

THE ATHENIAN UPPER CLASS AND NEW COMEDY

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The upper class in Classical Athens, particularly during the 4th century B.C. when the evidence of the orators can be brought to bear, has received considerable attention, from Boeckh's pioneering efforts in 1840 to a recent excellent chapter by A. H. M. Jones.¹ Today we are in a position to draw a more detailed picture, thanks in good part to the invaluable "social register" of Classical Athens compiled by J. K. Davies² and to the newly discovered plays of Menander,³ which enable us to identify the class that figures most importantly in Greek New Comedy and properly apply its evidence. We can define with greater precision who were the wealthy, what their fortune consisted of, how much income they derived from it, and how this affected their style of life.

¹ A. Boeckh, *Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener* (Berlin 1886³) i, 560–623; "The Social Structure of Athens in the Fourth-Century B.C.," first published in *Economic History Review* 8 (1955) 141–55 and reprinted in *Athenian Democracy* (Oxford 1957) 75–96, cited hereafter as Jones. There is much relevant information in M. Finley, *Studies in Land and Credit in Ancient Athens, 500–200 B.C.* (New Brunswick 1952), cited hereafter as Finley.

² *Athenian Propertied Families, 600–300 B.C.* (Oxford 1971), cited hereafter as Davies. Aside from the orators, Davies' chief source of information is epigraphy. For the fifth century the most illuminating inscriptions are the group that records the sale of property confiscated from Alcibiades and others condemned in 415/14 for mutilating the Herms and profaning the Eleusinian mysteries. They have been published by W. K. Pritchett: "The Attic Stelai," Part I (texts) *Hesperia* 22 (1953) 225–99, Part II (analysis and commentary) *Hesperia* 25 (1956) 178–317. For the fourth century the most illuminating are those that list leases of mining properties in the Laurium area. They have been published and analyzed by M. Crosby: "The Leases of the Laureion Mines," *Hesperia* 19 (1950) 189–312 and "More Fragments of Mining Leases from the Athenian Agora," *Hesperia* 26 (1957) 1–23.

³ *Menandri reliquiae selectae*, ed. F. Sandbach (OCT 1972); *The Plays of Menander*, trans. L. Casson (New York 1971).

I

Ideally we ought to treat the whole of Athenian society and not just its upper levels. Unfortunately, the only members we know to any extent are, first, those who were affluent enough to hire the likes of Demosthenes, Lysias, and Isaeus for their incessant squabbling about money, and whose property, income, family relations, and the like, emerge in the speeches written for their pleadings in court, and, second, those affluent enough to be reflected in Greek New Comedy, whose practitioners were no more interested in Athens' poor than Molière or Feydeau in Paris'. These two sources provide a fairly broad spectrum that ranges from the invalid who engaged Lysias to defend his right to a state dole of an obol a day (Lysias 24) or the pennypinching protagonist of Menander's *Dyskolos* to Demosthenes' immensely rich client Phormio (Demosthenes 36). Within it are those to whom Davies by and large limits his register, namely the men the state felt free to call upon to subsidize its military and festival expenses; as Davies cogently demonstrates (xx-xxxi), the performing of liturgies provides an eminently workable criterion for distinguishing Athens' upper class.

So far as we can tell, a fortune of 3 or 4 talents made a man a liturgist,⁴ marked him, in other words, as a well-to-do Athenian. How many such were there? And what percentage of the total population did they form? Fourth-century Athens probably had some 21,000 adult male citizens.⁵ In 322 Antipater forced the city to adopt a property qualification for citizenship, and 12,000 who were worth 20 minae or less were dropped from the rolls.⁶ Thus, in the thinking of the time, 20 minae was the poverty line: below it were the people too poor to be trusted with a share in running the state. Jones (76-84) reckons, and his figures cannot be far off, that the next highest bracket consisted of some 3000 with property between 20 and 25 minae, a figure that meant, for a peasant, a small farm of perhaps 6 acres, for an artisan, a shop with perhaps 5 to 6 slave assistants, enough to ensure a living, but not very much more. Above these, Jones calculates, were some 6000 whom

⁴ Davies xxiv. Jones (86) suggests 2 talents or even less, but, as we shall see, that is impossibly low. 1 talent = 6000 drachmae or 60 minae (1 mina = 100 drachmae).

⁵ The census taken by Demetrius of Phalerum (317-307 B.C.) produced this figure (Athenaeus 6.272c), and it squares with whatever other evidence can be brought to bear; see Jones 76.

⁶ Plut. *Phocion* 28.7 and Diodorus 18.18.4-5; cf. Jones 77.

the Athenians considered sufficiently well off to contribute to the *eisphora*, the sporadically imposed wartax.

A man worth 25 minae may have had the money to pay wartax, but, with a mere margin of 5 minae between him and the poverty line, he can hardly be considered well-to-do. We must now leave the lower brackets and start working down from the top. Here we have a most useful figure: the 1200 who, by the naval law of 357/6, were required to undertake the trierarchy. This liturgy, the maintaining of a warship at sea for a year, even when split between a pair of syntrierarchs, ran to at least 20 minae and often a good deal more; thus it was one of the most expensive state burdens, and the 1200 selected to bear it must have been Athens' wealthiest. As time went on it turned out to be too hard on many of them, so Demosthenes got the law changed to limit those liable to a select circle of 300.⁷ These 300, then, were the topmost bracket, with the 900 others forming a bracket just below them; 5 talents put a man among the 900 (Isaeus 7.19, 31-32, 42), possibly somewhat less. Then there appears to have been a third bracket which included those with fortunes around the 3 to 4 talent minimum that qualified a man to be a liturgist; they would be called upon for less expensive burdens than the trierarchy, for a dithyrambic chorus at the Panathenaea, for example, which cost as little as 3 minae (Davies xxi). How many were in this bracket we have no idea; it necessarily numbered not more than 4800 (the 6000 eligible for wartax less the 1200 eligible for the trierarchy) and certainly very much fewer.

Even within the Three Hundred there was great variation. In its upper reaches were the Rockefellers and Onassises of the age. Lysias at one point (19.46-48) reels off examples of the reputedly greatest fortunes. There was Callias (the man who married Cimon's sister) who valued his property at 200 talents (we know from other sources—Andocides 1.130, Isocrates 16.31—that his son Hipponicus passed for the richest man in Greece). There was Nicias who was worth 100, and Ischomachus (the hero of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*; see Davies 267) worth 70. Lysias quotes the figures only to throw doubt on them (and Jones [87] follows his lead), but there is no need for skepticism; such fortunes, no question about it, did exist. Oeonias, who

⁷ Naval law, Dem. 14.16-17; cost of liturgies, Davies xxi-xxii; Demosthenes' amended law, Jones 88 and 151, note 53.

fled when revealed to have been involved in the scandal of the Herms and Mysteries in 415 and whose properties as a result were confiscated and sold, owned lands in Euboea that alone brought the state 81 talents and 20 minae (*Hesperia* 22 [1953] 254, lines 311-14). Only the chance discovery of the inscription recording the sale has revealed that this obscure personage was one of Athens' wealthiest; there surely were others who have so far escaped history's notice. The estate of the banker Pasion was at least 65 talents (Dem. 36.5-6; cf. Davies 431-35). Lysias' family—he was a metic, but that is irrelevant in this context—had property worth 70 talents (*P. Oxy.* 1606.30; cf. Davies 589). Conon's earnings as a condottiere enabled him to leave an estate of 40 (Lysias 19.40). A Euthycrates mentioned by Hyperides (4.34) was worth more than 60, the Onetor who worked hand in glove with Demosthenes' guardian Aphobus over 30 (Dem. 30.10). Even 15 talents set a man well inside the Three Hundred, for this was the size of the estate alleged to have been left by Demosthenes' father, and the orator claimed that, for tax purposes, it put him in a class with such manifestly wealthy men as Conon's son Timotheus.⁸ How much less than 15 talents was the minimum for inclusion in the charmed circle we cannot say, but, in view of the yield available from the normal openings for investment (see below), my guess is that it was at least ten. In summary, the picture that emerges is something like this:⁹

Upper Class, the liturgy payers, worth upward of 3-4 talents

Upper-Upper: 300 worth 10 talents or more, responsible for trierarchies after Demosthenes' reform

Middle-Upper: 900 worth some 5 to 10 talents, perhaps somewhat less, responsible for trierarchies before the reform

Lower-Upper: indeterminate number with at least 3-4 talents, responsible for lesser liturgies

Middle Class, 3 talents down to 20 minae

⁸ Demosthenes' father's estate, Dem. 27.9, 28.11, 29.59 and Davies 126-33; actually it was slightly under 14 (Davies 127). In the same class as Timotheus, Dem. 27.7 and cf. G. de Ste. Croix, "Demosthenes' *Timema* and the Athenian *Eisphora* in the Fourth Century B.C.," *C & M* 14 (1953) 30-70, esp. 65-66; cf. Davies 130-31.

⁹ Jones points out (90-93) that, aside from the upper crust, there was a gentle gradation in the distribution of wealth—over 40% of the population were upper and middle class—and suggests that this contributed greatly to Athens' political stability.

Upper-Middle } totalling, together with the Upper Class,
 Middle-Middle } 6000, all liable for wartax, i.e., worth 25 minae
 or more

Lower-Middle: 3000 worth 25 to 20 minae

Lower Class, 12,000 worth less than 20 minae

II

The next question to deal with is: what did Athenians own and how much income did they derive from it?

In the early days, about the only form of property available was real estate, specifically agricultural or grazing land. As Athens and the Piraeus grew, real estate came to include houses for rent, both single-dwelling (*oikiai*) and multiple-dwelling, i.e., apartment houses (*synoikiai*).¹⁰ Holdings for agriculture or grazing were almost always made up of scattered parcels rather than one great unit; the biggest single farm we know of could not have been much more than 100 acres and most were considerably less.¹¹ And we have just recently become aware that any number of Athenians owned parcels overseas, not only in nearby places like Euboea but as far away as Thrace and the Chersonese.¹² Others leased land overseas.¹³

¹⁰ The wealthy Dicaeogenes of Isaeus 5—his property was worth perhaps 13 talents (note 55 below)—owned an apartment house in the Ceramicus (5.26–27). Pasion had two apartment houses (Dem. 36.34, 45.28). Hagnias' family property in Isaeus 11 included two *oikiai* which were rented out (11.42), and Ciron's modest estate in Isaeus 8 included one (Isaeus 8.35). The holdings of Aphobus, Demosthenes' guardian, included an apartment house (Dem. 29.3), and there were both *oikiai* and *synoikiai* in the properties confiscated from those involved in the scandal of the Herms and Mysteries (*Hesperia* 25 [1956] 265, 268).

¹¹ Pasion's property included three farms in three different demes (Davies 431). Hagnias' family property included two farms (Davies 87), as did the estate of Timarchus' father (Aeschines 1.97). The speaker of Lysias' "On the Olive Stump" refers to his "other lands . . . in the plain" (7.24). The biggest single farm property we know of, described as having a boundary 40 stades long and often taken to be 750 or so acres in extent, was perhaps no more than 100; see G. de Ste. Croix, "The Estate of Phaenippus (Ps.-Dem., xlii)," *Ancient Society and Institutions, Studies presented to Victor Ehrenberg on his 75th birthday* (Oxford 1966) 109–14. The other properties whose size is known were considerably smaller: 70 acres (300 plethra, Lysias 19.29; Plato, *Alc.* I, 123c), 22½ or 45 acres (100 or 200 plethra, Plut. *Arist.* 27.1–2; Dem. 20.115), 14 acres (60 plethra, Isaeus 5.22).

¹² The evidence for the 5th century has most recently been collected and discussed by P. Gauthier in M. Finley, ed., *Problèmes de la terre en Grèce ancienne* (Centre de recherches comparées sur les sociétés anciennes, civilisations et sociétés 33, Paris 1973) 163–78. Overseas holdings were so numerous that, in the inscription recording the sale of what had been

Real estate remained throughout a favored form of investment, and for good reason. To begin with, there was an emotional component in owning land that overweighed economic considerations: it was a source of pride, status, family solidarity as well as income.¹⁴ Then it was less risky than any other form of investment (slaves had a discouraging tendency to die, debtors to default, ships to go down), and there was no competition from foreigners since the right to own land was, except for special cases, limited to citizens. Moreover, it was a ready source of credit. The easiest way for an Athenian to raise cash was by hypothecating real estate; we not only have the numerous instances mentioned in the orators but the tangible evidence of over

confiscated from the men involved in the scandal of the Herms and Mysteries in 415, a special section was given over to them (*Hesperia* 22 [1953] 263); there were properties in Thasos and Abydos, and of other owners besides Oeonias in Euboea (cf. Pritchett in *Hesperia* 25 [1956] 276). Jones (167) sees the acquiring of such properties as starting under the empire, when Athens exploited its dominance to gain for its citizens the right of owning land in Allied territories. He also suggests (175-76) that cleruchs did not necessarily take up residence on their overseas properties but could remain in Athens as *rentiers*, which, if true, would make ownership of overseas property an everyday matter. The view has commended itself to P. Brunt (*Studies Ehrenberg* [note 11 above] 81-84), but not to Gauthier (163).

Gauthier does not include overseas properties that Athenians received as gifts from potentates grateful for services rendered. This is how Gylon, Demosthenes Sr.'s father-in-law, was able to settle down in Cephallenia in the Cimmerian Bosphorus and presumably acquire the funds that enabled him to dower his daughter so handsomely (Aeschines 3.171-72 and Davies 121-22) and perhaps how Alcibiades got his holdings in Thrace (cf. J. Hatzfeld, *Alcibiade* [Paris 1951²] 319-20).

In the 4th century, with the privileges of empire gone, Athenians still went in for owning lands wherever they could. Lemnos remained an Athenian possession, and an inscription (*Hesperia* 29 [1960] 25, no. 33, lines 7-8) records an orchard, other land, and a farmhouse there confiscated in 370/69 from an Athenian owner, while Terence in the *Phormio*, based on an original by Apollodorus, assigns to a *matrona* resident at Athens properties on the island whither her husband repairs periodically to collect the rents (679-80, 789-91). In Menander's *Heros*, the master is away on "private business in Lemnos" (45-46); it may well be the same sort of thing. Gifts from Philip put property in Boeotia in Demades' hands and in Pydna in Aeschines' (Davies 100, 547). Aeschines too had lands in Boeotia and probably elsewhere as well (Davies 547). And Athens' freewheeling generals, who between pay and loot amassed fortunes, in order to indulge in conspicuous consumption that would have raised too many eyebrows back home "chose to live outside the city, Iphicrates in Thrace, Conon in Cyprus, Timotheus in Lesbos, Chares in Sigeum, . . . Chabrias in Egypt" (Theopompus ap. Athenaeus 12.532b).

¹³ See Davies 469 for an Athenian lessee of temple property on Delos.

¹⁴ Cf. M. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1973) 116-22.

200 *horoi*, the stones inscribed with a brief statement which were placed on a property to indicate that it was encumbered by debt.¹⁵

But real estate had two drawbacks. For one, it was common practice among fourth-century Athenians to conceal the extent of their fortune in order to avoid or reduce their liability to liturgies and taxes or for other shady reasons, and land and buildings were all too visible, were *phanera ousia*, to use their term; loans, holdings overseas, and other forms of investment that they called *aphanes ousia* "invisible property" were safer from prying eyes.¹⁶ For another, it yielded a return of only about 8%, far less than other easily available investments, and then only when the owner was able to find satisfactory tenants.¹⁷ One way of increasing the yield and still retaining some of the safety of real estate was to go in for buildings that were used as baths, brothels, or inns.¹⁸ This, of course, involved an additional investment in a staff of slaves to run the establishment.

Slaves, as a matter of fact, were the next favored form of investment after real estate. In Athens, all industry was carried on either by independent artisans, the poorer working alone and the more successful with one or more slave assistants, or by shops that were totally slave,¹⁹ foreman and workers alike. Such shops were of all sizes to fit every

¹⁵ Published by Finley in *Studies in Land and Credit* (note 1 above).

¹⁶ References in de Ste. Croix (note 8 above) 34. Cf. Finley 54-55.

¹⁷ Isaeus 11.42: a farm worth 15,000 drachmae rented for 1200 = exactly 8%, and two houses, one worth 3000 and the other 500, together produced 300 = 8.57%. In *IG ii-iii*² 2496.9-28, buildings and a workshop in the Peiraeus, assessed for wartax at 700 drachmae, rented for 54; if assessed at their worth, the return was 7.71%. Cf. de Ste. Croix (note 8 above) 38-39.

On the difficulties in finding tenants, cf. Lysias 7.9-10: a vineyard (7.14) was rented to four different tenants in 7 years; two held it for only a year apiece. And there is no reason for thinking that Athenian landlords were spared the sort of troubles Pliny the Younger laments (*Epist.* 9.37).

¹⁸ Dicaeogenes (note 10 above) owned a bath (Isaeus 5.22), Euctemon in Isaeus 6 a *synoikia* in the Ceramicus (6.20) which he turned into a brothel, a *synoikia* in the Peiraeus (6.19), and a bath (6.33) in the Peiraeus (whose location has been identified; see *Hesperia* 34 [1965] 78). The *synoikia* in the Peiraeus, being next to the wine market, may have had a bar, along with rooms for guests, for the two usually went together. There certainly were inns at the time (see L. Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* [London and Toronto 1974] 87-91) and somebody had to own them.

¹⁹ Free labor, never very important in the ancient world, at Athens was limited to seasonal agricultural help and other casual employment. Free men in industry were almost always independent artisans or self-employed workers. On this important point, see Finley (note 14 above) 73-74.

investment purse, from a tiny establishment with but a few workers to the shield factory run by Lysias' family that was staffed by over one hundred. Timarchus' father owned a shoemaker's shop that employed nine or ten, Demosthenes' father a couch-making establishment that employed 20 and a cutlery with 32 to 33; the cutlers cost for the most part 5 or 6 minae each, a very steep price, and must therefore have been highly skilled workmen.²⁰ Sometimes the shop, as Demosthenes' father's, was accommodated right in the owner's home, sometimes in a building all its own. If the latter, the foreman and workers might be totally independent, *chôris oikountes* "dwelling apart," responsible only for the payment of a fixed fee to their owner.²¹ Sometimes no building at all was required, as in the case of the catering teams that turn up again and again in Greek New Comedy. At the head was a *mageiros*, which we traditionally translate "cook" but who was actually caterer and chef combined, and under him were a *trapezopoios* "waiter" and one or more scullions.²² Our sources never mention

²⁰ Building inscriptions reveal numerous instances of an artisan working with a handful of slave assistants. Cf., e.g., IG i² 374.202–207, 238–44, 308–11 (408/7–407/6): certain columns of the Erechtheum were fluted by a team of 7 stonemasons, Simias "resident in Alopeke" (i.e., a metic) with 4 slaves of his own and 2, no doubt hired, belonging to someone else. Lysias' father, Lysias 12.8, 12, 19; the 120 slaves mentioned very likely included a number of domestics employed in the family homes (Davies 589). Timarchus' father, Aeschines 1.97. Demosthenes', Dem. 27.9; 5 to 6 minae is high even for skilled labor (cf. the prices gathered by Pritchett in *Hesperia* 25 [1956] 276–78). Leocrates owned a bronze foundry whose slaves were sold off for 35 minae (Lycurgus, *Leoc.* 22–23, 58); if they were worth as much as Demosthenes Sr.'s expensive cutlers, his shop had 5 or 6. The shoemaker in Herondas' seventh mime, head of a thriving establishment that specialized in expensive footwear, had a staff of 13 slaves (7.44).

²¹ Demosthenes Sr.'s shops on the premises, Dem. 27.24–25 and Finley 67. The property of Comon, which was at issue in Dem. 48, consisted of a team of sailmakers and of color-grinders; the first was housed in his own home, the other in another building he owned (48.12). On the *chôris oikountes*, see W. Westermann in M. Finley, ed., *Slavery in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge 1960) 20–23. Timarchus' shoemakers belong to this category: they ran the shop by themselves, paying Timarchus 2 obols a day for each worker and 3 for the foreman and keeping what was left to live on and presumably put aside for eventual purchase of their freedom. Timarchus' father's slave woman who was "trained in working fine linen and offered it for sale in the agora" (Aeschines 1.97) may well have lived apart and operated independently. Syricus, the charcoal burner in Menander's *Epitrepontes* is another case in point: he turned up at intervals to render the required payments (*apophora*) to his master (cf. line 204). For *chôris oikountes* in the building trade, see below.

²² The team in Menander's *Aspis* consisted of the cook, a waiter, and a scullion (221–33). There were always the household slaves to call upon if additional hands were needed; cf. *Dyskolos* 403–404, 430–37, 456–63.

the ownership of such teams, but this simply reflects the fragmentary state of our knowledge; they must have done a thriving business since, among Athens' upper crust, sacrifices, weddings, and similar celebrations seem usually to have been catered affairs.²³ Another active service was the supplying of courtesans, a term that covered everything from the equivalent of Cho-Cho-San to a hardworking call-girl, but, as New Comedy clearly shows, a stigma attached to this and, despite the money to be made, it was left in the hands of none too savory foreigners.²⁴

The great advantage of investing in slave workers was the yield—at least 16 to 20% as against the mere 8% to be gotten from land.²⁵

Athenaeus makes the statement that there is no example of "the slave cook except in Poscidippus alone" (14.658f) and this has led to much wrangling over the status of cooks, whether they were slave or free; see, e.g., H. Dohm, *Mageiros. Die Rolle des Kochs in der griechisch-römischen Komödie* (Zetemata 32, Munich 1964) 19–22. In New Comedy they consistently have names that elsewhere are borne by slaves (A. Gomme and F. Sandbach, *Menander, A Commentary* [Oxford 1973] 131), wear masks that Pollux lists (4.148) under slave masks, associate with slaves (Menander, *Dyskolos* 393 ff.), commit the sort of acts typical of slaves (*Dyskolos* 888 ff.), fear whippings just like slaves (*Dyskolos* 900–901; cf. Gomme-Sandbach's note *ad loc.*)—in short, though in real life the profession included freedmen and the occasional citizen who would stoop to any disreputable line of work (Theophrastus, *Char.* 6.5), on the comic stage they were slave (cf. Gomme-Sandbach 290). I suspect Athenaeus had in mind the cook who was a slave in a household (cf. Plautus, *Men.* 219–25, 273–75) as against the professional hired from outside.

²³ Menander, *Dyskolos* 393 ff. (sacrifice), *Samia* 286 ff. and *Aspis* 216 ff. (wedding), *Epit.* 206–208 (party); cf. Dohm (note 22 above) 76–80.

²⁴ For the attitude, cf., e.g., Terence, *Adelphoe* 177–89; other references in W. Headlam, *Herodas, The Mimes and Fragments* (Cambridge 1922) xxxviii. Habrotonon, the slave courtesan in Menander's *Epitrepontes*, was getting 12 drachmae a day (136–37); the average skilled laborer at this time made no more than 2 to 2½ (Jones 135). To be sure, a girl as accomplished as she must have cost her owner a tidy sum. The notorious Neaera, who had been raised and trained in the same house as the courtesan patronized by no less a personage than Lysias (Dem. 59.18–21), cost 30 minae (Dem. 59.29).

²⁵ Demosthenes Sr.'s cutlery yielded just short of 16% per annum. The annual income was 3000 drachmae on a capital of 19,000 (Dem. 27.9–10; the total value of the cutlers plus couch-makers plus money out at interest was 29,000, and the last two items totalled 10,000—6000 out at interest and 4000 down on the books for the couch-makers). The 20 couch-makers, taken over as security for a loan of 4000 drachmae, produced 1200 per annum = 30%; they were almost certainly worth more than book value since security was usually much more than the amount of a loan and might run twice as high (cf. Finley 80–81; Pritchett in *Hesperia* 25 [1956] 274). Davies (129) is very tempted by the textual emendation in Dem. 27.9 which transfers the clause "and these were none of them worth less than 3 minae" from the description of the cutlers, where it now stands and makes difficult sense, to the description of the couch-makers, where it would make

Moreover, for men ambitious to get ahead, it was a far surer path to follow than real estate since ownership of land, as we have just mentioned, was based as much on emotional factors as economic, if not more, and parcels did not regularly come on the market; as has been acutely pointed out, though Greek has a word for the sellers of almost every conceivable object of exchange, there is none for "real-estate broker."²⁶ In a well-known passage (Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.7.6), Socrates mentions four men who became comfortably wealthy from slave-manned workshops—a miller, a baker, and two cloakmakers; the miller actually made it into the ranks of the liturgy-payers. Praxiteles' sculpture studio was so successful that the family not only became liturgists but his son was able to undertake a formidable number of trierarchies (Davies 286–88).²⁷ The money that enabled Athens' best known popular leaders to go into politics came from such shops: Cleon and Anytus owned tanneries, Hyperbolus was in lamp-making, Cleophon in lyre-making. Isocrates' expensive education was paid for out of the profits of his father's flute-making establishment. And many an Athenian must have made a tidy sum out of the shops that produced Athens' famed pottery.²⁸ The great disadvantage was that

excellent sense. However, he is reluctant to accept it on the grounds that a capital value for the couch-makers of 6000 drachmae (20×300) instead of 4000, when deducted from the total figure of 29,000 would leave too low a valuation for the cutlers. Actually, no such deduction is necessary. So far as the valuation of the estate was concerned, the value of the couch-makers was the amount of money for which they were security, 4000 drachmae. The clause would represent Demosthenes' estimate of their value on the open market, viz. 6000. On this basis the annual yield from the couch-making shop, 1200 on a capital of 6000, would work out to 20%.

Timarchus' father collected from each of his shoemakers 2 obols a day or 120 drachmae a year; if they were worth 600 apiece, like Demosthenes Sr.'s most expensive cutlers, the yield was 20%; if they were worth less, as is quite likely (cf. Pritchett in *Hesperia* 25 [1956] 277–78), the yield was proportionately higher.

²⁶ See Finley (note 14 above) 118.

²⁷ Other possible instances of successful movement up the socio-economic ladder are a sculptor and a carpenter who worked on the Erechtheum (Davies 242, 280).

²⁸ Davies 41 (Anytus), 246 (Isocrates), 318 (Cleon), 517 (Hyperbolus); Andocides 1.146 (Cleophon). J. Beazley, "Potter and Painter in Ancient Athens," *PBA* 30 (1944) 87–125, points out (111–12) that the shop of the Pentesilea Painter came close to a form of mass production; in the half century or so of its existence, a score of different painters can be distinguished, and we can identify cups whose inside was painted by one hand and the outside by another. See also T. Webster, *Potter and Patron in Classical Athens* (London 1972) chap. 1 and especially page 41, where he estimates the staff of the average shop turning out fine pottery at 10 to 20 potters and painters.

one's capital investment was subject to the whims of sickness and accident: the death or mutilation of a slave was that much money down the drain.²⁹

Running a shop meant putting money not only into slaves but into materials as well; when Demosthenes' father died, his estate included an inventory of iron, copper, wood, ivory, and gall for his shops worth $2\frac{1}{2}$ talents (Dem. 27.10)—almost enough by itself to qualify a man for paying liturgies. A simpler and less expensive way of exploiting slaves was to acquire them merely for renting out. The best customers were the men who had digging concessions in the silver mines at Laurium; they needed thousands—far more than 10,000, to judge from Xenophon, *Vect.* 4.24—for work in the pits and galleries, and apparently preferred to hire rather than own, to let someone else stand the inevitable write-offs from the high mortality rate, worse in mining than any other line of work. Nicias' fortune was reputedly based on 1000 slaves whom he rented out to a single entrepreneur, and Hipponicus, son of the fabulously wealthy Callias and said to be, as we reported earlier, the richest Athenian of his time, owned 600 (Xenophon, *Vect.* 4.14–15). At the other end of the scale was the Diocleides who claimed to have witnessed the culprits forming up for the mutilation of the Herms; he saw them, he averred, when he was setting out for Laurium to pick up the earnings of a slave he had there (Andocides 1.38). The return was at least as high as 30%; it dazzled Xenophon into suggesting that the state invest in mine-slaves in a big way and thereby put the whole citizen body in easy circumstances.³⁰

Others than mine concessionaires also preferred to work with rented slaves, even as some of us today find it more expedient to lease a car than own one; "I want to buy a slave boy," says a banker in

²⁹ This I suspect is why we are told that Demosthenes Sr.'s cutlery had "32 or 33" slaves (Dem. 27.9) or that Timarchus' father had "9 or 10" shoemakers (Aeschines 1.97); the complement of a shop was not always up to full strength.

³⁰ Xenophon, *Vect.* 4. The slaves, he states (4.14–15), brought their owners a return of an obol a day (= 60 drachmae per annum; he uses a 360-day year). In *Vect.* 4.23–24 he cites figures that offer a basis for estimating the cost of mine slaves, but they are somewhat imprecise, so the results derived from them vary: Boeckh (note 1 above) i, 86 offers 125–50 drachmae as the cost of a single slave, E. Ardaillon (*Les mines de Laurion dans l'antiquité* [Paris 1897] 104) 122 or 194, J. Thiel (*Xenophontos Poroi* [Vienna 1922] 52–53) 158 or 195. The 30% yield in the text is a minimum based on a cost in round numbers of 200. The lower figures—Jones (in Finley [note 21 above] 5) uses Boeckh's—bring the yield up to 40% and 50%.

Plautus' *Curculio* (382–83), “but now let me get one to rent; I need my cash.” Demosthenes Sr.'s cutlery had three slaves on lease from one of Demosthenes' guardians (Dem. 27.20). The individual slaves whose names appear in the building records were either *chôris oikountes* who contracted out their own services, or had been hired out directly by their owners.³¹ People in all income brackets found the hiring out of slaves a useful way to supplement their income. Theophrastus' mean-minded miser, a man of considerable wealth—he traveled abroad on public business (30.7) and borrowed sums up to 30 minae (30.13)—not only regularly hired out slaves (30.15) but, when he went on a trip with acquaintances, used their slave attendants so he could leave his own at home to rent out (30.17). Arethusius, the *bête noir* of Pasion's son Apollodorus, had two slaves whom he hired out for agricultural labor or would allow to contract out their own services (Dem. 53.20–21). In Plautus' *Asinaria* there is a reference (441–43) to a slave hired out who has brought in half his pay and will bring the rest when the job contracted for is done. In Terence's *Adelphoe*, the friend of an indignant lady refers (481–82) to her lone male slave as the sole support of the family; he could only have been that by being hired out and bringing back enough for them to live off. There was a special area, the *Kolonos Agoraios* just west of the Agora, where slaves available for casual work shaped up awaiting potential employers. The cooks, all of whose employment was occasional, had their own “cook's market.”³²

When Socrates during his visit to the lovely courtesan Theodote noted the sumptuousness of her household, he asked her (Xenophon, *Mem.* 3.11.4), “Do you own land?” “Not I,” she replied. “Well then, you own house property that brings in revenue?” “No house

³¹ In IG i² 374, the records of the Erechtheum, Kerdon, slave of Axiopeithes, put in a day's work taking down scaffolding (line 71) and another day's work, along with another slave of the same owner, fluting columns with Simias' gang (note 20 above).

³² On the *Kolonos Agoraios*, see A. Fuks in *Eranos* 49 (1951) 171–73, who has collected all the references. For its location, see J. Travlos, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie des antiken Athen* (Tübingen 1971) 169, No. 218. The *mistharnountes* who lined up there included, to be sure, free men, but my feeling is that most were slave. For the “cook's market,” see Plautus, *Pseud.* 790–807, and Dohm (note 22 above) 70–71; Pollux (9.48) calls it the *mageireia*. Theophrastus' pennypincher, instead of buying his wife a ladies' maid, hired one from the “woman's market” to accompany her everytime she wanted to go out (*Char.* 22.10); according to Pollux (10.18) this was where household gear was sold but apparently it was also where female labor shaped up.

property." "Then don't you have some craftsmen?" "No craftsmen." "Then how do you manage the necessities of life?" Land, houses, craftsmen—these were what the wealthy Athenian ordinarily derived his income from. To them we may add lending money to responsible borrowers on good security. It brought at least 10%, commonly 12%, sometimes as high as 18%, more, in other words, than real estate but not as much as craftsmen.³³

All the above were the equivalent of our "widows and orphans" grade of investment. There were any number of Athenians who were willing to try something more speculative for the better return it offered. They found it in mining, certain aspects of commerce, and tax-farming.

The silver mines of Laurium headed the list of the Athenian's preferred speculative ventures. For the lucky the profits could be enormous. Callias was one of the first beneficiaries: the mines were the basis of his fortune (Davies 260); people used to call his family the "pit-rich" (Plut., *Arist.* 5.6). There was one mine which, it was claimed (Hyp. 4.35), brought its owners 300 talents in three years. The speaker of Demosthenes 42, who embarked on a business career with the very modest inheritance of 45 minae (42.22), turned to mining and, beginning by wielding pick and shovel with his own hands (42.20), ended up a member of the select circle of the Three Hundred (42.3). Some people went in for the actual extracting of the ore, some for the running of a refinery, some for both.³⁴ The former involved the

³³ In Isaeus 8, Ciron's modest estate of between 1 and 2 talents, chiefly in land and houses, included some money out on loan (8.35). The wealthy estate at issue in Isaeus 11 included 40 minae out on loan at 18% (11.42). A certain Arcesias lent 16 minae to Pasion's son Apollodorus on the security of an apartment house at 16% (Dem. 53.13). Demosthenes Sr., who, as we have noted, disliked real estate, had a talent out at 12% (Dem. 27.9), and Timarchus' father, who shared the dislike, also had money out on loan (Aeschines 1.97). Oretor and Timocrates, two extremely wealthy men—Demosthenes (30.10) estimated their fortunes at 30 and 10 talents respectively—were in the habit of "lending no small sums to others." On interest rates see R. Bogaert, *Banques et banquiers dans les cités grecques* (Leiden 1968) 347.

³⁴ In Davies' register there are almost 30 certain or probable instances of men or families who invested in mining leases (35, 42, 70, 111, 156, 158, 161, 162, 163, 167, 178, 186, 187, 189, 192, 205, 221, 238, 279, 320, 341, 386, 424, 518, 525, 531, 533, 591). Half a dozen also had money in refineries (42, 70, 163, 385–86, 531, 533). Timarchus' father invested only in refineries; the listing of his property (Aeschines 1.97–101) includes two but makes no mention of mining concessions. There are a few in Davies' register

leasing of a concession from the state (mines were inalienable public property). Little investors as well as big could be accommodated, since the concessions were of various sizes and types (for starting of a new mine, continuation of work on an old one, reopening of an abandoned one). Some were so expensive that it took several people in a partnership to handle them, for few individuals had sufficient capital for the cost of the lease and the hire of the necessary number of mine slaves; the concession that yielded 300 talents was operated by a certain Epicrates who headed a syndicate "of just about the richest men in the city" (Hyp. 4.35). A speech of Demosthenes mentions (37.22) a concessionaire who paid the considerable sum of $1\frac{1}{2}$ talents, and in the inscriptions listing mining leases there is one that cost just short of 3 talents. But most in the inscriptions are far cheaper: a very common figure is 150 drachmae and quite a few went for as little as 20, mere pits, no doubt, that a concessionaire, like the speaker of Demosthenes 42, could work with his own labor and no outlay save for a hammer, pick, and shovel.³⁵ On the other hand, investing in a refinery was solely

whose known investments include only refineries (139, 143), but these may have held concessions as well.

Pantaenetus, the speaker's opponent in Dem. 37, owned both a refinery and a mining lease. The case involves only his refinery (*ergasterion*, 37.4 and throughout) and the loan for which he had hypothecated it, a loan in the form of a *prasis epi lysei*, i.e., with "security in the form of conditional sale;" see Finley 32-35. His mining lease (*metallon*, 37.22), which cost him $1\frac{1}{2}$ talents, is a thing apart; it is mentioned only because, when he sent his slave to the state treasury with the cash for a part payment, his creditors high-handedly stopped the man and took the money away. Many have confused the two properties: F. Paley and J. Sandys in their *Select Private Orations of Demosthenes* i (Cambridge 1898³) 98-100; the Loeb translator; H. Michell, *The Economics of Ancient Greece* (New York 1957²) 106; Westermann in Finley (note 21 above) 90. L. Gernet, the Budé translator, renders the relevant passages properly.

For a convenient account of what is known about the technique of mining and refining, see Michell 98-112, and for the leasing R. Hopper, "The Attic Silver Mines in the Fourth Century B.C.," *ABSA* 48 (1953) 200-54.

³⁵ M. Crosby in *Hesperia* 19 (1950) 202 collected the prices known up to that time: of 76 leases where the price is preserved, 22 cost 20 drachmae and 30 cost 150. The highest price that occurs in the inscriptions is 17,550-450 drachmae short of 3 talents (*Hesperia* 26 [1957] 13, No. 55, line 15), the next highest 6100 (*Hesperia* 5 [1936] 404, line 299), the third highest 2000 (*Hesperia* 19 [1950] 255, line 3). Hopper (note 34 above) argues (238-39) that all the figures most probably represent the payment for a prytany; thus a 20-drachmae lease cost the lessee 200 per annum, a 150-drachmae lease 1500 per annum, and the one for 17,550 would come to 29 talents, 15 minae. He also discusses (234-37) the length of the leases—most were for 7 years, certain renewals for 3—and the prices: 20 drachmae was the fee set by the state for opening a new mine or continuing

for men with capital inasmuch as it required the purchase of a good deal of expensive equipment—mortars, mills, washing-tables, furnaces—as well as a gang of slaves to run it, for refinery slaves were not hired but owned, as in other manufactories.³⁶ Holders of small concessions no doubt worked out arrangements to have their ore processed by the nearest available facility.

Next, commerce. In the commercial ventures of the time, there were three roles to play: the *naukleros*, the man who supplied the ship, either an owner or a charterer; the *emporos* “merchant,” who booked space on the ship and put cargoes into it; and the moneylender who supplied the *emporos* with the funds he needed to pay the freight and purchase the cargoes. Often, to spread the risk, one or more of the

work on one of unknown quality; 150 the fee for continuing work on a promising mine; 20 for reworking of abandoned sites by an original lessee; 150 by a new; still higher figures, probably set by auction, for sites of proven quality.

Despite the fragmentary and haphazard nature of our information, there is a demonstrable correlation between wealth and cost of concession. Of the more expensive leases, 150 drachmae and higher, there are some 16 instances in which the lessee's name has been preserved. At least half of the names appear in Davies' register: Euthykrates, who held the lease of 2000 mentioned above (Davies 71); Thrasylochus, Meidias' brother, who held two, one of 1550 and another of 150 (Davies 385); Leukios (Davies 341) and Epicrates (Davies 162), both with leases of 200; Euetion (Davies 189), Cleonymus (Davies 556), Onetor (Davies 424), possibly Euthykrates (Davies 35), all with leases of 150. (The seven that do not appear are: *Hesperia* 10 [1941] 16, No. 1, lines 50–51 [lease of 1550], 83 [lease of 150]; 19 [1950] 261, No. 19, line 18, and 264, No. 20, lines 12–13, 16–17 [two leases of 150, one of 160]; *IG ii²* 1582.75, 82–83 [two leases of 150]). Of the cheapest leases, those for 20 drachmae, there are some 20 instances in which the lessee's name is preserved; of these, only four are in Davies' register, and of these four, two held two such leases simultaneously, Callias (Davies 525) and Pheidippus (Davies 533). The two others are Aisimides (Davies 42) and Diotimus (Davies 163). (The sixteen that do not appear are: *Hesperia* 10 [1941] 16–17, No. 1, lines 44, 56–57, 58–59, 60, 67, 71, 76, 78–79; 19 [1950] 251, No. 16, line 10; 26 [1957] 4, No. S2, lines 24, 27–28, 29, 33, 35, 36–37, 41; *IG ii²* 1582.122–23.)

³⁶ An *ergasterion* usually consisted of a crushing mill and washing tables placed as near as possible to the mine or mines it served to keep transportation to a minimum. The refinery proper, the furnace for smelting, was called a *kaminos*, and there were considerably fewer of these, presumably strategically located. In the inscriptions, 83 *ergasteria*, sc. crushing and washing facilities, are mentioned as against 6 *kaminoi*; cf. Crosby in *Hesperia* 19 (1950) 194–95. The *ergasterion* in Dem. 37 was probably a full-scale affair with both a furnace (37.28) and crushing mill (*kenchreôn* in 37.26 is probably the facility for crushing the ore, though the evidence is inconclusive; see Ardaillon [note 30 above] 62, Paley-Sandys [note 34 above] note *ad loc.*, Hopper [note 34 above] 204). The work force consisted of 30 slaves (37.4; Jones [14] mistakenly took them as the crew of a mining concession). It was sold, slaves included, for 3 talents, 26 minae (37.31).

three roles were split up among partners. At times *naukleros* and *emporos* were the same person, in which case he could borrow on the security of the ship; most often they were separate, and then the *emporos* borrowed on the security of the cargo he loaded aboard.³⁷

	<i>Naukleros</i>	<i>Emporos</i>	Lender	Security
32	Hegestratus of Marseilles	Protus	Demon	cargo
33	Apaturius of Byzantium	Apaturius	Parmeno, Heraclides	ship
34	Lampis, Dio both of Cimmerian Bosporus	Phormio	1. Chrysippus, a partner 2. (illegitimate loan) Theodorus, Lampis	cargo cargo
35	Hyblesius of Phaselis, Apollonides of Halicarnassus	Artemo, Apollodorus	Androcles, Nausicrates	cargo
56	Dionysiodorus, Parmeniscus	Dionysiodorus, Parmeniscus	Dareius, Pamphilus	ship

In all three roles, the Athenian was competing with metics and aliens; barred from owning real estate, these found a natural outlet for their business energies in commerce. So many went into shipowning that one has the impression Athenians deliberately avoided this form of enterprise. With more attractive opportunities open to them, they could well have preferred to leave to others an investment that was of considerable size (shipowners had to lay out for the crew of slaves as well as for the vessel) and that stood idle for over half the year and might be totally lost at any moment during the other half.³⁸ Andocides became a *naukleros*—but only after exile had forced upon him a new role in life, turning him from soldier, diplomat, and politician to businessman (And. 1.137). Phormio, the wealthy client of Demosthenes to whom we have already referred, eventually added shipowning to his business pursuits (Dem. 45.64), but he was a naturalized Athenian who had started life as a slave. A Micon of Cholleidai, mentioned in one of Demosthenes' speeches, is the only instance besides Andocides of a native-born Athenian *naukleros* in the orators, and there is but one

³⁷ Our information comes chiefly from five speeches of Demosthenes dealing with bottomry loans, 32–35 and 56. Demon, the lender in 32, and Androcles, one of the lenders in 35, were the only citizens; all the others were either certainly or probably metics or aliens.

³⁸ The sailing season was roughly April into October; see L. Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Princeton 1971) 270–73. Slaves crews, *ibid.* 328.

possible example in New Comedy.³⁹ Athenians, however, were not at all reluctant to take on the other two roles. They competed with metics and aliens as merchants, either for their own account or as agents of commercial houses, either operating from Athens or voyaging abroad the way merchants in those days were wont to do, and far outnumbered them in the field of maritime loans.⁴⁰ This was a

³⁹ Micon, Dem. 58.6, 9, 15; cf. Davies 57–58. The title figure of Plautus' *Mercator* had sold his farm to become a *naukleros-emporos* (74–77, 87–89), but we cannot be certain that Plautus found this in his original. Pataecus in Menander's *Perik.*, who lost his fortune when "the ship which used to furnish my livelihood" (378) sank and thus was either a *naukleros* or *naukleros-emporos*, was a native of Corinth.

⁴⁰ Lysias 32.4 (Diodotus had made his considerable fortune—over 15 talents [Davies 152–53]—in commerce); Dem. 52.20 (two brothers from Eleusis prepare to borrow money for a business trip to Acê in Phoenicia, perhaps—cf. Herondas 2.16–17 with Headlam's note *ad loc.*—to purchase wheat). Nicobulus in Dem. 37 sailed off on business to the Pontus (37.6, 10, 25), very likely to trade in wheat, for the area was Athens' major supplier; he also went in for moneylending to keep his spare cash at work (37.54), and, since one of his loans was on the security of real property, the silver refinery mentioned in notes 34 and 36 above, he must have been a citizen (as Gernet, the Budé translator assumed [225, note 3]; the arguments of Erxleben [see below] to the contrary are unconvincing). The Athenian father who goes abroad on business—thereby leaving a son free to sow wild oats and thus start the wheels of the plot spinning—is a common figure in Greek New Comedy. In Menander's *Samia*, Demeas and Niceratus have just returned from the Pontus (96–112) and in his *Dis Exapatôn* two brothers have gone off to Ephesus to collect a debt owed to their father (cf. Gomme-Sandbach [note 22 above] 118). For examples from Roman comedy see Terence, *Phormio* 66–68 (business trip to Cilicia), Plautus, *Most.* 440, 971 (to Egypt), *Stichus* 366–83 (Asia), *Trin.* 771 (Seleucia).

We find the Athenian Pythodorus acting as agent for Pasion (Davies 430), the Athenians Stephanus and Timosthenes acting as agents, including voyaging abroad, for his successor Phormio (Dem. 45.64, 49.31), and the Athenian Antiphanes representing abroad a certain Philip who, being a *naukleros*, was most probably a metic or alien (Dem. 49.14–15). Bogaert (note 33 above, 68–69) along with the Loeb translator assumes that Antiphanes and Philip were abroad together; Gernet in the Budé translation renders the phrase describing Antiphanes properly: "Antiphanès de Lamptra, qui naviguait comme intendant de l'armateur Philippe." E. Erxleben, "Die Rolle der Bevölkerungsklassen im Aussenhandel Athens im 4. Jahrhundert v. u. Z.," in E. Welskopf, ed., *Hellenische Poleis* (Berlin 1974) i, 460–520, claims (473–75, 501) that there are far more examples of non-Athenian *emporoi* than Athenian. Very likely they were in the majority, but the evidence available is too haphazard to yield hard and fast conclusions. Moreover, aside from a reference (468–69) to a fragment from Diphilus, he takes no cognizance of New Comedy; yet the Athenian merchant was obviously common enough to be used as a standard character.

Erxleben has analyzed the nationality of the moneylenders who went in for maritime loans. His summary (502) shows 41 Athenians as against 11 metics, 16 aliens, and 1 slave. The Diodotus of Lysias 32, who had made his fortune in commerce (32.4), left at his death 7 talents and 40 minae in maritime loans (32.6). Demosthenes Sr., who put all his money into manufacturing and moneylending, had a maritime loan of 70 minae

venturesome business: the risks were great, since there were acts of men—piracy and chicanery—to fear as well as acts of god, and there was no such thing as insurance.⁴¹ In compensation, the return was extraordinarily high. In the one contract that has been preserved (Dem. 35.10), the borrowers agreed to pay 225 drachmae on every 1000 for the four to five months from the beginning of the sailing season to mid-September and 300 if delayed until after that—in other words, 22½ and 30% for 4–5 months or 67½ and 90½% per annum. We hear of one merchant who invested 2 talents in a trading venture to the Adriatic and doubled his money (Lysias 32.25), and there is no reason to doubt the statement. Maritime loans were even a quicker way than the mines to make a fortune, but just as quick a way to lose one. Hence those who went in for them were generally experienced moneylenders, and not just anybody looking for a good return on some spare cash.⁴²

Lastly, there was tax-farming. Athens, with its rudimentary bureaucracy, did not have the personnel to do its own collecting of taxes, so the practice was to farm them out, to auction off the right to collect them, whether it was the 2% customs duty on all cargoes going in and out of the Peiraeus or the tax on the city's prostitutes. The amounts involved were often too much for the resources of any one person—the winning bid for the customs duty in 402/1, for example, was 36 talents—so syndicates were formed to handle them. The head of a syndicate was generally a wealthy man, but the members could be

on the books when he died (Dem. 27.11), and his son seems to have gone in for such loans as well (Plut., *Comp. of Dem. and Cic.* 3.6; cf. Erxleben 467). Nausicrates and Xenopeithes in Dem. 38, who had most of their capital in moneylending (38.7), had 100 staters, perhaps 2800 drachmae (cf. Dem. 34.23), out on loan to a trader in the Cimmerian Bosphorus (38.11–12).

⁴¹ For piracy, cf. Dem. 52, a case that grew out of the death of a merchant in a pirate attack (52.5); cf. also Lysias 32.29. For chicanery, cf. Dem. 32, involving a pair of rascals from Marseilles who borrowed sizable sums in Syracuse on the security of their ship, sent the money off for safekeeping in their home town, and then, since repayment was contingent upon safe arrival, tried to scuttle the vessel.

⁴² The Demon of Dem. 32 (see note 37 above) was a relative of Demosthenes, and he may have been out of his depth when he went in for a maritime loan, for he seems to have been so neatly swindled out of his money (cf. the previous note and Davies 117) that even his gifted relative's help may not have gotten it back for him.

people of very modest means.⁴³ We have no idea how much profit there was to be made, but it must have been generous, for there never seems to have been a shortage of bidders. Though metics were allowed to take part, most of the tax-farmers we hear of were Athenian.⁴⁴

Banking, like shipowning, was left almost totally in the hands of metics and aliens. The Athenians, as we have seen, were not at all averse to moneylending, yet the other, equally important side of an ancient bank's business, money-changing, pawn-broking, and safe-deposit, apparently did not attract them. Athens' largest banking house in the 4th century belonged to Pasion, who had started life as a slave, his successor was Phormio, also an ex-slave, and when Phormio gave it up it was entrusted to a management team of four slaves or metics (cf. Davies 433). There is actually only one certain instance of a native Athenian banker.⁴⁵

III

So much for the sources of an Athenian's income and the return he might expect from them. The next problem is to reach some idea of the size of his family, for this, then as now, was a crucial factor in determining a man's cost of living.

Our information about family size comes not from birth registers or the like but almost wholly from the orators and inscriptions, from

⁴³ The winning bid in 402/1 B.C. was made by a syndicate headed by Andocides which nosed out Agyrrhius' syndicate (Andocides 1.133-34); Andocides was a very rich man, and Agyrrhius came from a well-known family of liturgical status (Davies 31, 278-79). On the other hand, Leocrates, whose estate was a mere talent, was once a partner in a syndicate farming the customs duty (Lycurgus, *Leoc.* 19, 22-23, 58).

⁴⁴ See the previous note. There is also Xenocleides mentioned by Demosthenes (59.26-28) as tax-farmer of the customs duty in 369 B.C. In the story of Alcibiades' tricking of a syndicate into buying out the successful bidder (Plut. *Alc.* 5), the latter was a metic.

⁴⁵ On ancient banking, see Bogaert (note 33 above) 315-56 and, on the bankers of Athens, 62-86. The earliest banker in Athens that we know of was a certain Antimachus mentioned by Eupolis (fr. 127 K = Edmonds 1, p. 342); his nationality is unknown. The next are the Antisthenes and Archestratus who turned their bank over to their ex-slave Pasion and thereby launched him on his spectacular financial career. Bogaert (62) feels that both were metics, though we cannot be sure. The only certain native Athenian banker is the Aristolochus mentioned in Dem. 36.50 and 45.63-64 (cf. Davies 60).

remarks made in court speeches or names included in lists of mine lessees *aut sim.* As a consequence it (a) refers only to adults, most often adult males; (b) with rare exceptions reveals merely that a family had at least so many children, for there may well have been others whose mention was irrelevant; (c) is so haphazard it cannot possibly be quantified.

Among the families in Davies' register there are innumerable instances of two children, most often sons, but this no doubt is a reflection of the nature of our information. There are plentiful instances of three children; though they lean heavily to sons, in 40% of them there is one daughter and in almost 10% two daughters against one son. There are quite a few instances of families with four, even five children; again the emphasis is on sons, but two daughters are common and there are two instances of four daughters.⁴⁶ The biggest family we know of is Themistocles': five sons by a first wife and three daughters by a second (Davies 217). The Euctemon of Isaeus 6, who live to be 96, had three sons and two daughters by a first wife and two sons by a second (6.10, 13 and Davies 562-63). And a certain Nicarete in Dem. 57, whose family was so down on its luck that she had to hire herself out as a wetnurse and sell ribbons in the Agora, managed to find time to give her first husband a son and daughter and her second five sons (57.28, 30-35, 42, 43).

The crucial point is: how many live births did it take to produce adult families this size? Here a significant parallel is of help. A. R. Burn, using whatever vital statistics are available, has revealed how closely the age distribution in Roman Africa matches that of modern India. Jones demonstrates that the figures we have from 4th-century

⁴⁶ Three children: there are 29 instances of 3 sons (Davies 32, 44, 65, 80, 93, 161, 163, 179, 194, 197, 209, 247, 283, 306, 338, 351, 399, 403, 415, 423, 456, 467, 498, 545, 566, 571, Dem. 54.14, Lysias 17.3, Aeschines 1.102), 24 of 2 sons and 1 daughter (Davies 16-17, 24 [two instances], 61, 85, 115, 142, 148, 152, 229-30, 250, 253, 267, 313, 319-20, 361, 422-23, 456-57, 477-78, 481-82, 544, 547, Dem. 59.38, Isoc. 19.9), 5 of 1 son and 2 daughters (Davies 45, 200-201, 437, Isaeus 10.25, Lycurgus, *Leoc.* 22-23).

Four children: 6 instances of 4 sons (Davies 26, 94, 363, 365-66, 417, Lysias 13.65), 8 of 3 sons and 1 daughter (Davies 82-83, 177, 194-95, 275, 332-34, 365, 590, Isaeus 3.26, 30), 4 of 2 sons and 2 daughters (Davies 93-94, Lysias 16.10, Isaeus 2.3, 10.4), 3 of 1 son and 3 daughters (Davies 297, 315, 319).

Five children: 1 instance of 5 sons (Davies 79), 2 of 4 sons and 1 daughter (Davies 80, 246), 2 of 3 sons and 2 daughters (Davies 461-64, Isaeus 12.2-5), 2 of 1 son and 4 daughters (Davies 84, 145-48).

Athens make an equally good match. What is even more to the point is that India's ideal family size coincides in general with Athens', two grown sons and a daughter. Now, demographic studies reveal that "an Indian couple must have six or seven children . . . in order to have 95% certainty that one son will survive to the father's sixty-fifth birthday."⁴⁷ It follows that something of the same order must be true of 4th-century Athens: for the innumerable families with two sons who reached adulthood we must assume five or six live births. The families of four or five children that we find were not the exception but those lucky enough to have an above average survival rate. Athens, in a word, was a city of young people, with a plethora of children swarming about and of babes in arms (cf. Jones, 78, 83).⁴⁸

With this in mind, let us look at the basic living expenses an Athenian faced. The building records of Eleusis, dating in the 320's B.C., indicate that the cost of food for a slave was then reckoned at $\frac{1}{2}$ drachma a day (Jones 135) = 180 a year. One may argue that this is too high to be taken as an average, for a hardworking slave needs to be well fueled, or that it is too low, since it refers to the diet of a slave. No matter; it is a reasonable figure, Jones uses it in his cost-of-living calculations (30), and even if we discount it, the general conclusion will still be much the same. For children we may reckon a cost of 100 drachmae a year.⁴⁹ The speaker of Demosthenes 42 at one point says, "My father left me . . . property of only 45 minae . . . and it is not easy to live on that" (Dem. 42.22). It assuredly was not. Even if

⁴⁷ A. R. Burn, "Hic breve vivitur," *Past and Present* (1952-53) 2-31. Jones 82-83, where he reproduces Burn's chart. Indian family size, D. Mandelbaum, *Human Fertility in India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1974) 15, 18.

⁴⁸ Rostovtzeff, *SEHWW* 163, assumes families of one or two children, which is impossibly low. W. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (London 1968) 165, tends to allow more than two only to families with "resources;" actually, one of the biggest families we know of was produced by the poorest couple mentioned in the whole corpus of the orators (Dem. 57; see p. 48 above), and, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, there is no reason to exempt ancient Athens from the time-honoured conjunction of poverty and children.

⁴⁹ Cf. Lysias 32.20: "[Their guardian] reckoned, on the one hand, the food for two boys and their sister at 5 obols per day [= 100 drachmae per annum per child], but, on the other hand, for shoes and cleaning and hairdressing he put down neither a monthly nor yearly amount but a lump sum for the whole period [8 years] of more than a talent [i.e., over 750 drachmae per annum]." The speaker's complaint is levelled not so much at the amount reckoned for food as at that for the three luxury items and the cavalier bookkeeping.

invested at a generous return of 15%, his 45 minae would bring him but 675 drachmae a year, not even enough for food for himself, his wife and, say, four children—a conservative estimate in view of India's experience—which would amount to 760 ($180 \times 2 + 100 \times 4$). The speaker in question solved his problem by taking up a mining concession, hit it rich, and ended a very wealthy man. But people without his luck, no question about it, had to live frugally. Jones (84) points to a passage in Demosthenes which implies that some of those required to pay the wartax, i.e., anyone with an estate worth 25 minae or more, could not afford even a single slave. Indeed they could not, not those—and they would be the greater number—who were on the line or just over it.

Let us go further and take someone the Athenians considered unquestionably well-to-do, someone worth 3 talents and therefore in or near the ranks of the liturgy-payers. If it was all in rental property, the return, at 8%, would be 1440 drachmae. He would certainly have one slave and most probably two. To feed himself, his wife, and the male slave would cost (180×3) 540 drachmae, four children and a female slave (100×5) 500 drachmae, leaving but 400 drachmae for all his other expenses, an amount that a single liturgy could gobble up. Or take the specific case of Stratocles in Isaeus 11. His yearly income was 2200 drachmae (11.43). He had a son and 4 daughters (11.37; cf. Davies 84). One of the daughters had been left an inheritance of $2\frac{1}{2}$ talents by a childless uncle (11.41), so her upkeep and dowry presumably were taken care of from that source. That still left 4 other children and, as we have seen, a family that size might spend 1040 drachmae a year on food alone. In his bracket Stratocles could hardly have given his daughters dowries of less than 3000 drachmae (see below) or 9000 for all three. Since girls married about age 16 or even earlier, this would amount to a yearly charge of some 550 drachmae. Thus, out of his apparently handsome income, he would be left with no more than 600 drachmae ($2200 - 1040 + 550$) for all his other expenses. And Stratocles was worth not 3 talents but 5 (11.42; cf. Davies 88), and hence was liable for trierarchies, which, at the very least, would take 2000 drachmae (Davies xxii). Stratocles' return on his capital was low because he was a *rentier*, with the bulk of his money in real

estate at 8%. To maintain such a leisurely style of life he unquestionably must have drawn on the income of his daughter's $2\frac{1}{2}$ talents, custody of which had been left in his hands.

But how many could count on great expectations from generous childless uncles? The average family that boasted a wealth of as much as 5 talents simply could not afford to be *rentiers*. They either, like the protagonist of Menander's *Dyskolos*,⁵⁰ farmed their own land, which would ensure them a considerably greater yield than 8%, or put some of their capital into owning a shop or slave-broking or money-lending. And at that they probably had to keep a sharp eye on disbursements; an estate of 5 talents was eligible for the trierarchy, which by itself could exhaust a whole year's income. To be sure, by living on the farm or in a city house which they owned, there was no outlay for rent, and clothing, made at home and made to last, was a negligible expense, but there would be sacrifices and parties on fixed annual occasions,⁵¹ funerals and grave monuments for the dead, armor for the sons, dowries for the daughters, and the inevitable liturgies. And there were always years when the crops were poor or a key slave-worker died or a debtor defaulted. Theophrastus scoffs (*Char.* 22) at the pennypincher who has his sandals constantly resoled instead of buying a new pair, who stays in the house when his mantle is being washed because it is the only one he has, who makes the caterers he has hired for his daughter's wedding provide their own food; the jibes hit home because his target, a choregus and trierarch (22.2, 5), has no need to behave so, but there must have been many others for whom it was an unavoidable way of life. Even men worth a good deal more than 3 talents were constantly borrowing, hypothecating their lands, houses, slaves. It was not to raise money for business purposes but to cover some occasional large personal expense—a dowry, funeral, ransom, trierarchy, the cost of an adverse judgement in a lawsuit;⁵²

⁵⁰ His estate was 2 talents (327–28).

⁵¹ Cf. Menander, *Epit.* 749–50, reference to the annually recurring expenses of the women's festivals.

⁵² Cf. Finley 81–87. He points out (83) the number of *horoi* that record hypothecating of real estate to raise money for a dowry. See also Dem. 40.52 (loan to pay funeral expenses), 53.10 (loan to pay off a ransom), 50.7 (for a trierarchy), 47.49–51 (for paying off a judgment).

only the very rich had the reserves to fall back on for such contingencies. Scant wonder that there was so much wriggling and squirming to get out of being tapped for liturgies.⁵³

Among the clients of the orators were two diverse groups. One consisted of men of moderate wealth, 1 to 5 talents,⁵⁴ those whose incomes and financial problems we have just discussed. The other consisted of men with at least 10 to 15 talents, the members of the Three Hundred. As a matter of fact, 15 talents marked the lower limits. The charmed circle included plutocrats with double that or more.⁵⁵

These were the ones who were able to indulge in such conspicuous consumption as keeping horses (cf. Davies xxv-vi), even that extravagance *par excellence*, keeping them not for riding but for pulling a chariot (Dem. 42.24), who walked about with three slaves at heel and kept mistresses (Dem. 36.45), whose house in town boasted a garden (Isaeus 5.11) or a ball court and wrestling ring (Theophrastus, *Char.* 5.9), who went in for exotic pets and imported bric-a-brac (*ibid.*).⁵⁶ And of course they were able to lavish money on their children, no matter how many there were. Demosthenes' guardians laid out 700 drachmae a year for maintaining him along with his sister and mother

⁵³ The orators' clients frequently claim that their opponents are trying to avoid liturgies (e.g., Dem. 42.3-4, 21; Isaeus 5.36, 11.47, 11.49); there must have been fire behind the smoke.

⁵⁴ 1 talent (Lycurgus, *Leoc.* 22), 1-2 talents (Isaeus 2.34-35 and cf. Davies xxiii; 4.7 and Davies 237; probably 8.35 and Davies 314), 2-3 talents (Isaeus 11.41; 3.2 and Davies xxiii; Dem. 38.20 and Davies 416-18), 3-5 talents (Isaeus 7.19, 31 and Davies 45; 11.42, 44 and Davies 87-88; 6.19, 20, 23, 33 and Davies 562; Lysias 19.9, 59 and Davies 200; 17.2, 5 [real estate hypothecated for 2 talents and presumably worth much more; see note 25 above]; Dem. 42.28 and Davies 554 [real estate hypothecated for c. 3 talents]).

⁵⁵ Demosthenes Sr.'s estate was worth almost 14 talents (note 8 above); Aristophanes, who made money campaigning for Evagoras, had at least 15 (Lysias 19.29, 42-43 and Davies 202); Diodotus, a merchant, left over 15 (Lysias 32.4-6, 13-15 and Davies 152-53). The estate of Dicaeogenes produced an income of 80 minae (Isaeus 5.11, 35; for its components, see also 5.22, 26 and Davies 146); at, say, 10% this implies a worth of over 13 talents. Davies (593) estimates the worth of the speaker of Lysias 21 between 20 and 30 talents. A certain Timocrates was worth over 10 talents and his brother-in-law Onetor over 30 (Dem. 30.10 and Davies 423), Conon at least 40 (Lysias 19.40 and Davies 508), Pasion 65 (Dem. 36.5-6, 11, 34 and Davies 431-35), Lysias' family 70 (*P. Oxy.* 1606.30 and Davies 589).

⁵⁶ This is the class Xenophon had in mind when (*Vect.* 4.8) he speaks of people's need for cash in prosperous times, "the men for fine armor, good horses, a magnificent house and furnishings . . ., the women for expensive clothes and gold jewelry."

(27.36). It was not considered excessive to pay 1000 drachmae a year just for the upkeep of two boys and a girl. The cost of food and clothing was probably not much more than in families of lesser means, but children born with silver spoons in their mouths must have the costly services of the shoemaker, fuller, and hairdresser, and the sons must have their *paidagogos*, the daughters their maid.⁵⁷ Yet even these outlays were nothing compared with what had to be faced when the children grew up. And the expense that bulked larger than all the rest was the dowry that a girl in this elevated set required to attract a mate of appropriate financial standing; as a husband who had gotten a mere 20 minae with his bride remarked (Isaeus 11.40), "a man with a lot of money wouldn't be given a dowry that small."

The size of the dowries is a sure gauge of a family's wealth. Yet, though often discussed, they have not been properly exploited for a variety of reasons.⁵⁸ For one, our information derives from two quite different sources, the orators and inscriptions on the one hand and Greek New Comedy and its Roman adaptations on the other; the latter consistently provide a higher range of figures—the Roman adaptations many many times higher—and these figures have been both uncritically accepted and hypercritically rejected.⁵⁹ For another, no one has ever taken into account the crucial factor of family size. It

⁵⁷ The speaker in Lysias 32.28 reckons 1000 drachmae a year as a generous but reasonable amount for the upkeep of two boys and their sister along with a *paidagogos* and maid, and in 32.20 he indicates the principal items of expense. If we allow 500 for food (cf. note 49 above), that would leave 500 for shoes, cleaning, hairdressing, and similar services.

⁵⁸ See, e.g., W. Erdmann, *Die Ehe im alten Griechenland* (Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte 20, Munich 1934) 319–21 and Finley's justifiable criticism (266); H. Wolff, *RE* 23 (1957) 139–41.

⁵⁹ Rostovtzeff, *SEHWW* 163: "To the girls he [the Athenian *bourgeois*] gives a decent but not excessive dowry, usually of one, two, three, or four talents of silver, sixteen being the maximum;" Finley 79: "Roughly, 3,000–6,000 drachmas seems to have been the accepted standard for the wealthiest people. A dowry of more than 6,000 drachmas could be grounds for gossip, even suspicion." Rostovtzeff's figure of 16 is now read as 10 (Menander, ed. Koerte, fr. 333.11) and, though the text is uncertain, some sort of exaggeration seems intended ("don't marry an ugly old woman even with a dowry of 10 talents"). For dowries in Roman comedy, see below. Finley arrives at his low maximum by ad hoc explanations for any that run higher; in one important instance the explanation is based on an error: the 1 talent and 40 minae (10,000 drachmae) which Stephanus of Acharnae gave his daughter (Dem. 45.66; cf. Davies 438), Finley attributes to Phormio and explains as an ex-slave's bravura gesture. Bogaert (note 33 above, 390) has already pointed out the mistake.

makes all the difference how many daughters there were: a dowry of 20 minae may be the mark of a modest family if there was but one; if there were three, since the practice was to treat them equally,⁶⁰ the total outlay was 60, a talent no less, not at all the mark of a modest family. The number of brothers, too, has a bearing: a father of, say, three sons, aware that at his death each will have to live on but a third of the pie, will beware of cutting off overly large portions for his daughters.

Let us start off with the figures to be found in the orators (see page opposite).⁶¹

"His wife, who brought him a dowry worth talents, he gives a pittance for food," sneers Theophrastus' backbiter (*Char.* 28.4). As we can see from the evidence listed above, such dowries were by no means unusual. Families of even modest means gave as much as a talent, while those belonging to the Three Hundred, Athens' wealthiest, did not hesitate to lay out 2 talents and on occasion went as high as 4—higher, if we may believe Pasion's son, who rounds off to 5 the amount left in his father's will to his mother as a dowry upon her remarrying (*Dem.* 45.74).⁶² Isaeus (3.51) has a speaker refer scornfully to the person who would dower a daughter with less than one-tenth of his property. On the basis of the figures known to us, no father or brother or husband was anywhere near that parsimonious.

Let us turn now to Greek Comedy. There is one instance of a dowry of 1 talent, three instances of 2 talents, two of 3, and even one

⁶⁰ *Dem.* 40.24, 1 talent each to two daughters; *Dem.* 41.3, 29, 40 minae each to two daughters; *Lysias* 16.10, 30 minae each to two sisters; *Isaeus* 2.3, 5, 20 minae each to two sisters. In *Lysias* 19.16–17, one daughter received 40 minae and there is a clear implication that a sister received at least as much.

⁶¹ The figures found in inscriptions coincide nicely in the middle range but do not run quite as high as those in the orators and descend a good deal lower. There are 18 total *horoi* with the amount indicated (*Finley* Nos. 132–37, 141–43, 146–50, 153, 156; *Hesperia* 41 [1972] 275); they range from 1 talent, 20 minae (8000 drachmae) down to 3 minae (300 drachmae), with 8 clustered between 10 and 20 minae. In an inscription from Tenos (*IG* xii.5.873, end of 4th or beginning of 3rd cent. B.C.), three sisters receive 20 minae each. An inscription from Mykonos (*Dittenberger, Syll.*³ 1215, probably 3rd cent. B.C.) lists 8 that range from 2 talents, 2 minae, to 7 minae, with 4 clustered between 10 and 20.

⁶² Alcibiades received 10 talents when he married Hipponicus' granddaughter, with a promise of 10 more upon the birth of their first child (*Plut. Alc.* 8.2; *Andocides* 4.13–14), but this was so exceptional the story "went the rounds of the Greek world for centuries" (*Finley* 79).

References	Size of Estate	Number receiving Dowries	Number of Brothers	Total Outlay
Dem. 45.28	65 t (Pasion)	wife		3 t, 40 m
Dem. 27.4-5, 28.15-16	14 t (note 8)	wife, dau.	1	3 t, 20 m
Isaeus 5.5, 26	13 t (note 55)	4 sisters	1	2 t, 40 m
Lysias 32.6; Davies 152	15 t (note 55)	wife, dau.	2	2 t
Dem. 40.6, 24		2 dau.	3	2 t
Plato, <i>Ep.</i> 13, 361d-e		4 nieces		30 m for 1 = 2 t for all 4
Dem. 27.4; Davies 122, 141		2 dau.	0	50 m for 1 = 1 t, 40 m for both
Dem. 40.8-12, 20; Davies 365		1 dau.	3	1 t, 40 m
Dem. 45.66		1 dau.		1 t, 40 m
Dem. 29.48, 31.6-9; Davies 422-23	30 t (note 55)	1 dau.	2	1 t, 20 m
Dem. 41.3, 6, 29		2 dau.	0	1 t, 20 m
Lys. 19.16-17	5 t (note 54)	2 dau.	1	1 t, 20 m
Dem. 42.27 and Davies 552, 554	5 t (note 54)	1 dau.	0	over 1 t
Hyp. 1 (Lyc.) 13		wife		1 t
Lys. 16.10		2 dau.	2	1 t
Isae. 2.3, 5	1½ t (note 54)	2 dau.	2	40 m
Dem. 59.50	meagre (cf. 59.43)	1 dau.		30 m
Isae. 8.7-8	1½ t (note 54)	1 dau.	2	25 m
Isae. 11.40		1 dau.		20 m

of 4.⁶³ Is Menander, as has been claimed, going in for comic exaggeration?⁶⁴ Or are we in the milieu of the plutocrats, men who could lay out such sums without turning a hair?

⁶³ 1 talent, Kock, *Frag. com. graec.* iii, p. 430, No. 117 = Edmonds iiiA, p. 378; 2 talents, *Aspis* 135-36, Thrasonides 446 (= C. Austin, *Comicorum graecorum fragmenta in papyris reperta* [Berlin and New York 1973] No. 151), *P. Oxy.* 2533 (= Austin No. 251); 3 talents, *Dyskolos* 844, *Perik.* 1015; 4 talents, *Epit.* 134.

⁶⁴ Finley 267, conformable with his view that the wealthiest families rarely gave more than a talent (cf. note 59 above). To consider the figures exaggerated not only is unnecessary but blunts the point of Menander's portrayals. E.g., when Smicrines in the *Epitrepontes*, a sharp businessman for whom money talks, bemoans (134) the dowry of 4 talents he bestowed upon a son-in-law who forthwith proceeds to behave abominably toward his daughter, Menander is not showing us his weakness for exaggerating financial losses but his anguish at not getting what he paid for, particularly when he paid, as it were, the top of the market.

An unequivocal answer is provided by one of the new plays, the *Aspis*. Chaerestratus, a fine and open-handed *senex*, gives his niece a dowry of 2 talents (135–36, 268–69). Since he has a daughter of his own, he will presumably deal at least as generously with her. His total outlay for dowries, then, will be a minimum of 4 talents. Now, his estate happens to be 60 talents (350)—almost exactly the same as Pasion's, Athens' richest banker, whose fortune has been estimated at 65 talents (Davies 434), and who, as we have seen, left in his will a dowry of just about 4 talents to his wife.

The sons' style of life no less than the daughters' dowries points in the same direction. Moschion in the *Samia* had his "dogs and horses . . ., cut a fine figure in the guards, was able to give a fair amount of help to friends in need" and, far from avoiding liturgies, eagerly took them on to improve his public image (13–16). The mention of horses is particularly significant: as has been pointed out, they were the mark of affluence *par excellence*, the Athenian equivalent of maintaining a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce. Another tell-tale feature is the calling in of caterers when there is a festival or family event to celebrate.⁶⁵ And, when these moguls of money contract debts, it is not for a mere sum in minae but for "many talents" (Menander, *Sicyon*. 135).

All this makes clear why the sons are in such a desperate quandary when they lose their heart to a "poor" girl. They are not the mere scions of well-to-do burghers; they are heirs apparent to a financial throne in an aristocracy of wealth and it is their duty to marry an appropriate princess. In the two complete plays of Menander that we happen to have, the plot concerns young nobles of this sort who have betrayed their class by falling in love with, so to speak, the daughter of a commoner. We become so absorbed in Menander's world that we unthinkingly fall in with the values his characters express, unthinkingly accept the fathers of these girls as poor. They are poor the way a minor executive of General Motors is poor as compared with the Chairman of the Board. Cnemon, the father in the *Dyskolos*, a character informs us (604), is "the true Attic peasant;" with a peasantry

⁶⁵ See note 23 above. The caterer in Menander's *Aspis* expected to be paid 3 drachmae (223–24). It was the menu that was expensive, little short of a talent for an elaborate spread (Menander, ed. Koerte, fr. 264).

of the like of Cnemon, Attica would have been unique in the annals of ancient agriculture!⁶⁶ His land, of which he had so much he could afford for purely temperamental reasons to leave some uncultivated (162-65), was worth no less than 2 talents (327-28); Athenians paid the orators good money to help them go to court and battle for estates that size (Isaeus 2.34-35, 4.7, 8.35). The father in the *Samia*, Niceratus, far from coming from across the tracks, lived right alongside Demeas, father of the boy involved, was Demeas' close personal friend, and accompanied him on trips abroad (96-112). Both Cnemon and Niceratus were parsimonious, the first clearly by choice (cf. *Dyskolos* 328-31), the other perhaps by necessity since, as we have seen, even men worth several talents could often find it hard to make ends meet. But either of them would have been the envy of any of the 12,000 Athenians who, having less than 20 minae of property to their name, were in 322 B.C. dropped from the citizenship rolls. The contretemps in New Comedy are not between rich and poor but between the very very rich and those some cuts below them.

Now that the recent finds of Greek New Comedy have supplied a fair sampling of figures for dowries and property, it has become clear that these are of a different order from the figures long known from the Roman adaptations. The latter are so consistently higher one is driven to the conclusion that the Roman poets as a general practice inflated the numbers they found in their originals, perhaps as much as four or five times. A generous dowry in Menander is 2 talents; in Plautus and Terence it is 10 (Terence, *And.* 950-51; Plautus, *Merc.* 703; cf. *Truc.* 845, well in excess of 6) while 2 is but minimal (Terence, *H.T.* 838, 937-40). The biggest dowry known from Greek New Comedy is 4 talents, from Roman comedy 20 (Plautus, *Cist.* 561-62).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ B. Mieczysław ("Menanders Dyskolos und Athen," in *Menanders Dyskolos als Zeugnis seiner Epoche*, Deutsche Akad. der Wiss. zu Berlin, Schriften der Sektion für Altertumswissenschaft 50 [Berlin 1965] 13-14) takes Menander's word absolutely literally: "Er ist arm," he says repeatedly of Cnemon and describes him as leading "das Leben eines echten attischen Bauern" and his stepson Gorgias as "ein wirklich armer junger Bauer." Really poor peasants did not do their farming, as Gorgias did, with a slave at their side; cf. Jones 13-14.

⁶⁷ In *Trin.* 1158 the dowry is 1000 gold Philippi. Since the Philippus was worth about 25 denarii and there were 6000 denarii to the talent (T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* i [Baltimore 1933] 127), this works out to over 4 talents.

Cnemon in the *Dyskolos* has an estate of 2 talents (327–28), while Menedemus in Terence's *H.T.*, a comparable character, has one worth 15 (145–46).⁶⁸ In Plautus' *Mostellaria*, the clever slave claims (648) to have bought the house next door for 2 talents, a price that delights the man who thinks he has acquired it (904–15) and who asserts (912–14) he would not sell it back for 6; we have no prices for houses from New Comedy, but in the orators Demosthenes' father's house was worth only half a talent (Dem. 27.10) and the house of the wealthy Aristophanes (cf. note 55 above), the highest priced private dwelling mentioned in the orators (cf. Pritchett in *Hesperia* 25 [1956] 271), only 50 minae. In Terence's *Phormio*, property in Lemnos brings a return of 2 talents (789–91), which, at 8⁹/₁₀, would make the holding worth 25; the most expensive property we hear of in the orators, also belonging to Aristophanes, was worth a little over 4 (Lysias 19.29, 42 and Davies 202; cf. Pritchett, *ibid.* 271–73). Very likely, as has been suggested, the figures were inflated to put them in line with what Plautus' and Terence's audiences were used to, for rich Roman senators of their day could have bought and sold many times over even the wealthiest Athenians.⁶⁹

The "typical citizen . . . Menander . . . portrayed . . . is a middle-class landowner, a businessman, or a *rentier*, well-to-do but not extremely rich . . . Millionaires of the day (if there were any) are not accepted as typical Athenians and therefore do not appear in Menander's comedies." So wrote Rostovtzeff (*SEHWW* 163) before the recent spectacular additions to the corpus of Menander. We now know that it is precisely the "millionaires" who figure most prominently in his plays. We see reflected there the ancient equivalent of the society of Molière's *Misanthrope* or Oscar Wilde's *Importance of*

⁶⁸ Thus, when in Terence's *Phormio* (392–95), Phormio sneers that Demeas would certainly remember the name and total ancestry of a relative who had left him 10 talents, the implication is a mere 10 talents, the equivalent of a 2-talent estate in the orators, which, as we have seen, is modest. In Demeas' circle fortunes were over three times that size at least: his neighbor's wife had the land on Lemnos described below that was worth 25 talents, and the text makes clear that this was by no means all the family's holdings.

⁶⁹ In Plautus' *Trinummus* a house is sold for 40 minae (125–26), but this was an absurdly low price (cf. 1081–82). Suggestion that figures are inflated, in Gomme-Sandbach (note 22 above) 297. Wealth of Roman senators, cf. Finley (note 15 above) 101.

Being Ernest, not the comfortable suburbanites of American television comedy.⁷⁰

IV

Let us summarize. Athens' upper and middle classes together numbered some 9000 out of 21,000. We may consider as the upper class those who paid liturgies, men worth at least 3-4 talents. Among them was an upper bracket of 1200 liable for the trierarchy and, within these, the Three Hundred, the city's wealthiest, boasting at least 10 to 15 talents and in some cases much more. Men of means owned, either wholly or with partners, land, slave-manned workshops, slaves for hire, mining concessions and refineries or both; they invested in commerce, tax-farming, moneylending. Perhaps a majority had the bulk of their money in land with some representation in other areas, but there were not a few who eschewed land, with its modest return, for one or more of the other areas. The lower levels of the upper class, people with 3 to 5 talents, were in easy circumstances only if the family was small—and small families were the exception. Only the very rich, the members of the Three Hundred, had no financial worries: they could afford to go in for horses and other forms of conspicuous consumption and provide their women with handsome dowries. Greek New Comedy, contrary to what has been thought, concentrates on this particular class, hence the size of the dowries mentioned in the plays. This must be kept carefully in mind when using the plays as sources of socio-economic information.

⁷⁰ The Roman adaptations naturally reflect the same social class, families whose sons keep dogs and horses (Terence, *And.* 56-57), who have their parties catered (Plautus, *Aul.* 280, *Casina* 719-23, *Merc.* 578-80 and 741-43, *Pseud.* 790-94), who can produce sizable sums in cash at a moment's notice (Plautus, *Bacch.* 1050, *Epid.* 296-305), and who give their daughters handsome dowries; they are not merely "a well-to-do upper middle-class Greek society . . . not necessarily one of extreme or even great wealth" (G. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* [Princeton 1952] 273).