that was an academic conflict, since slavery went right on; but no society can carry such a conflict within it, around so important a set of beliefs and institutions, without the stresses erupting in some fashion, no matter how remote and extended the lines and connections may be from the original stimulus. Perhaps the most interesting sign among the Greeks can

[56] E. Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method, transl. from 8th ed. (repr. Glencoe, Ill., 1950), 28.

[57] Xen., Mem. 2.3.3.

[58] Op. cit., p. v.

[59] The Greek State: Preface to an Unwritten Book, in Early Greek Philosophy & Other Essays, transl. by M. A. Mügge (London & Edinburgh 1911), 6.

[60] Buckland, op. cit., p. 1.

be found in the proposals, and to an extent the practice in the fourth century B.C., to give up the enslavement of Greeks.[61] They all came to nought in the Hellenistic world, and I suggest that this one fact reveals much about Greek civilization after Alexander.[62]

It is worth calling attention to two examples pregnant with ambiguity, neither of which has received the attention it deserves. The first comes from Locris, the Greek colony in southern Italy, where descent was matrilineal, an anomaly which Aristotle explained historically. The reason, he said, was that the colony was originally founded by slaves and their children by free women. Timaeus wrote a violent protest against this insulting account, and Polybius, in turn, defended Aristotle in a long digression, of which unfortunately only fragments survive. One of his remarks is particularly worth quoting: "To suppose, with Timaeus, that it was unlikely that men, who had been the slaves of the allies of the Lacedaemonians, would continue the kindly feelings and adopt the friendships of their late masters is foolish. For when they have had the good fortune to recover their freedom, and a certain time has elapsed, men, who have been slaves, not only endeavour to adopt the friendships of their late masters, but also their ties of hospitality and blood; in fact, their aim is to keep them up even more than the ties of nature, for the express purpose of thereby wiping out the remembrance of their former degradation and humble position, because they wish to pose as the descendants of their masters rather than as their freedmen."[63]

In the course of his polemic Timaeus had said that "it was not customary for the Greeks of early times to be served by bought slaves."[64] This distinction, between slaves who were bought and slaves who were captured (or bred from captives), had severe moral overtones. Inevitably, as was their habit, the Greeks found a historical origin for the practice of buying slaves – in the island of Chios. The historian Theopompus, a native of the island, phrased it this way: "The Chians were the first of the Greeks, after the Thessalians and Lacedaemonians, who used slaves. But they did not acquire them in the same manner as the latter; for the Lacedaemonians and Thessalians will be found to have derived their slaves from the Greeks who formerly inhabited the territory which they now possess, . . . calling them helots and *penestae*, respectively. But

[61] See F. Kiechle, "Zur Humanität in der Kriegführung der griechischen Staaten", Historia VII (1958), 129–56, for a useful collection of materials, often vitiated by a confusion between a fact and a moralizing statement; and even more by special pleading of a familiar tendency, as in the argument (p. 140 n. 1) that reports of mass enslavement or massacre must not be taken too literally because some always managed to escape, or in the pointless discussion (pp. 150–53) of the supposed significance of Polybius' use of ἀναγκάζουσιν instead of κελεύουσιν in 5.11.3.

[62] See Rostovtzeff, op. cit. I 201–208.

[63] Polyb. 12.6a (transl. by E. S. Shuckburgh).

[64] 566 F 11, ap. Athen. 6.264C; cf. 272 A–B.

the Chians possessed barbarian slaves, for whom they paid a price."[65] This quotation is preserved by Athenaeus, whose *floruit* was about 200 A.D. and who went on to comment that the Chians ultimately received divine punishment for their innovation. The stories he then tells, as evidence, are curious and interesting, but I cannot take time for them.

This is not very good history, but that does not make it any less important. By a remarkable coincidence Chios provides us with the earliest contemporary evidence of democratic institutions in the Greek world. In a Chian inscription dated, most probably, to the years 575–550 B.C., there is unmistakable reference to a popular council and to the "laws (or ordinances) of the *demos*".[66] I do not wish to assign any significance other than symbolic to this coincidence, but it is a symbol with enormous implications. I have already made the point that, the more advanced the Greek city-state, the more it will be found to have had true slavery rather than the "hybrid" types like helotage. More bluntly put, the cities in which individual freedom reached its highest expression – most obviously Athens – were cities in which chattel slavery flourished. The Greeks, it is well known, discovered both the idea of individual freedom and the institutional framework in which it could be realized.[67] The pre-Greek world – the world of the Sumerians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and Assyrians; and I cannot refrain from adding the Mycenaeans – was, in a very profound sense, a world without free men, in the sense in which the west has come to understand that concept. It was equally a world in which chattel slavery played no role of any consequence. That, too, was a Greek discovery. One aspect of Greek history, in short, is the advance, hand in hand, of freedom *and* slavery.

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Hellenic joint twins { the market and the slave. / planning + competition.

[65] 115 F 122, ap. Athen. 6.265B–C.

[66] For the most recent discussion of this text, see L. H. Jeffery in Annual of the Brit. Sch. Athens, LI (1956), 157–67.

[67] It is hardly necessary to add that "freedom" is a term which, in the Greek context, was restricted to the members of the *koinonia*, always a fraction, and often a minor fraction, of the total male population.

Gratitude!
M. Finley

LAND, DEBT, AND THE MAN OF PROPERTY IN CLASSICAL ATHENS

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LAND, DEBT, AND THE MAN OF PROPERTY IN CLASSICAL ATHENS

WHEN Alexander the Great's father, Philip II of Macedonia, organized the Greek cities into a League of the Hellenes, one important task of the new body was the suppression of sedition in the Greek world. The catalogue of seditious acts included redistribution of the land and cancellation of debts.[1] For Plato these two measures betokened the tyrant and the demagogue.[2] All the citizens of Itanos in Crete swore, "I will not bring about a redistribution of lands or houses or building lots, nor a cancellation of debts," in an oath preserved on a marble pillar of the early third century before Christ.[3] Earlier, a law of Delphi, the city of the great oracle, made it a crime under pain of malediction merely to propose either step in the Assembly.[4]

The common theme is no mere rhetorical stereotype but the reflection of a deep concern solidly grounded in the character of the Greek economy and the history of Greek political struggles. Beginning no later than the eighth century B.C. and continuing uninterruptedly for more than five hundred years until the Roman conquest, Greeks were constantly on the move, either as migrants (singly or in groups) or as exiled revolutionists. The Athenian military-agricultural colonies (cleruchies) of the fifth century B.C., totaling some 20,000 men at the peak according to one estimate;[5] the huge number of

[1] [Demosthenes], *On the Treaty with Alexander* 17.15. (Square brackets around an author's name indicate that the work is incorrectly attributed to him in the tradition.)

[2] Plato, *Republic* 565E, *Laws* 684D, 736C; *cf.* Aristotle, *Politics* 5.4.3, 1305a2; Isocrates, *Panathenaic* 12.259.

[3] *Inscriptiones Creticae* III iv, 8.21-24.

[4] Lines VII 2-6 in the edition of Th. Homolle, *Bull. de correspondance hellénique*, vol. 50 (1926), pp. 3-106.

[5] Max Wagner, *Zur Geschichte der attischen Kleruchien* (diss. Tübingen, 1914), pp. 50-51.

fourth-century Greek mercenaries, of whom Xenophon's Ten Thousand are but the most famous example; the civil war in third-century Sparta under Agis, Cleomenes and Nabis—these are instances that can be repeated everywhere and at any moment in Hellenic history, if not always with the same dramatic impact. And it was land hunger that was the driving force. Land hunger, in turn, stemmed frequently from private expropriation, with debt the effective instrument.

The debt-ridden farmer may be a universal figure in one sense, but he is at the same time a personification of economic factors that change; and as they change, he, too, takes on an altered appearance, sometimes radically so. Natural conditions apart, significant variables would include the market, the size and type of the holding, the land-tenure régime, the division of labor between town and country, the quality and extent of credit facilities and operations, the economic position of the moneylender, and the degree and kind of intervention by the state. To say flatly, with a leading economic historian, that "like the consumption loan . . . the agricultural loan becomes a basis for extortion and oppression," [6] is to formulate a generalization which, though undoubtedly valid, also conceals a trap for those who ignore the variables. The elimination of such a trap at a focal point in Greek history is one aim of this paper.

I

Solon is the Greek name that comes first to mind when land and debt are mentioned together. Shortly after 600 B.C. he was designated "lawgiver" in Athens, with unprecedented constitutional powers, because the demand for redistribution of land and cancellation of debts could no longer be blocked off by the landholding oligarchy through force or minor concessions. In one of his poems, Solon spoke of the "dark earth, whose *horoi* affixed in so many places I once removed; once she was a slave, now free." [7] Just what measures Solon had in mind when he wrote these two lines is widely disputed today,

[6] H. Sieveking, "Loans, Personal", *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 9 (1933), p. 562.

[7] Quoted by Aristotle, *Constitution of the Athenians* 12.4.

as are most aspects of his economic reform program. It is certain, however, that in some fashion he lifted the encumbrances that were squeezing the small Attic farmers off their land.[8] *Horoi* were slabs of stone used to mark boundaries between adjoining holdings. At some point, the Athenians found another, quite distinct, use for the *horoi*, and it was this second type that Solon removed, markers which creditors had placed on their debtors' farms in order to make public the fact that those particular holdings were legally encumbered. In a sense, the Athenians had hit upon a very crude way of achieving some of the purposes of the modern register of titles and deeds. Removal of the stones symbolized cancellation of the debts.[9]

Whatever Solon may have accomplished for the farmers of his day, he neither intended nor effected a prohibition for all time of land-secured loans. Farmers continued to fall into debt, and now that they were no longer permitted to offer their persons or their families as security—a permanent reform of Solon's—only their land gave them borrowing capacity. The use of *horoi* for public notice continued, too, not merely for agricultural property but eventually also for houses in the city when they were put up as security. Archaeologists have discovered more than two hundred of these stones in Attica and in four Aegean islands under Athenian influence. The time period for these finds is roughly 400-250 B.C. The texts of 222 have been published so far; 182 of them are in a sufficiently complete state to be analyzed.[10]

A typical *horos*, translated very literally, read as follows:

[8] I have refrained from speaking of mortgages primarily because the word, as it has been used throughout the history of Anglo-American law, has several connotations that render it inapplicable to ancient Greece.

[9] Land tenure shows sharp distinctions in various parts of the ancient Greek world. For that reason alone it cannot be assumed automatically that whatever was true of Athens was equally true of Sparta, for example, or of Greek Sicily. The present article deals solely with Athens unless otherwise indicated; more narrowly, with Athens from the establishment of a democratic government to the Roman conquest of Greece, 500-200 B.C. in round numbers. This time limit is somewhat longer than the traditional "classical age".

[10] These figures are valid as of the end of 1951. The full documentation is given in my book, *Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens* (New Brunswick, 1952).

> In [the archonship] of Praxibulos [i.e., 315-314 B.C.]. *Horos* of the land and house put up as security to Nikogenes of [the deme] Aixone, 420 [drachmas], according to the agreement deposited with Chairedemos of [the deme] Rhamnus.[11]

Few of the stones have longer texts; most are shorter, for a date is given in only 27 or 28, a written agreement is mentioned in but 15, even the name of the creditor and the amount of the debt are sometimes omitted. Thus, one marble block found in the city of Athens proper says merely: "*Horos* of a workshop [*ergasterion*] put up as security, 750 [drachmas]"—three words and a numeral in the Greek.[12]

Such a concentrated, homogeneous body of texts from a single community is a rarity in Greek source materials. The time is significant, too, for the fourth century B.C., in which the majority of the *horoi* can be placed, is the century of the "breakdown" of the Greek city-state, however historians may understand and interpret that phenomenon. And there lies the trap. The considerable number of fourth-century *horoi* is regularly adduced to prove that, during that critical century, "the small farmers ran more and more into debt, and were frequently forced to give up their farms."[13] The memory of Solon and the picture of the mortgaged homestead farm of today are easily discernible, for, in fact, the *horoi* tell us nothing whatsoever about the small farmer and his debts. They stood on the property of the wealthier landowners.

[11] *Inscriptiones Graecae* II^2 2726. Three different verbs appear on the *horoi*, all of which I have translated "put up as security" because the juristic distinctions are not relevant to the question under examination. Brackets indicate words that do not appear in the Greek original.

[12] *Ibid.*, II^2 2760.

[13] Victor Ehrenberg, *The People of Aristophanes. A Sociology of Old Attic Comedy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), p. 93. The identical view will be found, for example, in F. Oertel, *Klassenkampf, Sozialismus und organischer Staat im alten Griechenland* (*Kriegsvorträge . . . Bonn*, No. 55, 1942), p. 30; H. Michell, *The Economics of Ancient Greece* (New York, 1940), pp. 85-86; A. Jardé, *Les Céréales dans l'antiquité grecque* (Paris, 1925), pp. 118-19; R. Pöhlmann, *Geschichte der sozialen Frage und des Sozialismus in der antiken Welt* (Munich, 1925), vol. 1, p. 185; E. Kornemann, "Bauernstand", *Real-Enzyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Supp. vol. 4 (1924), col. 89; Georg Busolt, *Griechische Staatskunde* (Munich, 1920), vol. 1, p. 179.

But, first, what was a large holding in ancient Athens? The persistent failure of the sources to give figures is a notable instance of the nonquantitative approach that characterizes Greek writing whenever it touches upon economic matters. I know of precisely five land figures in the whole of Athenian literature and not one usable figure in the Athenian inscriptions. In a forensic speech written somewhat later than 330 B.C., the estate of a man named Phainippos is given in linear measure; the acreage was somewhere between 700 and 1,000, depending on the contour of the land.[14] Then there is Alcibiades' patrimonial estate of some 70 acres, matched by the holding of a certain Aristophanes, not the playwright, confiscated by the state in 390 B.C.[15] In these three instances, the rule is broken and the dimensions given because the speakers wished to emphasize that they were large holdings. The fourth figure is 45 acres, the land in Euboea given by the Athenian state to Aristeides' impoverished son Lysimachos in the latter part of the fifth century B. C.[16] Finally, there is a 14-acre figure in an oration dated about 389 B.C.[17] This last figure was given to underscore the small size of the farm.

There is good reason to believe that 45- and 70-acre holdings, though not unusual, were above average. Phainippos' farm was certainly in the very highest bracket, shared by few Athenians. According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a proposal was made and rejected in 403 B.C. to restrict political rights in Athens to landholders, which, if carried, would have disfranchised 5,000 citizens.[18] The figure is difficult to control, for Dionysius lived 400 years later, but if it has any basis in fact it means that only 20 or 25 per cent of the Athenian citizens owned no land of any kind at the end of the fifth century B.C. Some support comes from the estimate that nearly two thirds of the citizen

[14] [Demosthenes], *Against Phainippos* 42.5.

[15] Plato, *Alcibiades I* 123C, and Lysias, *On the Property of Aristophanes* 19.29, respectively.

[16] Demosthenes, *Against Leptines* 20.115. Plutarch, *Aristeides* 27.1, puts the size at half that figure.

[17] Isaeus, *On the Estate of Dikaiogenes* 5.22.

[18] Dionysius, *On the Orations of Lysias* 32.

population lived in the rural districts in 430 B.C., slightly more than half one century later; and many of the city dwellers were themselves farm owners.[19]

Calculations of yield offer additional confirmation. Solon's constitutional reforms rested on a fourfold division of the citizen body according to their holdings in land. The highest rating consisted of the *pentakosiomedimnoi,* men whose estates yielded at least 500 *medimnoi* a year (a little more than 700 bushels or an equivalent in liquid measure). Gustave Glotz has calculated that 75 to 145 acres of grain land, but only 20 or 25 acres of vineyards and olive orchards, were needed to qualify.[20] These are admittedly rough approximations, but they serve to set the scale of "small" and "large" holdings. And they are as valid for the fourth century B.C. as for the seventh or sixth, for there were no major technological advances in Greek agriculture in the intervening years.

Since no *horos* indicates the dimensions of the holding which it marked, the determination of the stratum of landowners involved must be somewhat circuitous. Thirty-two of the stones are linked with dowries. In Athenian law the dowry did not become the outright property of the husband. Under certain conditions, the death of a childless wife for example, the marriage portion had to be returned to her father or guardian. To guarantee the dowry's return in such cases, the dowry-giver often demanded adequate security, usually in the form of real property. The property remained the husband's, but, should he become obligated to surrender the dowry and fail to do so, then he would lose the security exactly as if he had offered that piece of property to guarantee a loan. Of the thirty-two *horoi* that indicate this type of legal situation, seventeen give the amount of the dowry. The range is from 300 to 8,000 drachmas, with the median 1,900 and the average 2,650.[21]

[19] Estimates of population are those of A. W. Gomme, *The Population of Athens in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.* (Oxford, 1933).

[20] Gustave Glotz, *Ancient Greece at Work* (London and New York, 1926), p. 247.

[21] There are certain complications which have been ignored in this summary: a different interpretation of one or two of the texts would increase the 2,650-drachma average slightly.

These figures are easily evaluated. There was no law requiring a man to dower his daughter. Economic and social pressures, however, not only made dowries more or less mandatory, they also tended to fix the amount appropriate for a given social status. Roughly, 3,000-6,000 drachmas seems to have been the accepted standard for the wealthiest Athenians. Authenticated dowries exceeding 6,000 drachmas are so rare that we may set that figure as the normal maximum. The *horoi* linked with dowries therefore take us into the world of the wealthier, indeed of the wealthiest, Athenian citizens. There are only three sums under 1,000 drachmas—one of 300 and two of 500—and even they are dowries far beyond the reach of the poorer section of the population.

Sums inscribed on the other *horoi* represent debts of various kinds, rarely specified. They range from a low of 90 drachmas to a high of 7,000, with a median of 1,000. For proper application in the present context, these figures require a substantial upward adjustment. In the first place, the property involved need not have been the whole of the individual debtor's holding. In the second place, some of the smaller debts were secured by houses alone. The farm-secured debts, in other words, would show a median substantially greater than 1,000 drachmas. Even 1,000-drachma debts, like 1,000-drachma dowries, were not possible for the small farmers. In 322 B.C. the Macedonian general Antipater, wishing to establish an oligarchy in Athens, imposed a 2,000-drachma property qualification on the right to vote and hold office, thereby disfranchising a majority, perhaps 70 per cent of the citizen body.[22] If we assume that the property marked by a *horos* was as a rule worth at least twice the amount of the indebtedness—an assumption for which there is some supporting evidence—then considerably more than half these landed estates fell within the aristocratic range as defined by Antipater.

The astonishing point is that, once the *horoi* have been eliminated as evidence of the decline of the small farmer and of the growing concentration of agricultural properties in fourth-century Athens, no evidence at all remains. An examination of the authorities cited early in this discussion reveals that their

[22] See Gomme, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-19.

picture of a shift from small to large holdings, mediated through land credits, is drawn from a combination of two arguments: a misreading of the significance of the *horoi* coupled with an analysis of the economics of agriculture (capital needs, markets, and the like) that pertains to modern farming, not to the ancient Greek, and that rests on no discoverable basis in Athenian sources. Ultimately we seem to be reduced to the conviction that the small farmer "must have" been squeezed off the land in the fourth century as he had been in the seventh. But why? According to the best estimates of population, the citizen body increased steadily in the fourth century (at least until 322 B.C.), following the sharp drop during the Peloponnesian War; the rate of urbanization seems to have been no greater than the growth rate; nor is there any evidence of increasing size of families. More important, there is no trace in Athens of a genuine demand for, or even fear of, redistribution of land and cancellation of debts at any time during the century.[23] In this respect, Athens was not typical of the Greek world, as the program of the League of the Hellenes demonstrates.

That the fourth century was the finale—and not a pretty one—of the classical Greek *polis* is indisputable. That the democratic *polis* had lost its vitality, even where it maintained a formal existence, is clear. That in Athens the rich were living more comfortably, the poor more miserably, is probable. But that all this had anything to do with a shift in the property régime on the land seems quite certainly wrong.

II

"Where a loan is involved," wrote the Peripatetic author of a book of *Problems* attributed to Aristotle, "there is no friend, for if a man is a friend he does not lend but gives."[24] This

[23] After Solon, the issue seems to have reappeared but once, when the democracy was reëstablished following the bloody and confiscatory oligarchic government which ruled Athens after its defeat by Sparta at the end of the fifth century B.C. The leaders of the democratic restoration were conciliatory in all matters, including property questions, an attitude for which they were later commended by Aristotle: "In the other cities . . . the *demos*, taking power, . . . brings about a redistribution of the land." *Constitution of the Athenians* 40.3.

[24] [Aristotle], *Problems* 29.2, 950a28; *cf.* 29.6, 950b28.

ethical judgment, like Plato's recommendation that interest-bearing loans be prohibited altogether,[25] no longer coincided fully and literally with prevailing Athenian norms, but it still reflected a substratum of aristocratic solidarity which remained operative in the fifth, fourth and third centuries B.C. For that we have indisputable testimony, for example in the case of Apollodoros.

After the death of his father Pasion, the most successful and most famous of all Athenian bankers, Apollodoros involved himself in a series of legal maneuvers, probably in the years 368-365 B.C., against a certain Nikostratos and the latter's brother. Nikostratos had been captured in some war and then ransomed. He had succeeded in repaying 1,000 drachmas of the ransom money but he could not raise the balance and was threatened with enslavement, in accordance with Athenian law on the subject. In this emergency, he appealed for help to his boyhood friend Apollodoros. What happened is told to the court by Appollodoros in the following way:

> " Nikostratos," I said, ". . . since at the present time you cannot find the entire sum of money, nor have I any cash any more than yourself, I will lend you as much of my property as you wish and you shall hypothecate it for as much money as is lacking; you may have the use of the money for one year without interest and pay off the strangers. When you have collected the *eranos*-loan, as you yourself say, release my property." Hearing this, he thanked me and urged me to act as quickly as possible . . . I therefore hypothecated my multiple-dwelling to Arkesas of [the deme] Pambotadai, whom this man himself recommended to me, for 1,600 drachmas at interest of 8 obols per mina per month [i.e., 16 per cent per annum].[26]

The *eranos*-loan which Nikostratos was to arrange in order to repay Apollodoros was a familiar and very common device all over the Greek world. It was a friendly loan tendered by an *ad hoc* group (more properly, a plurality) of individuals; it was characterized not only by the fact of group participation

[25] Plato, *Laws* 742C.

[26] [Demosthenes], *Against Nikostratos* 53.12-13. Only the relationship between Apollodoros and Nikostratos is under consideration. It is therefore unnecessary to examine certain apparent contradictions and difficulties in the passage.

but also by the absence of interest and by a provision for repayment over a period of years in regular installments. *Eranoi* were resorted to by everyone, from slaves who raised money in this fashion to purchase their freedom (more often than not it was the master who assembled the loan) to the wealthy landowners and social leaders of the community. Willingness to lend ranked high among the civic and social virtues;[27] it was perfectly consonant with the Peripatetic's "if a man is a friend, he does not lend but gives." Aristotle's pupil and successor, Theophrastus, reflected the same notion when he depicted a braggart as one who ran up on his abacus the fantastic sum of ten talents (60,000 drachmas) in paid-out *eranoi*.[28]

Nikostratos needed financial assistance to extricate himself from his ransomers. In probably the best known of all Athenian instances of personal indebtedness, the fictional case of Strepsiades in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, the rich, elderly, old-fashioned farmer went to Socrates to learn how to cheat two creditors from whom he had borrowed 1,500 drachmas for the purchase of horses—not farm animals, the playwright underscores, but show horses for the conspicuous consumption of Strepsiades' socially ambitious wife and son.

A third example of motive in borrowing is given us in another of Apollodoros' lawsuits, a successful action against the leading Athenian general Timotheos to recover a total of nearly 4,500 drachmas that Pasion had lent the latter on several occasions in 373-372 B.C. According to the plaintiff, Timotheos was in a hopeless financial position when Pasion out of friendship lent him various sums with which to meet obligations incurred in the course of his military and political activities on behalf of the state. The loans were made without witnesses or documents, they were unsecured, and they bore no interest. After Pasion's death the general denied the existence of the obligations, hence the suit by Apollodoros as his father's heir.[29]

Eranoi, ransom, conspicuous consumption, the personal financial troubles of generals in the turbulent fourth century—the

[27] See [Antiphon], *Tetralogy* I β 12. [28] Theophrastus, *Characters* 23.6.

[29] [Demosthenes], *Against Timotheos* (orat. 49). There is no suggestion of political corruption in the picture.

pattern that emerges is one of borrowing for nonproductive purposes. The distinction between personal, consumption loans and business, productive loans is not always easy to draw. "From a historical point of view," Sieveking points out, "the differentiation . . . became possible only when the merchant began to maintain special accounts for the management of his business undertakings and when the firm became clearly distinguished from the private household."[30] Apollodoros was entitled to sue Timotheos because Pasion's "firm" and private household were one and the same; there was no distinction, in fact or in law, between bank property and the banker's personal wealth. Apollodoros' claim against the general rested on his position as son and heir, not on the continuity of the bank, with which he never had any connection. Nevertheless, the difference between personal loans and business loans does emerge with considerable clarity, especially when the transactions under consideration are counterposed to maritime loans, which were indubitably business operations on both sides.

It seems to have been almost a fixed rule of Athenian commercial practice, attributable to the great risks of sea traffic and the inadequate accumulation of liquid capital, that merchants used borrowed funds, in whole or in part, for their maritime ventures. In the fourth century B.C., from which our information about bottomry comes, a set pattern can be seen. The loans rarely, if ever, exceeded 2,000 drachmas; they were made for the duration of the voyage (weeks or months, no more); the articles of agreement were detailed and always in writing; interest rates were high, even an annual figure of 100 per cent was not unheard of; all the risks of the voyage, though not of economic failure, were borne by the lender, who held the ship or cargo or both as security for prompt repayment once the vessel was safely back in the harbor of Athens. Land-secured loans, in contrast, averaged only a little less than the maximum for bottomry and frequently ran to far larger sums. They were often arranged verbally and without interest. When interest was charged, the rate was roughly 10 to 18 per cent. One year seems to have been a common term, perhaps the cus-

[30] Sieveking, *op. cit.*, p. 561.

tomary one. And of course the kind of risk element inherent in bottomry transactions was lacking.

The available information is altogether too meager for any sort of statistical presentation. But it is significant, even decisive, that in the instances known to us from our best source, the Athenian orators, whenever a substantial sum was borrowed on real security, the borrower's purpose was not a productive one. Occasionally landed Athenians no doubt did borrow on their holdings for productive reasons, but the pattern was unmistakably in the opposite direction: "to cover the conventional needs of a social class accustomed to elaborate expenditures." [31]

Paramount among the conventional needs, in Athens as in all earlier socio-economic systems, were the financial requirements of marriage, in particular a large dowry. Fully one third of the *horoi* are explicitly linked with family matters; how many of the others may also have been is not determinable from the texts and their elliptical language. Thirty-two *horoi* indicated dowry security, as we have already seen. Twenty-one others were connected with an institution known officially as "leasing of the family estate" (*misthosis oikou*). If a guardian designated by will was unwilling or unable to administer the child's property, he could arrange to have the estate leased by auction, under governmental supervision, for the duration of the child's minority. The successful bidder was required by law to offer adequate real security guaranteeing payment of the annual rent and the return of the estate when the orphan attained his majority. The twenty-one *horoi* stood on properties so encumbered. The lessors of course acted from motives of gain, not charity. However, these texts contribute nothing to the discussion of the motive for indebtedness on the part of men of property who *borrowed* on their holdings. Leases are not under consideration, and the *misthosis oikou* was nothing but a lease under peculiar circumstances.

Apart from dowry and *misthosis oikou*, the *horoi* maintain almost complete silence about the reasons for the indebtedness they publicized. But the orators and other literary sources leave little doubt that in most instances the underlying obliga-

[31] Sieveking, *ibid.*, writing in general terms, not about Greece in particular.

tion was like those described by Apollodoros. Particular stress must be given the point that, whereas the modern mortgage loan serves primarily to finance either the purchase or the improvement of real property, these two reasons for borrowing were virtually unknown in Athens.

Among the Greeks, sales were cash sales in fact as well as in law. The Greek city-states never recognized a promise to buy and sell to be a legally binding contract, not even when accompanied by transfer of possession and partial payment. In this respect the law merely kept step with actual practice. Some credit sales were made, to be sure, but they constituted the exception and they could be given legal force only through a fiction, usually in the form of a loan agreement. I know of exactly two unequivocal references in the Athenian sources to a piece of real property being put up as security to cover its purchase price. One is a *horos*, found in a rural district and dated in either 340-339 or 313-312 B.C. It marked a plot of land that was encumbered for 2,000 drachmas owing on the price.[32] The other is in a speech by Demosthenes, probably dated 346-345 B.C., written for a lawsuit in a very complicated case involving an ore-crushing mill in the silver-mining district of Attica, purchased together with some slaves with the help of a loan of 10,500 drachmas, by far the largest private credit transaction in extant Athenian records.[33]

The fact is that there was no real-estate market, properly speaking, in Athens at all, that land was not a commodity in any significant sense. The Greek language had no word for "real property". Nor was there a word for "seller of real estate" or "broker"; "grain-seller", yes, "perfume-seller", "bread-seller", even comic inventions like Aristophanes' "decree-seller", but no "land-seller" or "house-seller". Not one Athenian is known to us who earned his livelihood by dealing in real estate. The city itself kept no formal record of property holdings and no record of any kind of transactions on property. That explains why a creditor posted a *horos* in order

[32] *Inscriptiones Graecae* II^2 2762. Fritz Pringsheim, *The Greek Law of Sale* (Weimar, 1950), pp. 163-64, offers another interpretation which would remove the credit-sale element and leave us with but one firm example.

[33] Demosthenes, *Against Pantainetos* (orat. 37).

to protect himself against possible legal complications, should the owner be tempted to borrow further on his already encumbered land or to alienate it. A would-be buyer or lender could not turn to registers of deed or title, but he could see the telltale stone markers.

Not a single Athenian text is available to exemplify the modern practice of mortgaging property in order to raise funds for purposes of building and improvement. All in all, there are not a dozen references in any context in Greek literature to increasing the value of a farm or of urban realty. And the few to be found scattered in the sources attribute the results to zeal, hard work, temperance, or some other moral quality, rather than to an outlay of funds or skillful managerial manipulation bringing about a change in the economic quality and potentiality of the property.

One group of documents is particularly instructive in this respect. It was a standard practice for Athenian cult associations, public, quasi-public, and private, to rent their land to individual farmers on long-term leases (ten to forty years). Some twenty individual and model agreements have been preserved on stone. They are rather detailed: among the provisions to be found in one or another are clauses requiring the tenant to restore the property at the end of the rental period with the same number of trees and vines he had received, to keep the buildings in repair, to cut the olive trees in a designated way, to employ the fallow system, and the like. Only once is there mention of improvements in the proper sense of the term, and that a singularly unimpressive one. The fourth-century B.C. lease of a garden owned by worshipers of the Hero Physician gave the tenant, who took a thirty-year lease, the right to make any construction he wished, at his own expense, in a designated section of the property. At the end of the term, he was to remove the roof, doors and window frames, unless a prior agreement was made to the contrary.[34]

That farmland was maintained for years and years on a fixed

[34] Lines 11-23 of the inscription, as reproduced in *Rev. des ét. grecques*, vol. 63 (1950), pp. 148-49. It was sometimes the practice, still to be found in places in modern Greece, for rural tenants to provide their own roofs and woodwork and to take them away when they left.

level of operations is revealed most clearly by the inventories of the temple of Apollo on Delos.[35] Whatever it was that prevented the Delian temple from developing its landed holdings, it was not lack of cash, for the temple possessed large sums, some of which it hoarded while the remainder was placed on loan, always at 10 per cent. The Athenian man of property may or may not have had the cash. If he did not, neither did he borrow on his property for economic expansion. His mentality was nonproductive. Freedom from the burden of earning one's living was what distinguished the *plousios* from the *penēs*; this standard Greek antinomy has a shade of meaning that differs significantly from our "rich" and "poor". For the latter word-pair there is no precise rendition in Greek, except through a circumlocution. Wealth was good and desirable, in fact necessary for the life of the good citizen. But its function was to liberate its owner from economic activity and concern, not to provide him with a base for continued effort toward more and more acquisition.[36]

Institutionally, a major inhibition to the building of a bridge between property and money was the citizen's monopoly of land ownership. All Greek cities limited the right to own land to their citizens; noncitizens could acquire the right only by special enactment and there is ample evidence that such privileges were not easily obtained except in times of gravest crisis. The Athenians in particular jealously guarded their prerogative. Obviously, a man who could not own land would not accept land as security for a debt; such security would be worthless to anyone who could not seize the property in case of default.[37] Noncitizens played a leading rôle in the economic life of Athens, particularly in financial dealings. As noncitizens, however, their financial activities were necessarily cut off from the

[35] See J. H. Kent, "The Temple Estates of Delos, Rheneia, and Mykonos", *Hesperia*, vol. 17 (1948), pp. 289-90.

[36] One need only read the Socratic parables in Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.7-10. There was another, money-getting strain to be found in the Athenian world, to be sure, but our concern is solely with the wealthier landowning stratum and only with the dominant attitudes among them.

[37] That this was the situation in Athens is explicitly stated by Demosthenes, *For Phormio* 36.6.

economic base of the society, its landed property. They could lease farms, houses and mines, but they could not purchase them or lend on them.

However one may explain the unbroken insistence upon the citizens' monopoly of real property, the fact remains that in large measure land and money remained two separate spheres; for a large section of the financial community, entirely so. There were twenty or thirty thousand metics (permanently resident aliens) and an incalculable number of transients in Athens. Their contribution to the city's economic life was welcomed, even sought after. In the fourth century B.C., important changes in legal procedure were introduced to facilitate and expedite the settlement of disputes in which they were involved and to make their commercial and financial dealings simpler and therefore more attractive. But their exclusion from the land remained untouched; as far as we know, no one ever proposed a change in that law. It follows that there were not productive drives sufficient in strength to overcome the political-psychological resistance of the traditional land-citizenship tie. And neither a genuine market in land, a significant concentration of holdings, nor a continually intensified exploitation of the land was possible divorced from fluid wealth.

III

Moneylending was fundamentally noninstitutional and discontinuous. Neither the firm nor true partnership made an appearance; agency was known in a rudimentary way, but it was very much the exception. In the overwhelming mass of land-secured debts, individual X was directly and personally indebted to individual Y, no more.[38] Though there is little information about the Y's, that few of them were vocationally

[38] It is necessary to reiterate that neither petty lending nor bottomry operations are under consideration. Even such activity, I may add, will show the same characteristics summarized here, though not so rigidly. Sizable loans for manufacture, like extensive agricultural credits, were unknown. The one exception to the rule that moneylending was noninstitutional is found among demes and other subdivisions of the state, temples, and private cult bodies. Many of them made loans at interest, but the sums were almost invariably small, and, important as the activity may have been in providing funds for sacrificial animals and ceremonial banquets, there is no evidence that it contributed measurably to the economic life of the community.

lenders of money seems certain. Not thirty Athenians are known from the whole of the fourth century who are specifically identified as bankers, a reflection of the rarity of the occupation, not of a defect in the available sources. Most often the loans came either from merchants and *rentiers* who seized a particular opportunity to make a profit or from men of wealth willing to assist a friend without any monetary return. Occasionally two or more men made a loan jointly. Their relationship, too, like that between creditor and debtor, was accidental and disjunctive. Thus, the two men who made the 10,500-drachma loan on the ore-crushing mill and slaves, already cited, were neither business associates nor even friends; and this is the largest transaction of its kind on record.

From the whole pattern it necessarily follows that no continuity or rationality of financial connection was established; that "credit rating" was a matter of gossip and repute, not of economic analysis; and that no machinery existed for building up large cash funds in private hands, not to mention credit balances, which would transcend the relatively small sums any given individual was able and prepared to venture in any single, isolated loan transaction. When the loan was sufficiently large and when the creditor was a citizen (or one of the rare non-citizens who had received from the state the privilege of owning realty), he often requested land or a house as security, at times even for an interest-free, friendly loan. This practice is not to be confused with investment in mortgages.

In the first place, short-term lending was the rule. For the lender this meant a brief outlay of cash for a high return, not a long-range placement of capital. For the borrower it meant generally the satisfaction of a social-personal need, not the expansion of his economic potential. If the mere number of *horoi* now available proves anything, it is the wide prevalence of indebtedness among the propertied Athenians in the fourth and third centuries before Christ.

In the second place, book clearance and negotiable paper were foreign to the Athenian economy. The banker was little more than a money-changer and pawnbroker; his system of deposits and payments did not rise even to the *giro* level. Much of the

available coin never found its way into the banks, but remained in homes and buried hoards. The state, too, handled its money in a rudimentary, strongbox method, doling out coins as needed to the appropriate officials.[39] Oral transactions were common. The receipt was unknown: proof of payment was secured by the presence of witnesses. "Some of you", Demosthenes says to the jury, "... [saw Theogenes] count out this money [a 3,000-drachma payment] in the Agora."[40] If there was a written agreement in existence, it was destroyed and that was the end of the affair. A clearance procedure and, to a lesser extent, negotiable paper are essential for payment in credit, in turn a necessary technical condition if the economy is to grow beyond the narrow limits imposed by the necessity of holding and transporting large quantities of coin or bullion. And there is a simple, logical connection between nonnegotiability and a legal system that clings to the strict principles of cash sale.

In the third place, security was substitutive, not collateral. In its early form, security is always substitution, a forfeit. X owes Y something, an object, money, a performance, which he does not render, and Y accepts a substitute—land for money—in full satisfaction of X's obligation to him. Athenian security practice remained on that level right down to the Roman conquest, and perhaps for centuries thereafter. Occasional exceptions were made when the two parties had special reasons for introducing them, but the original conception continued unbroken. Collateral security involves economic thinking of quite another order. The security now becomes a guarantee of payment, not a substitute; default entails not simple forfeit but compulsory sale and a division of the proceeds according to the respective monetary values of the debt and the property. Between substitution and collateral there lies a profound economic transformation. "We are not to seek in the law of pledge itself for the reasons of the change. The change came about as soon as the community recognized credit widely and developed

[39] Nothing could be more striking than the description of the sacred chest and the public chest of second-century Delos, given by J. A. O. Larsen, in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, ed. by Tenney Frank (Baltimore, 1938), vol. 4, pp. 340-44.

[40] Demosthenes, *Against Aphobos I* 27.58.

varieties of obligation and forms of action for them."[41] Conversely, failure to make the change suggests failure of the community to recognize (that is, need) credit widely.

It scarcely requires demonstration that an investor must have collateral security as much as negotiability. The average, casual, nonprofessional Athenian lender of two or three or even ten thousand drachmas was seeking either the emoluments of friendship or 10 or 12 per cent together with the return of the principal at the end of perhaps a year. He would have preferred not to take the security as a substitute, not merely because of the nuisance involved in foreclosure but because he might very well be burdened for a considerable period with a farm or house for which he had no use or desire. If he did take the security, under the law it could be only as a substitute, in full and final satisfaction of the debt.

It is commonly said today that land was a "preferred investment" in ancient Greece because it was less risky than any other form of "investment". How strange, then, that the numerous cult bodies, whose psychology was certainly not that of the speculator, did not put their money into land but always put it to work in small loans, when they did not simply hoard it. Only one instance is known of the purchase of property by such a group, and that one in the first century after Christ.[42] The great majority owned some realty, no matter how small a plot, *which they invariably acquired by gift*. But they did not "invest" their funds in land when they sought a regular, secure cash income with which to meet the expenses of their religious activity.

In so far as land was in fact preferred to other forms of wealth, the choice was a psychological, social and political one: land was the proper wealth for a self-respecting gentleman and citizen. No economic judgment about investments was implied, merely a generally nonproductive mentality. But when a man made a loan at interest, he was seeking profit, not social

[41] J. H. Wigmore, "The Pledge-Idea: A Study in Comparative Legal Ideas", *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 10 (1896/7), p. 332 (stated in a discussion of late medieval Germanic law).

[42] This statement is based on the exhaustive investigation of these groups made by Franz Poland; see his *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig, 1909), p. 487, note 10.

standing, and he wanted his own money back and more, not a substitute in realty.

When Lord Nottingham in the seventeenth century ruled that "The principal right of the mortgagee is to the money, and his right to the land is only as security for the money," the collateral idea was finally triumphant in England.[43] Implicit in that transformation was a conception of property whereby everything is readily translated into money. The post-Nottingham English creditor who accepted a landed estate as collateral security thought of it not so much as land but as so many pounds sterling concealed in the form of land, valuable to him only because in that form his money could not easily escape him. With pardonable exaggeration we may say that his Athenian counterpart saw nothing but the land.

Hazeltine has interpreted the shift from substitution and forfeit to collateral and the right of redemption as, in part at least, a victory of the debtor class in England.[44] It is doubtful that this line of reasoning offers a useful analogy for classical Athens. Under Solon there was a debtor class and it did score some sort of victory. But the relatively heavy, land-based indebtedness of the fourth and third centuries B.C. was largely an intraclass phenomenon. There was no struggle then between small farmer and usurer or between landowner and merchant capitalist. The usurer was not missing from the picture, to be sure, but we find him—and the complaints against him—circulating among the petty shopkeepers and craftsmen in the market place and the harbor, not in the countryside. Interest rates were untouched by legislation. Plato proposed the abolition of interest in his *Laws*. This he did as a philosopher with a fully systematized ethical theory, not as the spokesman of a debtor class. There is no trace in classical Athens of any popular agitation against usury, just as there is no serious evidence of a demand for cancellation of debts—and for the same reasons.

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[43] Thornbrough *v.* Baker (1676), 1 Ch.Ca. 284. On the historic significance of this case in English law, see R. W. Turner, *The Equity of Redemption* (Cambridge, Eng., 1931), chap. iii.

[44] H. D. Hazeltine, General Preface to Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. xlviii-xlix, lxi-lxiii.

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ATHENIAN DEMAGOGUES[1]

WHEN THE NEWS OF THEIR DEFEAT IN SICILY IN 413 B.C. REACHED THE Athenians, they received it with disbelief. Then came the realization of the full scale of the disaster, and the people, writes Thucydides, "were indignant with the orators who had joined in promoting the expedition, as if they [the people] had not themselves decreed it [in assembly]".[2] To this George Grote made the following rejoinder:

> From these latter words, it would seem that Thucydides considered the Athenians, after having adopted the expedition by their votes, to have debarred themselves from the right of complaining of those speakers who had stood forward prominently to advise the step. I do not at all concur in his opinion. The adviser of any important measure always makes himself morally responsible for its justice, usefulness, and practicability; and he very properly incurs disgrace, more or less according to the case, if it turns out to present results totally contrary to those which he had predicted.[3]

These two opposing quotations raise all the fundamental problems inherent in the Athenian democracy, the problems of policy-making and leadership, of decisions and the responsibility for them. Unfortunately Thucydides tells us very little about the orators who successfully urged on the Assembly the decision to mount the great invasion of Sicily. In fact, he tells us nothing concrete about the meeting, other than that the people were given misinformation by a delegation from the Sicilian city of Segesta and by their own envoys just returned from Sicily, and that most of those who voted were so ignorant of the relevant facts that they did not even know the size of the island or of its population. Five days later a second Assembly was held to authorize the necessary armament. The general Nicias took the opportunity to seek a reversal of the whole programme. He was opposed by a number of speakers, Athenian and Sicilian, neither named by the historian nor described in any way, and by Alcibiades, who is given a speech which throws much light on Thucydides himself and on his judgment of Alcibiades, but scarcely any on the issues, whether the immediate ones being debated or the broader ones of democratic procedure and leadership. The result was a complete defeat for Nicias. Everyone, Thucydides admits, was now more eager than before to go ahead with the plan — the old and the young, the hoplite soldiers (who were drawn from the wealthier half of the citizenry) and the common people alike. The few who remained opposed, he concludes, refrained from voting lest they appeared unpatriotic.[4]

The wisdom of the Sicilian expedition is a very difficult matter. Thucydides himself had more than one view at different times in his life. However, he seems not to have changed his mind about the orators: they promoted the expedition for the wrong reasons and they gained the day by playing on the ignorance and emotions of the Assembly. Alcibiades, he says, pressed hardest of all, because he wished to thwart Nicias, because he was personally ambitious and hoped to gain fame and wealth from his generalship in the campaign, and because his extravagant and licentious tastes were more expensive than he could really afford. Elsewhere, writing in more general terms, Thucydides says this:

> [Under Pericles] the government was a democracy in name but in reality rule by the first citizen. His successors were more equal to each other, and each seeking to become the first man they even offered the conduct of affairs to the whims of the people. This, as was to be expected in a great state ruling an empire, produced many blunders.[5]

In short, after the death of Pericles Athens fell into the hands of demagogues and was ruined. Thucydides does not use the word "demagogue" in any of the passages I have been discussing. It is an uncommon word with him,[6] as it is in Greek literature generally, and that fact may come as a surprise, for there is no more familiar theme in the Athenian picture (despite the rarity of the word) than the demagogue and his adjutant, the sycophant. The demagogue is a bad thing: to "lead the people" is to mislead — above all, to mislead by failing to lead. The demagogue is driven by self-interest, by the desire to advance himself in power, and through power, in wealth. To achieve this, he surrenders all principles, all genuine leadership, and he panders to the people in every way — in Thucydides' words, "even offering the conduct of affairs to the whims of the people". This picture is drawn not only directly, but also in reverse. Here, for example, is Thucydides' image of the right kind of leader:

> Because of his prestige, intelligence, and known incorruptibility with respect to money, Pericles was able to lead the people as a free man should. He led them instead of being led by them. He did not have to humour them in the pursuit of power; on the contrary, his repute was such that he could contradict them and provoke their anger.[7]

This was not everyone's judgment. Aristotle puts the breakdown earlier: it was after Ephialtes took away the power of the Council of the Areopagus that the passion for demagogy set in. Pericles, he continues, first acquired political influence by prosecuting Cimon for malfeasance in office; he energetically pursued a policy of naval power, "which gave the lower classes the audacity to take over the leadership in politics more and more"; and he introduced pay for

jury service, thus bribing the people with their own money. These were demagogic practices and they brought Pericles to power, which, Aristotle agrees, he then used well and properly.[8]

But my interest is neither in evaluating Pericles as an individual nor in examining the lexicography of demagogy. The Greek political vocabulary was normally vague and imprecise, apart from formal titles for individual offices or bodies (and often enough not even then). The word *demos* was itself ambiguous; among its meanings, however, was one which came to dominate literary usage, namely "the common people", "the lower classes", and that sense provided the overtones in "demagogues" — they became leaders of the state thanks to the backing of the common people. All writers accepted the need for political leadership as axiomatic; their problem was to distinguish between good and bad types. With respect to Athens and its democracy, the word "demagogue" understandably became the simplest way of identifying the bad type, and it does not matter in the least whether the word appears in any given text or not. I suppose it was Aristophanes who established the model in his portrayal of Cleon, yet he never directly applied the noun "demagogue" to him or anyone else;[9] similarly with Thucydides, who surely thought that Cleophon, Hyperbolus, and some, if not all, of the orators responsible for the Sicilian disaster were demagogues, but who never attached the word to any of these men.

It is important to stress the word "type", for the issue raised by Greek writers is one of the essential *qualities* of the leader, not (except very secondarily) his techniques or technical competence, not even (except in a very generalized way) his programme and policies. The crucial distinction is between the man who gives leadership with nothing else in mind but the good of the state, and the man whose self-interest makes his own position paramount and urges him to pander to the people. The former may make a mistake and adopt the wrong policy in any given situation; the latter may at times make sound proposals, as when Alcibiades dissuaded the fleet at Samos from jeopardizing the naval position by rushing back to Athens in 411 B.C. to overthrow the oligarchs who had seized power there, an action to which Thucydides gave explicit approval.[10] But these are not fundamental distinctions. Nor are other traits attributed to individual demagogues: Cleon's habit of shouting when addressing the Assembly, personal dishonesty in money matters, and so on. Such things merely sharpen the picture. From Aristophanes to Aristotle, the attack on the demagogues always falls back on the one central question: in whose interest does the leader lead?

Behind this formulation of the question lay three propositions. The first is that men are unequal — both in their moral worth and capability and in their social and economic status. The second is that any community tends to divide into factions, the most fundamental of which are the rich and well-born on one side, the poor on the other, each with its own qualities, potentialities, and interests. The third proposition is that the well-ordered and well-run state is one which over-rides faction and serves as an instrumentality for the good life.

Faction is the greatest evil and the most common danger. "Faction" is a conventional English translation of the Greek *stasis*, one of the most remarkable words to be found in any language. Its root-sense is "placing", "setting" or "stature", "station". Its range of political meanings can best be illustrated by merely stringing out the definitions to be found in the lexicon: "party", "party formed for seditious purposes", "faction", "sedition", "discord", "division", "dissent", and, finally, a well-attested meaning which the lexicon incomprehensibly omits, namely, "civil war" or "revolution". Unlike "demagogue", *stasis* is a very common word in the literature, and its connotation is regularly pejorative. Oddly enough, it is also the most neglected concept in modern study of Greek history. It has not been observed often enough or sharply enough, I believe, that there must be deep significance in the fact that a word which has the original sense of "station" or "position", and which, in abstract logic, could have an equally neutral sense when used in a political context, in practice does nothing of the kind, but immediately takes on the nastiest overtones. A political position, a partisan position — that is the inescapable implication — is a bad thing, leading to sedition, civil war, and the disruption of the social fabric.[11] And this same tendency is repeated throughout the language. There is no eternal law, after all, why "demagogue", a "leader of the people", must become "mis-leader of the people". Or why *hetairia*, an old Greek word which meant, among other things, "club" or "society", should in fifth-century Athens have come simultaneously to mean "conspiracy", "seditious organization". Whatever the explanation, it lies not in philology but in Greek society itself.

No one who has read the Greek political writers can have failed to notice the unanimity of approach in this respect. Whatever the disagreements among them, they all insist that the state must stand outside class or other factional interests. Its aims and objectives are moral ones, timeless and universal, and they can be achieved —

more correctly, approached or approximated — only by education, moral conduct (especially on the part of those in authority), morally correct legislation, and the choice of the right governors. The existence of classes and interests as an empirical fact is, of course, not denied. What is denied is that the choice of political goals can legitimately be linked with these classes and interests, or that the good of the state can be advanced except by ignoring (if not suppressing) private interests.

It was Plato, of course, who pursued this line of its reasoning to its most radical solutions. In the *Gorgias* he had argued that not even the great Athenian political figures of the past — Miltiades, Themistocles, Cimon and Pericles — were true statesmen. They had merely been more accomplished than their successors in gratifying the desires of the *demos* with ships and walls and dockyards. They had failed to make the citizens better men, and to call them "statesmen" was therefore to confuse the pastrycook with the doctor.[12] Then, in the *Republic*, Plato proposed to concentrate all power in the hands of a small, select, appropriately educated class, who were to be freed from all special interests by the most radical measures, by the abolition insofar as they were concerned of both private property and the family. Only under those conditions would they behave as perfect moral agents, leading the state to its proper goals without the possibility that any self-interest might intrude. Plato, to be sure, was the most untypical of men. One does not safely generalize from Plato; not only not to all Greeks, but not even to any other single Greek. Who else shared his passionate conviction that qualified experts — philosophers — could make (and should therefore be empowered to enforce) universally correct and authoritative decisions about the good life, the life of virtue, which was the sole end of the state?[13] Yet on the one point with which I am immediately concerned — private interests and the state — Plato stood on common ground with many Greek writers (much as they disagreed with him on the answers). In the great final scene of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* the chorus expresses the doctrine explicitly: the welfare of the state can rest only on harmony and freedom from faction. Thucydides implies this more than once.[14] And it underlies the theory of the mixed constitution as we find it in Aristotle's *Politics*.

The most empirical of Greek philosophers, Aristotle collected vast quantities of data about the actual workings of Greek states, including facts about *stasis*. The *Politics* includes an elaborate taxonomy of *stasis*, and even advice on how *stasis* can be avoided under a variety

of conditions. But Aristotle's canons and goals were ethical, his work a branch of moral philosophy. He viewed political behaviour teleologically, according to the moral ends which are man's by his nature; and those ends are subverted if the governors make their decisions out of personal or class interest. That is the test by which he distinguished between the three "right" forms of government ("according to absolute justice") and their degenerate forms: monarchy becomes tyranny when an individual rules in his own interest rather than in the interest of the whole state, aristocracy similarly becomes oligarchy, and polity becomes democracy (or, in the language of Polybius, democracy becomes mob-rule).[15] Among democracies, furthermore, those in rural communities will be superior because farmers are too occupied to bother with meetings, whereas urban craftsmen and shopkeepers find it easy to attend, and such people "are generally a bad lot".[16]

On this matter of special interest and general interest, of faction and concord, the available exceptions to the line of thinking I have summarized are strikingly few and unrewarding. One deserves particular mention, and that, ironically enough, is the pamphlet on the Athenian state by an anonymous writer of the later half of the fifth century B.C. who now generally goes under the too amiable label of the Old Oligarch. This work is a diatribe against the democracy, hammering at the theme that the system is a bad one because all its actions are determined by the interests of the poorer (inferior) sections of the citizenry. The argument is familiar enough; what gives the pamphlet its unusual interest is this conclusion:

> As for the Athenian system of government, I do not like it. However, since they decided to become a democracy, it seems to me that they are preserving the democracy well by the methods I have described.[17]

In other words, the strength of the Athenian government comes precisely from that which many merely criticize, namely, the fact that it is government by a faction acting unashamedly to its own advantage.

The great difference between political analysis and moral judgment could not be better exemplified. Do not be misled, says the Old Oligarch in effect: I and some of you dislike democracy, but a reasoned consideration of the facts shows that what we condemn on moral grounds is very strong as a practical force, and its strength lies in its immorality. This is a very promising line of investigation, but it was not pursued in antiquity. Instead, those thinkers whose orientation was anti-democratic persisted in their concentration on political philosophy. And those who sided with the democracy?

A. H. M. Jones has recently tried to formulate the democratic theory from the fragmentary evidence available in the surviving literature, most of it from the fourth century.[18] Still more recently, Eric Havelock made a massive attempt to discover what he calls the "liberal temper" in fifth-century Athenian politics, chiefly from the fragments of the pre-Socratic philosophers. In reviewing his book, Momigliano suggested that the effort was foredoomed because "it is not absolutely certain that a well-articulated democratic idea existed in the fifth century".[19] I go further: I do not believe that an articulated democratic theory ever existed in Athens. There were notions, maxims, generalities — which Jones has assembled — but they do not add up to a systematic theory. And why indeed should they? It is a curious fallacy to suppose that every social or governmental system in history must necessarily have been accompanied by an elaborate theoretical system. Where that does occur it is often the work of lawyers, and Athens had no jurists in the proper sense. Or it may be the work of philosophers, but the systematic philosophers of this period had a set of concepts and values incompatible with democracy. The committed democrats met the attack by ignoring it, by going about the business of conducting their political affairs according to their own notions, but without writing treatises on what they were about. None of this, however, is a reason why we should not attempt to make the analysis the Athenians failed to make for themselves.

No account of the Athenian democracy can have any validity if it overlooks four points, each obvious in itself, yet all four taken together, I venture to say, are rarely given sufficient weight in modern accounts. The first is that this was a direct democracy, and however much such a system may have in common with representative democracy, the two differ in certain fundamental respects, and particularly on the very issues with which I am here concerned. The second point is what Ehrenberg calls the "narrowness of space" of the Greek city-state, an appreciation of which, he has rightly stressed, is crucial to an understanding of its political life.[20] The implications were summed up by Aristotle in a famous passage:

> A state composed of too many . . . will not be a true state, for the simple reason that it can hardly have a true constitution. Who can be the general of a mass so excessively large? And who can be herald, except Stentor?[21]

The third point is that the Assembly was the crown of the system, possessing the right and the power to make all the policy decisions, in actual practice with few limitations, whether of precedent or scope. (Strictly speaking there was appeal from the Assembly to

the popular courts with their large lay membership. Nevertheless, I ignore the courts in much, though not all, of what follows, because I believe, as the Athenians did themselves, that, though they complicated the practical mechanism of politics, the courts were an expression, not a reduction, of the absolute power of the people functioning directly; and because I believe that the operational analysis I am trying to make would not be significantly altered and would perhaps be obscured if in this brief compass I did not concentrate on the Assembly.) The Assembly, finally, was nothing other than an open-air mass meeting on the hill called the Pnyx, and the fourth point therefore is that we are dealing with problems of crowd behaviour; its psychology, its laws of behaviour, could not have been identical with those of the small group, or even of the larger kind of body of which a modern parliament is an example (though, it must be admitted, we can do little more today than acknowledge their existence).

Who were the Assembly? That is a question we cannot answer satisfactorily. Every male citizen automatically became eligible to attend when he reached his eighteenth birthday, and he retained that privilege to his death (except for the very small number who lost their civic rights for one reason or another). In Pericles' time the number eligible was of the order of 45,000. Women were excluded; so were the fairly numerous non-citizens who were free men, nearly all of them Greeks, but outsiders in the political sphere; and so were the far more numerous slaves. All figures are a guess, but it would not be wildly inaccurate to suggest that the adult male citizens comprised about one sixth of the total population (taking town and countryside together). But the critical question to be determined is which four or five or six thousand of the 45,000 actually went to meetings. It is reasonable to imagine that under normal conditions the attendance came chiefly from the urban residents. Fewer peasants would often have taken the journey in order to attend a meeting of the Assembly.[22] Therefore one large section of the eligible population was, with respect to direct participation, excluded. That is something to know, but it does not get us far enough. We can guess for example, with the aid of a few hints in the sources, that the composition was normally weighted on the side of the more aged and the more well-to-do men — but that is only a guess, and the degree of weighting is beyond even guessing.

Still, one important fact can be fixed, namely, that each meeting of the Assembly was unique in its composition. There was no membership in the Assembly as such, only membership in a given

Assembly on a given day. Perhaps the shifts were not significant from meeting to meeting in quiet, peaceful times when no vital issues were being debated. Yet even then an important element of predictability was lacking. When he entered the Assembly, no policy-maker could be quite sure that a change in the composition of the audience had not occurred, whether through accident or through more or less organized mobilization of some particular sector of the population, which could tip the balance of the votes against a decision made at a previous meeting. And times were often neither peaceful nor normal. In the final decade of the Peloponnesian War, to take an extreme example, the whole rural population was compelled to abandon the countryside and live within the city walls. It is beyond reasonable belief that during this period there was not a larger proportion of countrymen at meetings than was normal. A similar situation prevailed for briefer periods at other times, when an enemy army was operating in Attica. We need not interpret Aristophanes literally when he opens the *Acharnians* with a soliloquy by a farmer who is sitting in the Pnyx waiting for the Assembly to begin and saying to himself how he hates the city and everyone in it and how he intends to shout down any speaker who proposes anything except peace. But Cleon could not have afforded the luxury of ignoring this strange element seated on the hillside before him. They might upset a policy line which he had been able to carry while the Assembly was filled only with city-dwellers.

The one clearcut instance came in the year 411. Then the Assembly was terrorized into voting the democracy out of existence, and it was surely no accident that this occurred at a time when the fleet was fully mobilized and stationed on the island of Samos. The citizens who served in the navy were drawn from the poor and they were known to be the staunchest supporters of the democratic system in its late fifth-century form. Being in Samos, they could not be in Athens, thus enabling the oligarchs to win the day through a majority in the Assembly which was not only a minority of the eligible members but an untypical minority. Our sources do not permit us to study the history of Athenian policy systematically with such knowledge at our disposal, but surely the men who led Athens were acutely aware of the possibility of a change in the composition of the Assembly, and included it in their tactical calculations.

Each meeting, furthermore, was complete in itself. Granted that much preparatory work was done by the Council (*boule*), that informal canvassing took place, and that there were certain devices to control and check frivolous or irresponsible motions, it is nevertheless true

that the normal procedure was for a proposal to be introduced, debated, and either passed (with or without amendment) or rejected in a single continuous sitting. We must reckon, therefore, not only with narrowness of space but also with narrowness of time, and with the pressures that generated, especially on leaders (and would-be leaders). I have already mentioned the case of the Sicilian expedition, which was decided in principle on one day and then planned, so to speak, five days later when the scale and cost were discussed and voted. Another kind of case is that of the well-known Mytilene debate. Early in the Peloponnesian War the city of Mytilene revolted from the Athenian Empire. The rebellion was crushed and the Athenian Assembly decided to make an example of the Mytileneans by putting the entire male population to death. Revulsion of feeling set in at once, the issue was reopened at another meeting the very next day, and the decision was reversed.[23] Cleon, at that time the most important political figure in Athens, advocated the policy of frightfulness. The second Assembly was a personal defeat for him — he had participated in the debates on both days — though he seems not to have lost his status even temporarily as a result (as he well might have). But how does one measure the psychological effect on him of such a twenty-four hour reversal? How does one estimate not only its impact, but also his awareness all through his career as a leader that such a possibility was a constant factor in Athenian politics? I cannot answer such questions concretely, but I submit that the weight could have been no light one. Cleon surely appreciated, as we cannot, what it promised for men like himself that in the second year of the Peloponnesian War, when morale was temporarily shattered by the plague, the people turned on Pericles, fined him heavily, and deposed him for a brief period from the office of general.[24] If this could happen to Pericles, who was immune?

In the Mytilene case Thucydides' account suggests that Cleon's was a lost cause the second day, that he tried to persuade the Assembly to abandon a course of action which they intended to pursue from the moment the session opened, and that he failed. But the story of the meeting in 411, as Thucydides tells it, is a different one. Peisander began the day with the feeling against his proposal that the introduction of an oligarchical form of government should be considered, and he ended it with a victory. The actual debate had swung enough votes to give him a majority.[25]

Debate designed to win votes among an outdoor audience numbering several thousands means oratory, in the strict sense of the word. It was therefore perfectly precise language to call political

leaders "orators", as a synonym and not merely, as we might do, as a mark of the particular skill of a particular political figure. Under Athenian conditions, however, much more is implied. The picture of the Assembly I have been trying to draw suggests not only oratory, but also a "spontaneity" of debate and decision which parliamentary democracy lacks, at least in our day.[26] Everyone, speakers and audience alike, knew that before night fell the issue must be decided, that each man present would vote "freely" (without fear of whips or other party controls) and purposefully, and therefore that every speech, every argument must seek to persuade the audience on the spot, that it was all a serious performance, as a whole and in each of its parts.

I place the word "freely" in inverted commas, for the last thing I wish to imply is the activity of a free, disembodied rational faculty, that favourite illusion of so much political theory since the Enlightenment. Members of the Assembly were free from the controls which bind the members of a parliament: they held no office, they were not elected, and therefore they could neither be punished nor rewarded for their voting records. But they were not free from the human condition, from habit and tradition, from the influences of family and friends, of class and status, of personal experiences, resentments, prejudices, values, aspirations, and fears, much of it in the subconscious. These they took with them when they went up on the Pnyx, and with these they listened to the debates and made up their minds, under conditions very different from the voting practices of our day. There is a vast difference between voting on infrequent occasions for a man or a party on the one hand, and on the other hand voting every few days directly on the issues themselves. In Aristotle's time the Assembly met at least four times in each thirty-six day period. Whether this was also the rule in the fifth century is not known, but there were occasions, as during the Peloponnesian War, when meetings took place even more frequently. Then there were the two other factors I have already mentioned, the smallness of the Athenian world, in which every member of the Assembly knew personally many others sitting on the Pnyx, and the mass-meeting background of the voting — a situation virtually unrelated to the impersonal act of marking a voting paper in physical isolation from every other voter; an act we perform, furthermore, with the knowledge that millions of other men and women are simultaneously doing the same thing in many places, some of them hundreds of miles distant. When, for example, Alcibiades and Nicias rose in the Assembly in 415, the one to propose the expedition

against Sicily, the other to argue against it, each knew that, should the motion be carried, one or both would be asked to command in the field. And in the audience there were many who were being asked to vote on whether they, personally, were to march out in a few days, as officers, soldiers, or members of the fleet. Such examples can be duplicated in a number of other, scarcely less vital areas: taxation, food supply, pay for jury duty, extension of the franchise, laws of citizenship, and so on.

To be sure, much of the activity of the Assembly was in a lower key, largely occupied with technical measures (such as cult regulations) or ceremonial acts (such as honorary decrees for a great variety of individuals). It would be a mistake to imagine Athens as a city in which week in and week out great issues dividing the population were being debated and decided. But on the other hand, there were very few single years (and certainly no ten-year periods) in which some great issue did not arise: the two Persian invasions, the long series of measures which completed the process of democratization, the Empire, the Peloponnesian War (which occupied twenty-seven years) and its two oligarchic interludes, the endless diplomatic manoeuvres and wars of the fourth century, with their attendant fiscal crises, all culminating in the decades of Philip and Alexander. It did not often happen, as it did to Cleon in the dispute over Mytilene, that a politician was faced with a repeat performance the following day; but the Assembly did meet constantly, without long periods of holiday or recess. The week-by-week conduct of a war, for example, had to go before the Assembly week by week; as if Winston Churchill were to have been compelled to take a referendum before each move in World War II, and then to face another vote after the move was made, in the Assembly or the law-courts, to determine not merely what the next step should be but also whether he was to be dismissed and his plans abandoned, or even whether he was to be held criminally culpable, subject to a fine or exile or, conceivably, the death penalty either for the proposal itself or for the way the previous move had been carried out. It was part of the Athenian governmental system that, in addition to the endless challenge in the Assembly, a politician was faced, equally without respite, with the threat of politically inspired lawsuits.[27]

If I insist on the psychological aspect, it is not to ignore the considerable political experience of many men who voted in the Assembly — gained in the Council, the law-courts, the demes, and the Assembly itself — nor is it merely to counter what I have called the disembodied-rationalism conception. I want to stress something

very positive, namely, the intense degree of involvement which attendance at the Athenian Assembly entailed. And this intensity was equally (or even more strongly) the case among the orators, for each vote judged them as well as the issue to be decided on. If I had to choose one word which best characterized the condition of being a political leader in Athens, that word would be "tension". In some measure that is true of all politicians who are subject to a vote. "The desperateness of politics and government" is R. B. McCallum's telling phrase, which he then developed in this way:

> Certainly a note of cynicism and weariness with the manoeuvres and posturings of party politicians is natural and to an extent proper to discerning dons and civil servants, who can reflect independently and at leisure on the doings of their harried masters in government. But this seems to arise from a deliberate rejection . . . of the aims and ideals of party statesmen and their followers and the continual responsibility for the security and well-being in the state. For one thing party leaders are in some sense apostles, although all may not be Gladstones; there are policies to which they dedicate themselves and policies which alarm and terrify them.[11]

I believe this to be a fair description of Athenian leaders, too, despite the absence of political parties, equally applicable to Themistocles as to Aristides, to Pericles as to Cimon, to Cleon as to Nicias; for, it should be obvious, this kind of judgment is independent of any judgment about the merits or weaknesses of a particular programme or policy. More accurately, I should have said that this understates the case for the Athenians. Their leaders had *no* respite. Because their influence had to be earned and exerted directly and immediately — this was a necessary consequence of a direct, as distinct from a representative, democracy — they had to lead in person, and they had also to bear, in person, the brunt of the opposition's attacks. More than that, they walked alone. They had their lieutenants, of course, and politicians made alliances with each other. But these were fundamentally personal links, shifting frequently, useful in helping to carry through a particular measure or even a group of measures, but lacking that quality of support, that buttressing or cushioning effect, which is provided by a bureaucracy and political party, in another way by an institutionalized Establishment like the Roman Senate, or in still another way by large-scale patronage as in the Roman clientage system. The critical point is that there was no "government" in the modern sense. There were posts and offices, but none had any standing in the Assembly. A man was a leader solely as a function of his personal, and in the literal sense, unofficial status within the Assembly itself. The test of whether or not he held that status was simply whether the Assembly did or did not vote as he wished, and therefore the test was repeated with each proposal.

These were the conditions which faced all leaders in Athens, not merely those whom Thucydides and Plato dismissed as "demagogues", not merely those whom some modern historians mis-call "radical democrats", but everyone, aristocrat or commoner, altruist or self-seeker, able or incompetent, who, in George Grote's phrase, "stood forward prominently to advise" the Athenians. No doubt the motives which moved men to stand forward varied greatly. But that does not matter in this context, for each one of them without exception, *chose* to aspire to, and actively to work and contest for, leadership, knowing just what that entailed, including the risks. Within narrow limits, they all had to use the same techniques, too. Cleon's platform manner may have been inelegant and boisterous, but how serious is Aristotle's remark that he was the first man to "shout and rail"?[29] Are we to imagine that Thucydides the son of Melesias (and kinsman of the historian) and Nicias whispered when they addressed the Assembly in opposition to Pericles and Cleon, respectively? Thucydides, who brought his upper-class backers into the Assembly and seated them together to form a claque?[30]

This is obviously a frivolous approach, nothing more than the expression of class prejudice and snobbishness. As Aristotle noted, the death of Pericles marked a turning-point in the social history of Athenian leadership. Until then they seem to have been drawn from the old aristocratic landed families, including the men who were responsible for carrying out the reforms which completed the democracy. After Pericles a new class of leaders emerged.[31] Despite the familiar prejudicial references to Cleon the tanner or Cleophon the lyre-maker, these were in fact not poor men, not craftsmen and labourers turned politician, but men of means who differed from their predecessors in their ancestry and their outlook, and who provoked resentment and hostility for their presumption in breaking the old monopoly of leadership. When such attitudes are under discussion, one can always turn to Xenophon to find the lowest level of explanation (which is not therefore necessarily the wrong one). One of the most important of the new leaders was a man called Anytus, who, like Cleon before him, drew his wealth from a slave tannery. Anytus had a long and distinguished career, but he was also the chief actor in the prosecution of Socrates. What is Xenophon's explanation? Simply that Socrates had publicly berated Anytus for bringing up his son to follow in his trade instead of educating him as a proper gentleman, and that Anytus, in revenge for this personal insult, had Socrates tried and executed.[32]

None of this is to deny that there were very fundamental issues

behind the thick façade of prejudice and abuse. Throughout the fifth century there were the twin issues of democracy (or oligarchy) and empire, brought to a climax in the Peloponnesian War. Defeat in the war ended the empire and it soon also ended the debate about the kind of government Athens was to have. Oligarchy ceased to be a serious issue in practical politics. It is only the persistence of the philosophers which creates an illusion about it; they continued to argue fifth-century issues in the fourth century, but politically in a vacuum. Down to the middle of the fourth century, the actual policy questions were perhaps less dramatic than before, though not necessarily less vital to the participants — such matters as navy finance, foreign relations both with Persia and with other Greek states, and the ever-present problem of corn supply. Then came the final great conflict, over the rising power of Macedon. That debate went on for some three decades, and it ended only in the year following the death of Alexander the Great when the Macedonian army put an end to democracy itself in Athens.

All these were questions about which men could legitimately disagree, and disagree with passion. On the issues, the arguments of (say) Plato require earnest consideration — but only insofar as he addressed himself to the issues. The injection of the charge of demagogy into the polemic amounts to a resort to the very same unacceptable debating tricks for which the so-called demagogues are condemned. Suppose, for example, that Thucydides was right in attributing Alcibiades' advocacy of the Sicilian expedition to his personal extravagance and to various discreditable private motives. What relevance has that to the merits of the proposal itself? Would the Sicilian expedition, as a war measure, have been a better idea if Alcibiades had been an angelic youth? To ask the question is to dismiss it, and all other such arguments with it. One must dismiss as summarily the objections to oratory: by definition, to wish to lead Athens implies the burden of trying to persuade Athens, and an essential part of that effort consisted in public oratory.

One can draw distinctions, of course. I should concede the label "demagogue" in its most pejorative sense, for example, if a campaign were built around promises which a clique of orators neither intended to honour nor were capable of honouring. But, significantly enough, this accusation is rarely levelled against the so-called demagogues, and the one definite instance we know comes from the other camp. The oligarchy of 411 was sold to the Athenians on the appeal that this was now the only way to obtain Persian support and thus to win the otherwise lost war. Even on the most favourable view, as

Thucydides makes quite clear, Peisander and some of his associates may have meant this originally, but they quickly abandoned all pretence of trying to win the war while they concentrated on preserving the newly won oligarchy on as narrow a base as possible.[33] That is what I should call "demagogy", if the word is to merit its pejorative flavour. That is "misleading the people" in the literal sense.

But what then of the interest question, of the supposed clash between the interests of the whole state and the interests of a section or faction within the state? Is that not a valid distinction? It is a pity that we have no direct evidence (and no indirect evidence of any value) about the way the long debate was conducted between 508 B.C., when Cleisthenes established the democracy in its primitive form, and the later years of Pericles' dominance. Those were the years when class interests would most likely have been expounded openly and bluntly. Actual speeches survive only from the end of the fifth century on, and they reveal what anyone could have guessed who had not been blinded by Plato and others, namely, that the appeal was customarily a national one, not a factional one. There is little open pandering to the poor against the rich, to the farmers against the town or to the town against the farmers. Why indeed should there have been? Politicians regularly say that what they are advocating is in the best interests of the nation, and, what is much more important, they believe it. Often, too, they charge their opponents with sacrificing the national interest for special interests, and they believe that. I know of no evidence which warrants the view that Athenian politicians were somehow peculiar in this respect; nor do I know any reason to hold that the argument is an essentially different (or better) one because it is put forth not by a politician but by Aristophanes or Thucydides or Plato.

At the same time a politician cannot ignore class or sectional interests or the conflicts among them, whether in a constituency today or in the Assembly in ancient Athens. The evidence for Athens suggests that on many issues — the Empire and the Peloponnesian War, for example, or relations with Philip of Macedon — the divisions over policy did not closely follow class or sectional lines. But other questions, such as the opening of the archonship and other offices to men of the lower property censuses or of pay for jury service or, in the fourth century, the financing of the fleet, or the theoric fund, were by their nature class issues. Advocates on both sides knew this and knew how and when (and when not) to make their appeals accordingly, at the same time that they each argued, and believed,

that only their respective points of view would advance Athens as a whole. To plead against Ephialtes and Pericles that *eunomia*, the well-ordered state ruled by law, had the higher moral claim, was merely a plea for the status quo dressed up in fancy language.[34]

In his little book on the Athenian constitution, Aristotle wrote the following:

> Pericles was the first to give pay for jury service, as a demagogic measure to counter the wealth of Cimon. The latter, who possessed the fortune of a tyrant . . . supported many of his fellow-demesmen, every one of whom was free to come daily and receive from him enough for his sustenance. Besides, none of his estates was enclosed, so that anyone who wished could take from its fruits. Pericles' property did not permit such largesse, and on the advice of Damonides . . . he distributed among the people from what was their own . . . and so he introduced pay for the jurors.[35]

Aristotle himself, as I indicated earlier, praised Pericles' regime and he refused responsibility for this silly explanation, but others who repeated it, both before and after him, thought it was a telling instance of demagogy pandering to the common people. The obvious retort is to ask whether what Cimon did was not pandering in equal measure, or whether opposition to pay for jury service was not pandering, too, but in that case to the men of property. No useful analysis is possible in such terms, for they serve only to conceal the real grounds for disagreement. If one is opposed to full democracy as a form of government, then it is wrong to encourage popular participation in the juries by offering pay; but it is wrong because the objective is wrong, not because Pericles obtained leadership status by proposing and carrying the measure. And vice versa, if one favours a democratic system.

What emerges from all this is a very simple proposition, namely, that demagogues — I use the word in a neutral sense — were a structural element in the Athenian political system. By this I mean, first, that the system could not function at all without them; second, that the term is equally applicable to all leaders, regardless of class or point of view; and third, that within rather broad limits they are to be judged individually not by their manners or their methods, but by their performance. (And that, I need hardly add, is precisely how they *were* judged in life, if not in books.) Up to a point one can easily parallel the Athenian demagogue with the modern politician, but there soon comes a point when distinctions must be drawn, not merely because the work of government has become so much more complex, but more basically because of the differences between a direct and a representative democracy. I need not repeat what I have already said about the mass-meeting (with its uncertain

composition), about the lack of a bureaucracy and a party system, and, as a result, the continuous state of tension in which an Athenian demagogue lived and worked. But there is one consequence which needs a little examination, for these conditions make up an important part (if not the whole) of the explanation of an apparently negative feature of Athenian politics, and of Greek politics generally. David Hume put it this way:

> To exclude faction from a free government, is very difficult, if not altogether impracticable; but such inveterate rage between the factions, and such bloody maxims are found, in modern times, amongst religious parties alone. In ancient history we may always observe, where one party prevailed, whether the nobles or people (for I can observe no difference in this respect), that they immediately butchered . . . and banished . . . . No form of process, no law, no trial, no pardon . . . . These people were extremely fond of liberty, but seem not to have understood it very well.[36]

The remarkable thing about Athens is how near she came to being the complete exception to this correct observation of Hume's, to being free, in other words, from *stasis* in its ultimate meaning. The democracy was established in 508 B.C. following a brief civil war. Thereafter, in its history of nearly two centuries, armed terror, butchery without process or law, was employed on only two occasions, in 411 and 404, both times by oligarchic factions which seized control of the state for brief periods. And the second time, in particular, the democratic faction, when it regained power, was generous and law-abiding in its treatment of the oligarchs, so much so that they wrung praise even from Plato. Writing about the restoration of 403, he said that "no one should be surprised that some men took savage personal revenge against their enemies in this revolution, but in general the returning party behaved equitably".[37] This is not to suggest that the two centuries were totally free from individual acts of injustice and brutality. Hume — speaking of Greece generally and not of Athens in particular — observed "no difference in this respect" between the factions. We seem to have a less clear vision of Athens, at least, blocked by the distorting mirror of men like Thucydides, Xenophon and Plato, which magnifies the exceptional incidents of extreme democratic intolerance — such as the trial and execution of the generals who won the battle of Arginusae and the trial and execution of Socrates; while it minimizes and often obliterates altogether the even worse behaviour on the other side, for example, the political assassination of Ephialtes in 462 or 461 and of Androcles in 411, each in his time the most influential of the popular leaders.

If Athens largely escaped the extreme forms of *stasis* so common elsewhere, she could not escape its lesser manifestations. Athenian

politics had an all-or-nothing quality. The objective on each side was not merely to defeat the opposition but to crush it, to behead it by destroying its leaders. And often enough this game was played within the sides, as a number of men manoeuvred for leadership. The chief technique was the political trial, and the chief instrumentalities were the dining-clubs and the sycophants. These, too, I would argue, were structurally a part of the system, not an accidental or avoidable excrescence. Ostracism, the so-called *graphe paranomon*, and the formal popular scrutiny of archons, generals and other officials, were all deliberately introduced as safety devices, either against excessive individual power (and potential tyranny) or against corruption and malfeasance or against unthinking haste and passion in the Assembly itself.[38] Abstractly it may be easy enough to demonstrate that, however praiseworthy in intention, these devices inevitably invited abuse. The trouble is that they were the only kind of device available, again because the democracy was a direct one, lacking a party machinery and so forth. Leaders and would-be leaders had no alternative but to make use of them, and to seek out still other ways of harassing and breaking competitors and opponents.

Hard as this all-out warfare no doubt was on the participants, unfair and vicious on occasion, it does not follow that it was altogether an evil for the community as a whole. Substantial inequalities, serious conflicts of interest, and legitimate divergences of opinion were real and intense. Under such conditions, conflict is not only inevitable, it is a virtue in democratic politics, for it is conflict combined with consent, and not consent alone, which preserves democracy from eroding into oligarchy. On the constitutional issue which dominated so much of the fifth century it was the advocates of popular democracy who triumphed, and they did so precisely because they fought for it and fought hard. They fought a partisan fight, and the Old Oligarch made the correct diagnosis in attributing Athenian strength to just that. Of course, his insight, or perhaps his honesty, did not extend so far as to note the fact that in his day the democracy's leaders were still men of substance, and often of aristocratic background: not only Pericles, but Cleon and Cleophon, and then Thrasybulus and Anytus. The two latter led the democratic faction in overthrowing the Thirty Tyrants in 403, and in following their victory with the amnesty which even Plato praised. The partisan fight was not a straight class fight; it also drew support from among the rich and the well-born. Nor was it a fight without rules or legitimacy. The democratic counter-slogan to *eunomia* was *isonomia*, and, as Vlastos has said, the Athenians pursued "the goal of

political equality . . . not in defiance, but in support of the rule of law". The Athenian poor, he noted, did not once raise the standard Greek revolutionary demand — redistribution of the land — throughout the fifth and fourth centuries.[39]

In those two centuries Athens was, by all pragmatic tests, much the greatest Greek state, with a powerful feeling of community, with a toughness and resilience tempered, even granted its imperial ambitions, by a humanity and sense of equity and responsibility quite extraordinary for its day (and for many another day as well). Lord Acton, paradoxically enough, was one of the few historians to have grasped the historic significance of the amnesty of 403. "The hostile parties", he wrote, "were reconciled, and proclaimed an amnesty, the first in history".[40] *The first in history*, despite all the familiar weaknesses, despite the crowd psychology, the slaves, the personal ambition of many leaders, the impatience of the majority with opposition. Nor was this the only Athenian innovation: the structure and mechanism of the democracy were all their own invention, as they groped for something without precedent, having nothing to go on but their own notion of freedom, their community solidarity, their willingness to inquire (or at least to accept the consequences of inquiry), and their widely shared political experience.

Much of the credit for the Athenian achievement must go to the political leadership of the state. That, it seems to me, is beyond dispute. It certainly would not have been disputed by the average Athenian. Despite all the tensions and uncertainties, the occasional snap judgment and unreasonable shift in opinion, the people supported Pericles for more than two decades, as they supported a very different kind of man, Demosthenes, under very different conditions a century later. These men, and others like them (less well known now), were able to carry through a more or less consistent and successful programme over long stretches of time. It is altogether perverse to ignore this fact, or to ignore the structure of political life by which Athens became what she was, while one follows the lead of Aristophanes or Plato and looks only at the personalities of the politicians, or at the crooks and failures among them, or at some ethical norms of an ideal existence.

In the end Athens lost her freedom and independence, brought down by a superior external power. She went down fighting, with an understanding of what was at stake clearer than that possessed by many critics in later ages. That final struggle was led by Demosthenes, a demagogue. We cannot have it both ways: we

cannot praise and admire the achievement of two centuries, and at the same time dismiss the demagogues who were the architects of the political framework and the makers of policy, or the Assembly in and through which they did their work.

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NOTES

[1] This is a revised text of a paper read to the Hellenic Society in London on 25 March 1961, of which a shortened version was broadcast on the Third Programme of the B.B.C. and published in *The Listener* of 5 and 12 October 1961. I am grateful to Professors A. Andrewes and A. H. M. Jones, Messrs. P. A. Brunt and M. J. Cowling for advice and criticism.

[2] Thuc., 8.1.1. [3] *A History of Greece*, new edn., (London, 1862), v. p. 317 n. 3.

[4] Thuc., 6.1-25. [5] Thuc., 2.65.9-11.

[6] Used only in 4.21.3, and "demagogy" in 8.65.2. [7] Thuc., 2.65.8.

[8] *Const. of Athens*, 27-28; cf. *Politics*, 2.9.3 (1274a3-10). A. W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, (Oxford, 1956), ii. p. 193, points out that "Plutarch divided Perikles' political career sharply into two halves, the first when he did use base demagogic arts to gain power, the second when he had gained it and used it nobly".

[9] Aristophanes uses "demagogy" and "demagogic" once each in the *Knights*, lines 191 and 217, respectively. Otherwise in his surviving plays there is only the verb "to be a demagogue", also used once (*Frogs*, 419).

[10] Thuc., 8.86.

[11] The only systematic analysis known to me, and that a brief one, is the inaugural lecture of D. Loenen, *Stasis*, (Amsterdam, 1953). He saw, contrary to the view most common among modern writers, that "illegality is precisely not the *constant* element in *stasis*" (p. 5). [12] *Gorgias*, 502E-519D.

[13] See R. Bambrough, "Plato's Political Analogies", in *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, ed. Peter Laslett, (Oxford, 1956), pp. 98-115.

[14] It is developed most fully in his long account (3.69-85) of the *stasis* in Corcyra in 427 B.C.

[15] Arist., *Pol.*, 3.4-5 (1278b-79b), 4.6-7 (1293b-94b); Polyb. 6.3-9.

[16] Arist., *Pol.*, 6.2.7-8 (1319a); cf. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.2.5-7.

[17] Pseudo-Xenophon, *Const. of Athens*, 3.1; see A. Fuks, "The 'Old Oligarch'," *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, i (1954), pp. 21-35.

[18] *Athenian Democracy*, (Oxford, 1957), ch. iii.

[19] E. A. Havelock, *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics*, (London, 1957), reviewed by A. Momigliano in *Riv. stor. ital.*, lxxii (1960), pp. 534-41.

[20] *Aspects of the Ancient World*, (Oxford, 1946), pp. 40-45.

[21] *Politics*, 7.4.7 (1326b3-7).

[22] That Aristotle drew very important conclusions from this state of affairs has already been indicated, at note 16.

[23] Thuc., 3.27-50. [24] Thuc., 2.65.1-4. [25] Thuc., 8.53-54.

[26] See the valuable article by O. Reverdin, "Remarques sur la vie politique d'Athènes au Ve siècle", *Museum Helveticum*, ii (1945), pp. 201-12.

[27] P. Cloché, "Les hommes politiques et la justice populaire dans l'Athènes du IVe siècle", *Historia*, ix (1960), pp. 80-95, has recently argued that this threat is exaggerated by modern historians, at least for the fourth century. Useful as his assembling of the evidence is, he lays too much stress on the argument from silence, whereas the sources are far from full enough to bear such statistical weight. [28] A review in *The Listener* (2 Feb. 1961), p. 233.

[28] Arist., *Const.*, 28.3.

[29] Plutarch, *Pericles*, 11.2. It was against such tactics that the restored democracy in 410 required members of the Council to swear to take their seats by lot: Philochorus 328 F 140 (in *Frag. gr. Hist.*, ed. F. Jacoby).

[31] Arist., *Const.*, 28.1. [32] Xen., *Apology*, 30-32. See generally Georges Méautis, *L'aristocratie athénienne*, (Paris, 1927). [33] Thuc., 8.68-91.

[34] "Eunomia . . . the ideal of the past and even of Solon . . . now meant the best constitution, based on inequality. It was now the ideal of oligarchy": Ehrenberg, *Aspects*, p. 92. [35] Arist., *Const.*, 27.3-4.

[36] "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations", in *Essays*, World's Classics edn., (London, 1903), pp. 405-406. Cf. Jacob Burckhardt, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, (reprint Darmstadt, 1956), i. pp. 80-81.

[37] *Epistles*, VII 325B; cf. Xen., *Hell.*, 2.4.43; Arist., *Const.*, 40.

[38] The fourth-century legislative procedure by means of *nomothetai* could properly be added to this list; see A. R. W. Harrison, "Law-Making at Athens at the End of the Fifth Century B.C.", *Jour. Hell. Studies*, lxxv (1955), pp. 26-35.

[39] G. Vlastos, "*Isonomia*", *Amer. Jour. Philology*, lxxiv (1953), pp. 337-66. Cf. Jones, *Democracy*, p. 52: "In general . . . democrats tended like Aristotle to regard the laws as a code laid down once for all by a wise legislator . . . which, immutable in principle, might occasionally require to be clarified or supplemented". The "rule of law" is a complicated subject on its own, but it is not the subject of this paper. Nor is the evaluation of individual demagogues, e.g. Cleon, on whom see most recently A. G. Woodhead, "Thucydides' Portrait of Cleon", *Mnemosyne*, 4th ser., xiii (1960), pp. 289-317; A. Andrewes, "The Mytilene Debate", to appear in a forthcoming issue of *The Phoenix*.

[40] "The History of Freedom in Antiquity", in *Essays on Freedom and Power*, ed. G. Himmelfarb, (London, 1956), p. 64. The paradox can be extended: in reviewing Grote, John Stuart Mill wrote about the years leading up to the oligarchic coups of 411 and 404: "The Athenian Many, of whose democratic irritability and suspicion we hear so much, are rather to be accused of too easy and good-natured a confidence, when we reflect that they had living in the midst of them the very men who, on the first show of an opportunity, were ready to compass the subversion of the democracy . . . .": *Dissertations and Discussions*, ii (London, 1859), p. 540.

FINLEY

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To [illegible]
with good wishes
[illegible]

REVIEWS AND DISCUSSIONS

ARTHUR E. R. BOAK, *MANPOWER SHORTAGE AND THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1955. Pp. VII + 169. 36*s*.

This little book is wholly given over to arguing a thesis, and the first response among reviewers and students has been very favourable. The thesis has two parts: (1) The population of the Roman Empire, 'never excessive . . ., began to suffer a general decline from the middle of the second century. This decline in turn created a shortage of manpower which was rendered still more acute' in the third century (p. 21). (2) Manpower shortage in its turn was a main factor in the fall of Rome, defined as 'the gradual disintegration of the Roman Empire in Italy, western Europe, and north Africa' (p. 1).

Here and there a cautious disclaimer is dropped into the discussion. Thus, the possibility is noted that manpower shortage 'might or might not coincide with, and be the result of, a general decline in population which would be defined as depopulation' (pp. 1–2). With similar caution, Boak writes (p. 109): 'Let me make it clear . . . that I do not believe there was any single major cause of this collapse, but rather a combination of conditions, forces, and trends which interacted upon one another so that at times it is almost impossible to tell which was cause and which was effect.' Nevertheless, the book is so single-minded in its stress on declining population and manpower shortage, that it is fair to ignore the disclaimers and to deal with the bipartite thesis in its bluntest formulation. That is how reviewers have proceeded, and rightly so. For example, Édouard Will finds himself drawn to the conclusion that 'it was not the policy of the late Empire which was responsible for the shortage of personnel but the other way round' (*Ant. Class.* XXV, 1956, 219–21). Every weakness of the late Empire, even every complaint—*agri deserti*, the troubles of the curials, compulsory labour service, army recruitment difficulties, the importation of Germans for military and agricultural purposes, brigandage, poverty, heavy taxation—is directly tied to manpower shortage. Professor Boak is frequently ambiguous about which is cause and which is consequence, and often the connection rests on his bare assertion, but the total effect is always unmistakably in one direction: from manpower shortage to social, political, and economic breakdown.

As a picture of the decline of the western Empire, the book offers a considerable accumulation of data. How valuable a collection it is, or how complete or accurate, need not detain us, because that is not where the importance of the work lies (either in intent or in performance). Admittedly much of the material is well known and accessible in various standard works. What makes the presentation significant is solely the focus. Either Professor Boak has made out a reasonable case for his thesis or he has not: that is the only question to be considered. To do so, it is necessary to examine not only the two parts of his thesis, but also his method.

I. The prime difficulty which Boak faces is, of course, the lack of figures. His opening pages offer a sound and useful reminder that our disability in this respect is total. As he says in a note, 'it is quite impossible to calculate with even approximate exactness the population of the city of Rome in ancient times' (p. 135), let alone the population of the Empire or its component regions, or the movements of population. This does not mean that oblique approaches are useless or invalid. Lacking statistics, we must try to get at the problem from other kinds of evidence, which may suggest trends and consequences even though they can never reveal the actual magnitude or rate of population change. Boak rests his case on two interlocking bases: (1) documentary and archaeological evidence which he believes indicates both a declining population and a severe shortage of manpower, and (2) the 'known population history of other countries and . . . the laws of population trends worked out by specialists in demography' (p. 21). It is this use of the comparative method which requires careful examination before the thesis itself can be tested.

In the West, Boak argues, the declining population trend was 'already . . . noticeable at the accession of Septimius Severus in 193' and it continued thereafter in a more or less unbroken, accelerating line. His evidence and arguments include (pp. 9–21): (1) life expectancy figures; (2) analogies from the history of China and medieval England; (3) the failure of the slave population to 'maintain itself, much less expand', hence the failure to build up 'an internal population pressure'; (4) the general 'absence of any population pressures' in the Roman world; (5) 'the refusal of the upper and middle classes to raise large families and often even to marry'; (6) the shortage of army recruits; (7) 'the impoverishment which made itself so widely felt'; (8) plague, civil war, and invasions; and (9) the fact that 'there is simply no evidence . . . for any substantial rise in population after 284'. It is obvious that all these arguments, crowded into a dozen octavo pages, are not developed at much length. It is also obvious that, of itself, most of this, even if valid as a picture of the late Roman world, tells us nothing whatever about the size of population or its movement. The heart of the argument is the life-expectancy analysis, without which the author himself would probably place little confidence in the remaining points.

It may be taken as proved that 'the duration of life in the Roman Empire corresponded to what is known as the Oriental pattern, illustrated by Egypt, India, and China, and not to the Occidental pattern, found in Italy, France, England, and the United States' (p. 10). But this is equally true for the whole of antiquity, and indeed for all pre-industrial society, that is, all of Europe down to the latter half of the eighteenth century and much of the rest of the world into the twentieth century. What follows? 'One extremely important result of such studies,' says Boak (p. 9), 'is the demonstration that only in the course of the last two centuries have European countries experienced any really great increase in population.' This is simply untrue. Boak's authority for the statement, W. F. Willcox, does not say this at all, but only that the great increase in average length of life 'has come within the last two centuries'. And two pages farther on, Boak himself gives figures purporting to show that the population of England more than trebled between 1086 and 1345. Furthermore, since low life expectancy was a constant throughout antiquity, it is elementary logic that such a factor cannot explain the downward movements in ancient population if there were also upswings. Boak does not deny that the population within the territory of the Roman Empire was greater at the time of Augustus, let us say, than it had been five centuries earlier. Therefore, unless it can be demonstrated that there was a significant downward change in the life expectancy figures (not just in the population totals) in the later Empire, these figures of themselves are virtually irrelevant. No such demonstration is offered.

Instead, we are given some parallels from medieval England and from China; more precisely, from the views of two scholars, one for each country. The English data are taken exclusively from the work of Josiah Cox Russell, and their authority is by no means unchallenged (see, e.g., the wholly negative judgment of the reviewer in the *Eng. Hist. Rev.* LXIV, 1949, 389). Indeed, if a recent critique of his method stands up (J. Krause, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser. IX, 1957, 420–32), all his calculations and tables simply collapse. And at best, not even Russell's admirers will endorse the 'it-has-been-shown' certainty with which Boak adduces his conclusions. For China, Boak rests everything on a short work of Ta Chen, *Population in Modern China* (Chicago 1946; also published as no. 1, part 2 of vol. LII of the *Amer. Jour. Sociology*). More precisely, Boak rests far more on this book than the author himself claims for it. Elsewhere the latter explains that, for China, 'the information now extant is woefully incomplete and generally inaccurate . . . the scientific study of China's population problems should no longer be delayed' (*Population Studies* I, 1947–48, 342). Ta Chen's tentative cyclical theory, even if correct, will not bear the weight Boak puts on it (and it may well be wrong, or at least inadequate: see A. J. Jaffe, ibid., 308–37).

Why China and medieval Britain (and *only* China and medieval Britain) in any event? 'In the light of the shortness of life expectancy in the Roman Empire and because of the lack of any evidence of overpopulation, one must conclude that its population pattern conformed to that of medieval and early modern Europe rather than to that of Europe in the last two centuries' (p. 16). That means that more modern western demographic parallels are to be avoided, but it still does not explain the particular choices for comparison, which were made, I am compelled to believe, because they seem to suit the argument. 'Periods of any marked increase have been the exception rather than the rule,' Boak writes (p. 14). 'It is generally agreed, for example, that in China there has been no material rise in population during the last one hundred years.' For this he cites p. 3 of Ta Chen's book, but he fails to indicate that Willcox, the authority for the remark, also estimated that the population of China *had multiplied fivefold* in the preceding two hundred years, 1650–1850. Ta Chen thinks that ratio is too high and he prefers Carr-Saunders' calculation, an increase of 300 per cent, as 'more reasonable' (op. cit., 5–6). Willcox made the further calculation that in the past century, when China's population was stationary, the whole of Asia went up by 300,000,000 (R. R. Kuczynski, *Population Movements*, Oxford 1936, 6–7). A large part of that increase occurred in India, where, according to figures Boak himself gives (p. 132 n. 26), life expectancy has been substantially lower than in China.

By basing his whole structure on life expectancy, Boak has managed to give an aura of scientific demography to his otherwise transparently speculative account of the population trend of the later Roman Empire. How successful he has been is seen in the reviews which have already appeared. With only three exceptions that I could discover, the refrain is, 'He employs with skill and prudent understanding the methods and results of modern demographic studies . . . .' (W. Ensslin, *Byz. Z.* XLIX, 1956, 122). It is necessary to stress, therefore, that demographers do not pretend to be able to deduce long-term trends from life expectancy figures. For that, they require some way to get at the reproduction rate, and that cannot even be guessed at for antiquity. Low life expectancy obviously restricts the rate of reproduction by the mere fact that a large percentage of women do not live through the entire period in which they are biologically fertile. Given that limit, however, in a stable life-expectancy pattern (whether high or low) the reproduction rate can vary greatly from generation to generation, according to many factors. The argument must proceed from those factors to the population curve, not the other way round.

It is a dangerous illusion to speak, as Boak does, of 'the laws of population trends' (p. 21). Modern demography is above all a highly refined technique of statistical analysis. In so far as it has discovered 'laws', they are solely in the form, 'If all the relevant factors remain unchanged, the present rate of reproduction in a given society will lead to an increase (or decrease) in the population of X per cent in Y years,' or of various corollaries that follow from this archetype. Such conclusions result from complex analysis because there is nothing more misleading with respect to population trends than raw census figures, including the raw mortality figures on which Boak lays all his stress. (For the layman, a good introduction on this general point is D. V. Glass, *The Struggle for Population*, Oxford 1936, ch. I.) No analysis, however, no matter how subtle, permits such a conclusion as this (p. 113): 'Once the birth rate of a people starts to decline, it continues to do so in a geometrical and not merely an arithmetical ratio.' Demographic laws of so universal and abstract a character simply do not exist. Boak erroneously attributes this 'law' to the late Adolphe Landry (p. 23 of the article cited in the next paragraph) by mistaking a simple statistical model for a demographic trend. Moreover, had he read the same page more carefully, he would have found in it a clear statement of the fallacy implicit in the attempt to deduce trends from mere life expectancy figures. (Curiously, A. Grenier, who anticipated Boak's thesis and marshalled a great deal of the same material as evidence in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, ed. T. Frank, III, Baltimore 1937, makes much the same statement on p. 575 about a geometric rate of decline, although he does not cite Landry at that particular point.)

The spirit of Landry permeates Boak's work. 'I should like to single out as particularly valuable the article of Adolphe Landry, "Quelques aperçus concernant la dépopulation dans l'antiquité gréco-romaine" [*Rev. hist.* CLXXVII, 1936, 1–33], . . . because of the use he has made of modern demographic methods in his study' (pp. 15–16). Landry was a serious student of French population, but never in his life, to my knowledge, did he make a proper study of ancient demography. The article which Boak singles out (and which he cites eight or nine times) is, in the author's own words, 'ce travail incomplet, imparfait, où la conjecture tient une grande place' (ibid. 33). This is an understatement: the article is purely conjectural and speculative, despite an occasional reference to a Greek or Roman source and even fewer references to modern scholarship. The main intent of the article was to buttress the author's gloomy views on the future of France, for Landry was a leading example of the well-known twentieth-century French obsession with the *crise de natalité* (see generally J. J. Spengler, *France Faces Depopulation*, Duke University 1938). Taken alone, such an article is a very shaky foundation indeed for 'laws', as Boak uses it at several key points (pp. 14, 17, 113, 160 n. 2).

One test case will have to suffice. 'Normally,' Boak writes (p. 17), 'a slave population tends to die out, and Roman slaves were no exception to this rule.' His authority is Landry, and what Landry offers, it turns out, is only speculation about the non-fecundity of slaves, without a single piece of evidence (op. cit. 4–7).* Evidence is available. In the United States, the Negro slave population at the date of the abolition of the slave trade was probably more than double the total number of Negroes imported into the country from the beginning. Hence the natural increase among the slaves was considerable. After the slave trade was abolished, the supply was successfully maintained by breeding. In Jamaica, on the other hand, the slave population never reproduced itself, although it nearly did, once the trade was abolished (Kuczynski, op. cit. 8–17; George W. Roberts, *The Population of Jamaica*, Cambridge 1957, ch. 7). Which of the two is the 'normal' pattern? The answer is that there is no universal law of slave population trends, and the lack of evidence regarding Roman slaves cannot be overcome by invoking a 'law'. (In a note to the sentence quoted, Boak writes: 'On the unusually high death rate among imperial slaves, Burn, op. cit., p. 9.' But death rate is not rate of reproduction. Furthermore, what Burn is referring to, in *Past and Present* no. 4, 1953, is only the slaves and freedmen in 'the no doubt pestilential city of Carthage', and Boak himself argues repeatedly, and probably correctly, that excessive mortality was the rule in such urban communities, among the free as well as the unfree.) Even Landry concedes that the Romans attempted to breed slaves when the imported supply dried up. 'Without any great success,' says Boak. But how does he know? His two authorities, Landry and Seeck, offer no proof. Nor is the tendency for slavery as an institution to die out any evidence, for that merely shifts the question from the fertility of slaves to the fertility of ex-slaves and *coloni*, and leaves untouched the question of the rate at which the agricultural population did or did not reproduce itself.

What follows from all this—with respect to method—is that the use of parallels and analogies requires controls which Boak has failed to exercise. 'It is justifiable,' he writes (p. 9) 'to make use of the known population trends among such peoples in attempting to trace the demographic history of the Roman Empire'. By 'such peoples' he means, according to the sentence which precedes the one I have quoted, 'other peoples living in a comparable cultural atmosphere'. I fail to find a single argument in the book which, on this test, warrants the selection of China and medieval England as

* See also below, p. 166.—ED

suitable models for the later Roman Empire. The social, economic, political, and psychological conditions were too different, and hence the premises are lacking for any comparison.

II. After his opening chapter, Boak proceeds on the assumption that the continuing decline in population is a datum. In discussing the army, for example, he writes : '. . . as I hope I have demonstrated, . . . the rural population . . . was still in process of recession' (p. 93). This is repeated, in one way or another, with reference to the rural population, the urban population, and government services (the three substantive chapters of the book). Then, by what amounts to circular reasoning, he intimates in the summary chapter that his account of *agri deserti*, the curials, and so on, has somehow strengthened the original thesis. It is here at the end, in fact, that he first presents his law of decline in geometric progression. But if there is neither contemporary evidence nor valid comparative argument for the view in the initial presentation, nothing which follows lends it any support. We may therefore ignore the point hereafter (except incidentally) and turn to the second part of the thesis, the operative role of manpower shortage in the fall of the western Empire. As Boak correctly says, this part of his argument need not stand or fall with the first : in principle, there can be manpower shortage with a stationary, or even a rising, population.

It is obviously a tautology to say that whenever a government (or 'society') sets a goal which is not fulfilled for lack of men, the failure is the consequence of a manpower shortage. At any moment, every society has a given number of men and a given number of roles, and only in a society administered by archangels will the allocation of the men to the roles be perfectly achieved. Some dislocation—whether shortage or surplus—is inevitable. Merely to pin the label on is not very interesting. The questions deserving of study are those which penetrate behind the ratio : how extensive is the dislocation and what are its consequences ? How was the dislocation brought about (*sharply*—by crisis, for example, as in world war or great plague ; or *gradually*—by an accumulation of socio-political developments, as in the growing bureaucratisation of the Roman Empire) ? What measures, if any, are being taken to re-establish an equilibrium, and with what success? And so on.

In my examination of Professor Boak's account, I shall take the simple choice he poses at the beginning of the book : 'My interest in the problem . . . has been aroused to new activity by the recent suggestion of a prominent historian that there was an acute shortage of manpower from the end of the third century, which was caused, not by a decline in population, but rather by the increased demand for suitable personnel' (p. 2). The reference is to A. H. M. Jones's London inaugural, *Ancient Economic History* (1948). 'This is an attractive theory,' Boak continues. 'I doubt, however, that it can be substantiated.' And Boak, as we have seen, proposes the reverse sequence : declining population, hence manpower shortage, hence breakdown. The choice between Jones and Boak, put in this way, is an oversimplification, but it will serve our present concern sufficiently. In making it, I pass no judgment on the ultimate usefulness of Jones's own view of the importance of manpower shortage, even in his limited definition (op. cit., 19)—'the excessive number of idle mouths'; nor do I propose to deny that there had been a drop in numbers from Augustus to Constantine. My sole interest here is in the analytical tool Boak offers us : is it a good one or not ?

Army recruitment (to which Boak devotes nearly twenty pages of a total text of only 129 pages) is a fair test. First Boak considers the size of the army and concludes (cautiously and with reserve) that on Diocletian's accession it numbered about 400,000 and that it was increased in the fourth century by about 150,000. These figures, he argues rather obscurely, imply a new recruiting load on the rural population in the West of 'only about 40,000 men in addition to the regular replacements' (pp. 85–94). That requirement was not met easily, for landlords and peasants alike were hostile, the former because they disliked the loss of labour power, the latter because they preferred civilian life. Therefore the emperors resorted to impressment, recruiting of slaves and barbarians, the imposition of hereditary obligations of service upon descendants of veterans (pp. 92–8). For Professor Boak there is a simple explanation for all this, so obvious that he is content merely to assert it : 'Shortage of manpower offers the best explanation of the methods of recruitment employed in the Late Empire' (p. 94).

Boak has apparently overlooked one of the main threads in military history. As G. L. Cheesman phrased it in opening his work on the *auxilia* (Oxford, 1914, 7) : 'The extent to which a ruling race can safely use the military resources of its subjects and the effect on both parties of such a relation' is a question 'of universal historical interest'. The history of armies cannot be separated from the social, economic, and political pattern. Both ruler and ruled have had strong (and not always consistent) views on military service : who bore arms was a very serious matter, the decision involved complex and delicate calculations, and the story cannot be reduced to a simple function of the number of citizens, or inhabitants, or men. More often than not in the past, governments have resorted to the very devices which, when employed by fourth-century Roman emperors, lead Boak to say triumphantly : Here is proof that manpower shortage lay at the root of the evil. If so, the history of armies prior to the nineteenth century (and sometimes beyond) is nothing but a history of manpower shortage—a *reductio ad absurdum*.

In the early eighteenth century, Frederick William I doubled the Prussian military establishment, making it the fourth largest in Europe while his country ranked tenth in territory and thirteenth in population. To accomplish this, 'he resorted increasingly to the impressment of his own subjects and to recruiting— . . . at times indistinguishable from kidnapping—in neighbouring states' (Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640–1945*, Oxford, 1955, 8). When this procedure proved inadequate, he shifted to the so-called 'canton system', which rested on a principle of universal military obligation with selective service. The army was then composed two thirds of natives, only one third of foreigners. Frederick the Great, however, 'set out deliberately to reverse that ratio' and he stated his reason most explicitly : 'useful hardworking people should be guarded as the apple of one's eye, and in wartime recruits should be levied in one's own country only when the bitterest necessity compels' (ibid., 22–3). The officer corps, on the other hand, was to be purely Prussian ; indeed, purely noble Prussian. This transformation came precisely 'in a period in which Prussian population and territory were growing' (ibid., 23). Examples of similar thinking abound in early modern absolutisms. (A useful survey is given by V. G. Kiernan, 'Foreign Mercenaries and Absolute Monarchy', *Past and Present* no. 11, 1957, 66–86.) And not only in absolutisms. 'The British soldier remained an expensive article whose price advanced despite the growth of population' (Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism*, N.Y. 1937, 153). The press gang was a familiar enough feature in English naval recruiting during the Napoleonic Wars, in the very decades when the population was increasing at a rate unprecedented in the whole of history.

It is the wholesale recruiting of Germans, in particular, upon which Boak places his heaviest stress. This was an 'immediate cause of the disintegration of the Western Empire' (p. 116). By itself, this 'very fact' of barbarian recruitment reveals the critical manpower shortage, for otherwise such a policy, which was 'initiated by Marcus Aurelius' with the Marcomanni (p. 115), would not have been tolerated. 'It cannot be imagined that the imperial government was unaware of the dangers' (p. 97, repeated on p. 115). What the dangers were Boak does not say, nor does he cite texts to justify the view that the emperors (or other contemporaries) believed there were dangers. Presumably the danger is self-evident ; it inheres in the word 'barbarian' and in their not being 'assimilated into the Roman citizen body. A vigorous and expanding population could have absorbed them, but not the enfeebled and discouraged one of the Late Empire' (p. 116). What saved the Eastern emperors was 'that they found a source of recruits in the Romanized population of the East with which to counterbalance their Germanic mercenaries' (p. 117). (I shall eventually return to this contrast with the East, which is a fatal flaw in the whole chain of reasoning. Here a note on sources is in point. On p. 117 Boak writes : 'Vegetius, in discussing the deficiency of suitable recruits, gives priority to decline of population over aversion to military life caused by urbanization.' Neither at 1.5, which Boak cites, nor anywhere else that I can discover, does Vegetius make any reference to, or even implication about, the dearth of population or the availability of a sufficient number of recruits.)

Bohemia, the Marcomannic centre, already played the 'leading cultural role . . . within the Germanic world' early in the first century. The archaeological record is of a 'particularly vigorous culture built up of Germanic, West-Celtic, Boian, provincial-Roman and purely Italic elements' (G. Ekholm, *CAH* XI, 57) ; and there is evidence of a relatively advanced social and political organization (E. A. Thompson, *Hermathena* no. 89, 1957, 26–7). Vague and unsubstantiated remarks about the dangers of 'barbarization' merely prejudice the issue. After all, Marcus Aurelius did not invent the use of barbarian soldiers ; among the *auxilia* the practice was common right back to the second century B.C. (Cheesman, op. cit. 8 ff.; nor was Marcus the first to use slaves in the army or to settle Germans on the land). The question then is : who assimilated whom and why ? 'A vigorous and expanding population could have absorbed them, but not the enfeebled and discouraged one of the Late Empire.' We may agree with Boak—despite his exaggeration of the degree to which these troops 'barbarized' the West—that the crucial change lay in social organization and psychology: the population was no longer 'vigorous' but 'enfeebled and discouraged' (provided the words are taken metaphorically, not in any literal biological sense). But what has 'expanding' to do with the issue ? Boak himself stresses the relatively small numbers of the German recruits and settlers (pp. 92, 161 n. 14), and there is no conceivable ground for injecting the Roman population curve into the discussion of social and cultural assimilation in this context. An expanding population need not be socially and culturally vigorous in the sense here indicated ; conversely, a stationary (or even declining) population is capable, under certain conditions, of great resistance and tenacity. The population of the western Empire would have had to fall to some ridiculously low figure before the demographic (i.e. arithmetical) explanation of the Germanic triumph by non-assimilation could become plausible.

The most important fact of all is that fourth-century armies, still predominantly composed of recruits from within the Empire, were considerably larger in the over-all than the armies of Augustus and his successors. In other words, the manpower demand upon the population had multiplied.

By making light of this increased demand—e.g., '*only* about 40,000 men' (p. 93, my italics)—and by stressing the failure to achieve full paper strength, Boak creates the image he seeks. If we take matters in their natural sequence, however, increased demand *preceded* partial failure, and therefore it is reasonable to hold that, other things being equal, 'the recruitment . . . of itself produce(d) such a critical shortage among the rural population that its presumed recovery from the losses of the period 235–84 was checked and instead was turned into a decline under pressure of government exactions and regimentation' (p. 91). Yet this view Boak rejects out of hand.

But other things were not equal—and I am not thinking of numbers of people, but of their condition. Near the end of the volume Professor Boak concedes (1) that 'there was a tendency for the landholder to supply recruits of inferior physique', and (2) that there was much shirking of military duty and frequent desertion, originating 'in the indifference of the *coloni* and other hereditary working groups toward the fate of a government which seemed to them more brutal in its exactions than did the barbarians' (p. 117). This explanation of what 'caused the emperors to depend to such a great extent upon barbarians', even if partial (and there is no attempt to estimate the relative importance), is something quite different from an assertion that 'shortage of manpower offers the best explanation of the methods of recruitment employed in the Late Empire'. Boak tries to merge the two by calling the landlords' reluctance to lose able-bodied men a 'lack of suitable men who could be spared from essential production'. However, this, as we have seen, is the universal dilemma of army recruitment, and of itself it tells us nothing about the content of the specific 'manpower shortage' under discussion. Furthermore, a *landlord's* reluctance to spare men from essential production is by no means identical with the *government's* concern with manpower allocation.

How manpower shortage was *created* comes out most clearly in the third chapter, 'The Urban Population'. Here Boak piles up a mass of well-known data and proves once again (though with his customary tendency to exaggerate) how excessive the government's demands were. The consequence was flight and evasion wherever possible, met by more and more pressure and by freezing men and their property to assigned, hereditary posts and duties. The logical sequence is so simple and obvious that one can do no more than marvel when Boak concludes the long, and largely unnecessary, chapter with this sentence : 'This amply confirms the view of an initial numerical deficiency and a progressive downward trend in the urban population of this period, which was deduced from other, more general, considerations' (p. 84). Neither the beginnings of the pattern of compulsion (about which we have no evidence at all) nor its fourth- and fifth-century developments demonstrate anything but (1) a dislocation of resources (rather than manpower) from the government's viewpoint, and (2) a failure to establish a workable balance between the demands of the government and the interests of the owners of the resources (but not nearly so great a failure to meet the government's demands as Boak pretends). To reduce all this to simple arithmetic—so many fixed and unchanging tasks, so many available hands—is to reduce everything to a meaningless formula.

III. There can be no disagreement with Professor Boak's judgment that the peasantry—whether free, unfree, or half-free—were in a generally unenviable position throughout the later Empire. What could a dissatisfied peasant do (legally or otherwise) ? Under certain conditions, he could join the army. 'It may seem contradictory,' says Boak (p. 98), 'in the face of the evidence presented with regard to manpower shortage in so many elements of the population to find it generally agreed among modern scholars that the majority of the recruits for the field units, at least, were secured by voluntary enlistment.' It is not the 'evidence' which is contradicted, however, but Boak's thesis (he does not challenge the role of enlistments, it should be noted). Only because he reduces all questions of choice of action to mere arithmetic—and, as we shall see, one-sided arithmetic at that—does he place himself in this kind of difficulty.

The same kind of mistake enters the analysis of the ratio (and relationship) between the urban and rural sectors. One of the laws Boak takes from his modern demographers is that 'in urban centres the birth rate tends to decline until it falls below the death rate', so that replacement must come 'through immigration from rural areas' (p. 14). In this instance he may be right in saying that 'this was true also of Roman urban centres'. When he comes to the decline of the cities, however, his thesis requires him to argue that the rural population of the later Empire was unable (not merely unwilling) to play its part as a recruiting ground, for otherwise the villain would not have been manpower shortage but something else. The 'impoverishment of the urban middle class', he writes (p. 111), 'can best be explained as a result of the impoverishment and decline of the surrounding rural population' (and for Boak, here as always, 'impoverishment' subsumes declining manpower). Then he adds an explanatory note, on the authority of Landry : 'In an agricultural economy flourishing urban communities can exist only when production greatly exceeds the needs of the producers.' This inflexible conception of a 'surplus' is a common one, and it is subject to the same objections as the conception of manpower shortage as a ratio which is arithmetically fixed by predetermined units of men and needs. (See H. W. Pearson, 'The Economy Has No Surplus : Critique of a Theory of

Development', *Trade and Markets in the Early Empires*, ed. Karl Polanyi *et al.*, Glencoe, Ill., 1957, ch. XVI.). There is no biologically fixed quantity of needs which must be met before the surplus can be turned over to non-producers, urban or rural. Stated differently, a surplus can be extended either by increasing productivity or by reducing the consumption of the primary producers. The latter—increased rents and taxes—has happened often enough in history, so that it is as legitimate (or illegitimate) to infer the presence of an affluent non-producing sector from the existence of an impoverished peasantry as it is to infer the opposite.

A second possible protest was to move from one landlord to another, in the hope of finding better conditions. With the almost total freezing of the peasantry to their estates, such movement was usually illegal. Yet it went on constantly (pp. 48–51). Third, the peasant could give up altogether and join the so-called brigands (native or German). But neither these forms of movement nor the government's opposition to them of themselves reveal anything about the demographic situation, valuable as they may be as indicators of a deep social and political dislocation. Mobility and brigandage are not incompatible with a declining population ; neither are they evidence of its presence, or of the existence of a manpower shortage in any meaningful sense of that term. 'The new and terrible problem' in Tudor England, writes R. H. Tawney (*The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century*, London 1912, 268), 'is the increase in vagrancy. The sixteenth century lived in terror of the tramp.' Yet that was an age when the population was certainly not declining, and when, indeed, many influential contemporaries were convinced that 'the realm was overpopulated' (E. E. Rich, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser. II, 1950, 247).

No one will deny that the plagues and disorders of the third century cut the population of the western Empire (though it is unnecessary to exaggerate to the point of saying, p. 38, that in Gaul 'the agricultural population had almost disappeared'). That is not the issue. 'The question to be answered is : Did rural Gaul experience a recovery from this devastation, and was its farming population restored to such an extent that it was able to meet the public and private demands upon agriculture ?' (p. 39—Boak is here talking only about Gaul, but, if his general thesis has any validity, the question must be extended to the whole West). 'If one were to rely solely' upon Ausonius, Sidonius, the *Expositio totius mundi*, and the fourth-century *laudationes*, 'he would have to answer this question in the affirmative.' Boak's own answer is nevertheless in the negative, for two reasons. Recovery might have come 'if the methods of agricultural operations then in vogue and the imperial fiscal system had been more favourable to the rise of a prosperous and contented class of small landholders, tenant farmers, and rural labourers' (p. 31; cf. p. 100). With this comment I can agree wholeheartedly. But that is merely Boak's shield against a possible charge of a one-cause explanation of the decline of the western Empire. Having made the point, in what amounts to an isolated passage unrelated to the essential argument of the book, he returns with his full arsenal of arguments to declining population and manpower shortage.

What he then proceeds to prove is, not that the farming population was unable 'to meet the public and private demands upon agriculture', but that the farmers remained poor, disgruntled, and rebellious (hence continued desertions, poor health, 'brigandage', etc.), and that the imperial structure grew weaker, more topheavy, and more corrupt (which is not the question at all). Boak takes an altogether peculiar (and slightly equivocal) view of the connection between size of population and poverty. He calls brigandage 'that symptom of an impoverished and fugitive rural population' (p. 46). Elsewhere he writes (p. 74): 'In Roman economic life a decrease in prosperity was intimately related to a falling off in the number of persons engaged in production and distribution.' In their language, both statements evade the issue of priority, as between manpower, production, and prosperity, but another passage brings us close to the false sequence : 'In the Roman world production depended upon hand labour. Impoverishment meant a decline in production ; this in turn implied a shortage of labour, rural or urban or both' (p. 18). Either Boak believes that manpower shortage led to poverty or he is here arguing against himself. The position he rejects, we must remember, is that 'the population did not increase because the heavy burden of taxation, due to the excessive and increasing number of idle mouths which the empire supported, did not leave enough to the peasants to rear sufficient children' (A. H. M. Jones, *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd ser. IX, 1956, 381). Yet all the material he adduces on the failure of the agricultural populations to recover *economically* supports that thesis, not his own.

Manpower, Professor Boak forgets, is only one element in the economy. And he forgets, too, that men are consumers as well as producers, that fewer men mean fewer working hands, but also fewer consuming mouths. The economic consequences of a drastic drop in population will differ according to what has happened, at the same time, to land and capital. They will vary, too, according to how the changes have affected town and country. In the later Middle Ages, for example, the radically depleted agricultural population continued to migrate to the urban centres, where, despite disproportionately heavy losses from the Black Death and subsequent plagues, great wealth and production continued very much in evidence, as in the rich and extensive buildings, public and

private, of the fifteenth century (see F. Lütge, 'Das 14./15. Jahrhundert in der Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte', *Jb. f. Nationalök. u. Stat.* CLXII, 1950, 161–213). Merely to invoke a formula, manpower shortage—declining production—impoverishment, will explain neither the fifteenth century nor the very different fourth (or fifth) century. A difficult and sophisticated analysis is necessary, involving prices, wages, productivity—and social and political factors too—before even tentative relationships can be established. Precisely this problem, in its connection with the Black Death, is now the subject of long and still unsettled discussion among medievalists (conveniently set out in articles by Lütge, Abel, and Postan in the *Jb. f. Nationalök. u. Stat.* for 1950, 1953, and 1954, respectively). Although Boak has made use of mortality calculations from this period, under the mistaken notion that his problem is a demographic one, his book shows no signs that he has considered the far more pertinent literature in economic history, or the issues they define.

We are now in a position to turn to shrinking agricultural production, revealed in a number of ways, in particular by the evidence regarding *agri deserti*. Even after we allow for Boak's considerable exaggerations—e.g., his failure to acknowledge that it is in the interest of landowners to have their estates classed as *agri deserti* and thus to obtain tax remission ; his tacit assumption that once abandoned, land remained so for ever ; or his characteristic arguments from silence : 'if this was the situation in Campania, . . . conditions in other districts must have been even worse' (p. 47)—the fact cannot be denied that a not inconsiderable quantity of arable had gone out of cultivation in the West by (and during) the fourth century. Boak, as we have seen, thinks this somehow undermines the picture of 'a rich and cultivated society supported by vast estates' which we find in Ausonius, Sidonius, and other sources. He replaces that picture by its opposite, 'a general breakdown of the agricultural system in the western half of the Roman world' (p. 52). Everyone 'suffered . . . from a creeping paralysis in agriculture attributable in large part to . . . *raritas colonorum*' (p. 54).

There is a basic confusion here between total production in the Empire and the wealth of individuals. It flies in the face of a mass of evidence to pretend that the land-owning nobility of the fourth century was suffering. Boak realizes that he is in difficulties because efforts to increase one's landholdings continued unabated, and his attempt to explain that away (pp. 52–3) is too lame to bear repetition. There is no contemporary evidence that I know which says that arable was abandoned because labour was unavailable. Nevertheless, I am prepared to believe that this factor did play a part. In fact, the *agri deserti* are virtually the only ground for accepting a decline in the total population (but not a continuous decline, which is something quite different). But when Professor Boak speaks of a 'creeping paralysis in agriculture attributable in large part to *raritas colonorum*', he is being both wilful and erroneous : wilful because that ignores the endless talk—and it cannot all be idle—about heavy taxation and too burdensome exactions ; erroneous because he forgets that a shrinkage of the arable, when it accompanies a decline in the number of consumers, is not of itself a sign of private impoverishment or crisis, or even necessarily of public crisis.

The North African situation is particularly illuminating. That district provides a few of the rare figures for abandoned and delinquent holdings, and they are relatively very high (pp. 44–6, and especially n. 76). But they are also relatively late. Boak concedes that this part of the Empire 'enjoyed prosperous conditions with a rural population that increased or certainly held its own until the disorders of the third century. In spite of devastation due to civil war and the rebellions and invasions of native tribes in the period 235 to 284, prosperity continued in various areas into the fourth century' (pp. 44–5). Why ? The African provinces, by coincidence, provide the best material for Roman life-expectancy calculations. How was this region able to escape the laws of demography ? Boak completely ignores this problem and is satisfied merely to write, in his final summation: 'But these favourable conditions were due to special circumstances and cannot be made the basis for generalizations about Italy and the western provinces as a whole' (p. 112). He does not even suggest what the favourable circumstances were. Nor does he fully reveal the range of exceptions: Aquitania, for example (see, e.g., Salvian, *De gub. Dei* 7.8), or Britain, with its countryside flourishing and still expanding for a long time after the failure of urbanism in the fourth century (R. G. Collingwood and J. N. L. Myres, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1937, 213–17 ; Boak's account, pp. 36–8, is nothing but a desperate attempt to turn white into black).

The mere acknowledgement that there were significant (and at times even decisive) variables in the picture is sufficient to undermine Boak's whole structure of argument. And we have seen that this is not the only such instance in the book. It remains to notice one other example, the most destructive of all. The whole of Boak's argument, in its details as well as in its broad sweep, applies equally to the eastern Empire. He himself notes that the great plague of 250–270 'probably struck the eastern provinces more heavily than the western' (p. 26). The chief devil in the story, the plague of the time of Marcus Aurelius, may also have originated in the East (SHA *Verus* 8). Boak also concedes that 'the West bore a lighter load than the East in meeting the new (army) levies' (p. 92). There is good evidence to show that in the Aegean islands and Asia Minor, 'the registered agricultural population was very thin on the ground according to ancient standards, . . . and well under half the minimum for

efficient cultivation as reckoned by (ancient) agricultural experts' (A. H. M. Jones, *JRS* XLIII, 1953, 57). And so on. Yet the eastern Empire did not 'fall'. Only once does Boak face the problem, when he explains that the eastern emperors avoided the disaster of a barbarized army by finding 'a source of recruits in the Romanized population of the East with which to counterbalance their Germanic mercenaries' (p. 117). This will not do. If manpower shortage was the key to every difficulty from the third century on, including army recruitment, by what magic were the eastern emperors able to discover manpower which did not exist? Stated in general terms, if manpower shortage did not bring down the eastern Empire, it is not the key to the fall of the western Empire. (On this basic problem, see N. H. Baynes, 'The Decline of the Roman Power in Western Europe: Some Modern Explanations', *JRS* XXXIII, 1943, 29–35; reprinted in his *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*, London 1955, ch. v.)

IV. The short of it is that population is never an independent variable. We can understand how a severe plague or great war brings about an immediate reduction, or how improved sanitation and greater medical knowledge change the average age of death. But these tell us nothing about long-term trends. Professor Boak does not seem to have asked himself what causes a population to rise or fall over a long period. Apart from the brief and not very helpful life-expectancy analysis, his account simply assumes some kind of inevitability—in this instance, inevitably downwards. He is right to insist that population *is* a factor, and to protest against the prevailing indifference among historians of antiquity. That is a service. But with it goes a danger, that his way of insisting, and in particular his pretended scientific laws, will satisfy the longing for neat solutions. Declining population will then take the place of soil exhaustion and race mixture, to become the fashionable explanation of the '50s and '60s of the fall of Rome.

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