

Land and the Citizen in the Hellenistic Period

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DOI: 10.54103/milanoup.292.c754

ABSTRACT:

The article follows on, for the Hellenistic period, from Faraguna's 2024 essay on land and citizenship in Archaic and Classical cities. As pointed out by F., the link between citizenship and land ownership has not been enough emphasised in recent scholarship. The question is what role it plays in the very definition of citizenship: either it remains a capacity that citizens have the right (but not the obligation) to exercise, or it is indispensable for establishing their legal status. Furthermore, certain individuals have access to ownership without entering *politeia*: foreigners with *enktesis*, free peasants not citizens, beneficiaries of a *dōrea*. Finally, this chapter discusses the oliganthropic crisis/*stasis* of the second half of the third century BCE and its relationship with land ownership.

KEYWORDS: citizenship; *enktesis*; *paroikoi*/*perioikoi*; oliganthropy; *stasis*.

1. The question of the legal links between land and citizenship

In an article published in 2024,¹ Michele Faraguna decisively tackled a subject that he rightly considers to be neglected today: the link between citizenship, land and the institutionalisation of the *polis* in the Archaic and Classical periods. The author's thesis is presented as a "triangulation" exercise, in which he seeks to show that "the dynamics of the relationship between land and *politeia* [...] can offer new elements for the analysis of institutionalisation within the Greek city".²

Indeed, with the exception of the work of Julien Zurbach, which shows the centrality of land in defining status from the Mycenaean period to the formation of city-states,³ recent studies on citizenship have approached the issue from what could be described as an anthropological perspective: two recent

* I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Michele Faraguna for inviting me to Milan in June 2025 for the conference "Sharing in the *Polis*", as well as to Jules Buffet and Graham Oliver, who read and emended the present article with great care.

1 Faraguna 2024.

2 Faraguna 2024, 121.

3 Zurbach 2013; Zurbach 2017.

works come to mind, one by Josine Blok, *Citizenship in Classical Athens*, published in 2017,⁴ and the second, a collective volume published in 2023 entitled *Citizenship in Antiquity: Civic Communities in the Ancient Mediterranean*.⁵ By conceiving of citizenship as a question of membership and participation, Blok's book was groundbreaking in at least two respects: firstly, it reintroduced the religious aspect, in this case from the perspective of the links between gods and men, which had, so to speak, been abandoned in favour of a purely political vision in the narrow sense of the term; secondly, it rehabilitated women as *politides*, "citizens", enjoying a real form of participation, insofar as the latter was no longer reduced to the government of the *polis*.⁶ Therefore, in line with the book's perspective, the question of land was not treated as such, in its relationship to citizenship, from a legal and economic perspective.⁷ The second work takes a broader perspective in terms of space and time, but it is part of the same anthropological trend, so that no article is directly devoted to the question of the link between land and citizenship. This is evidenced by the initial contribution, by French anthropologist Catherine Neveu, who focuses primarily on how citizenship, beyond its legal and formal aspects, is practised and defined by the actors themselves.⁸ Another example is the contribution by Alain Duplouy, devoted to lifestyle and behaviour,⁹ which follows on from a collective work published in 2018 by him and Roger Brock, *Defining Citizenship in Archaic Greece*.¹⁰ In a recent book on citizenship in the Hellenistic period,¹¹ I myself chose to emphasise what I call "the making of the citizen" and to show that this status, long to build or difficult to acquire, remained fragile in many respects for its beneficiaries. The question of land is addressed in a section of the book devoted to participatory practices, where one sees how individuals or groups belonging to different statuses coexist and interact in the same appropriated space.¹² But here again, even if the analysis of institutions remains central, the objective was not to focus on an economic understanding of citizenship.

Beyond these recent debates on citizenship, the second historiographical thread is, or could have been, that of studies on the Hellenistic economy, or

4 Blok 2017.

5 Filonik *et al.* 2023.

6 Blok 2017, 43-45.

7 Chapter 3 ("The Value of Descent", Blok 2017, 100-46) deals with inheritance, but this inheritance is primarily immaterial, that of *hiera kai bosia*, defined on p. 99 as follows: "*Hiera kai bosia* (...) refers to human obligations to the gods in two distinct but related ways, namely the human gifts to the gods (*hiera*) and conduct towards gods and humans showing proper respect for the gods (*bosia*)".

8 Neveu 2023, 33.

9 Duplouy 2023.

10 Duplouy, Brock 2018.

11 Müller 2026a.

12 Müller 2026a, chap. 5, "*Metousia*: la participation et son partage, § Les campagnes d'Asie Mineure ou comment partager la terre avec les populations locales".

rather economies, which saw a revival in the early 2000s with the work carried out by the Liverpool and Bordeaux research teams. For more than 20 years, several collective works have sought to explore this period,¹³ both to move beyond the ideas of M.I. Finley, who stated that the subject did not exist,¹⁴ and to update M.I. Rostovtseff's work on both a conceptual and documentary level.¹⁵ This has resulted in a series of studies that have focused, on the one hand, on issues of trade, financial flows, objects of exchange and coinage and, on the other, on the State in relation to the emergence of the Hellenistic kingdoms, in both cases based on regional cases,¹⁶ or even analyses of very specific sources. However, the question of the link between status and economy seemed distant, particularly in the *Hellenistic Economies* series, given the amount of material still to be brought to light, or obsolete for those who were primarily concerned with factors of change: according to Archibald, "orders, statuses, monarchies, territories are categories that impose false notions of stability in what is a mutable and mutating world".¹⁷ This line of thinking (status + economics) has therefore only emerged recently, in relation to labour force in the Hellenistic Mediterranean, in a collective volume devoted mainly to so-called subaltern categories.¹⁸

That is why I propose here to revisit the question of citizenship from a different angle and explore, for the Hellenistic period, a theme that follows on from Faraguna's investigation, namely the link between land and the citizen, focusing on the Aegean area and the coast of Asia Minor.¹⁹ It quickly becomes obvious that it is impossible to discuss the status of citizens without also considering other statuses, for which Hellenistic sources, particularly inscriptions, provide a wealth of varied designations: *xenoi*, *metoikoi*, *perioikoi*, *paroikoi*, *apeleutheroi*, *Rhōmaioi* for the most part, not to mention servile statuses or the many ethnonyms that carry a statutory dimension. These various statuses never appear in isolation, but within "statutory clusters" in which *politai* are generally included. We must therefore also consider the relationship of these categories

13 See Archibald *et al.* 2001; Archibald *et al.* 2005; Archibald *et al.* 2011; Descat 2006a.

14 Finley 19993, 183, with Davies 2001, 11-12 and Descat 2006b, 6.

15 Rostovtseff 1989 [1941], with the assessment given by Archibald 2001.

16 This twofold historical approach has led to the publication of several monographs devoted to the economy of various parts of the Greek world during the Hellenistic period: to name but a few, Oliver 2007b (Athens), Müller 2010 (Northern Black Sea), Archibald 2013 (Northern Aegean), Castelli 2024 (Western Black Sea), to which should be added the essential works by Laurent Capdetrey on the Seleucid Empire, which give ample space to the study of land tenure systems: Capdetrey 2007 and 2022.

17 Archibald 2001, 386.

18 Maillot, Zurbach 2021.

19 I don't discuss Egypt here, for lack of space; although it has already been extensively dealt with in the works of Joseph G. Manning (see especially Manning 2003) and Andrew Monson (Monson 2012), it should be taken into account for further work.

to the land in order to understand that of citizens, which I will do through a series of case studies.

The specific problem is to establish how land ownership and the status of *politēs* are linked, with two central questions: in what direction(s) does the link between the two operate? Is property the prerogative of citizens? We will see that three related parameters must be taken into account: the legal land tenure system, but also the mode of exploitation and the level of wealth accumulation, which are powerful factors of change. At the end of this article, I will discuss the effects produced in certain cities by the breakdown of the link between land and citizenship, in terms of *stasis* or even *metabolē*, or “revolution”.

2. Two preliminary remarks

2.1. The first remark concerns the types of land found in sources for the Hellenistic period. In short, beyond the three traditional categories that Aristotle attributes to Hippodamus of Miletus,²⁰ four types of land can be distinguished: royal land, public land belonging to cities, sacred land and private land. The distinction between these types of land is not always clear.

The most studied today is certainly royal land, which belonged to Hellenistic rulers of all kinds. In the case of Seleucid Asia Minor, Laurent Capdetrey points out that the expression *chōra basilikē* is found only twice in the sources.²¹ He rightly shows that the best way to define it is to consider it negatively as “all land not dependent on an autonomous entity exercising control over a territory and capable of negotiating the forms of that control with the royal power”.²² It is less a question of the king enjoying a form of ownership than of exercising his

20 Arist. *Pol.* 2.1267b 33-37: διήρει δ' εἰς τρία μέρη τὴν χώραν, τὴν μὲν ἱερὰν τὴν δὲ δημοσίαν τὴν δ' ἰδίαν: ὅθεν μὲν τὰ νομιζόμενα ποιήσουσι πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς, ἱερὰν, ἀφ' ᾧ δ' οἱ προπολεμοῦντες βιώσονται, κοινήν, τὴν δὲ τῶν γεωργῶν, ἰδίαν, “He divided the land into three parts, one sacred, one public and one private: sacred land to supply the customary offerings to the gods, common land to provide the warrior class with food, and private land to be owned by the farmers”. As highlighted by Rousset 2013, 113, the three types are articulated differently in *Pol.* 7.1330a 9-18: ἀναγκαῖον τοίνυν εἰς δύο μέρη διηρῆσθαι τὴν χώραν, καὶ τὴν μὲν εἶναι κοινήν τὴν δὲ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν, καὶ τούτων ἑκατέραν διηρῆσθαι δίχα πάλιν, τῆς μὲν κοινῆς τὸ μὲν ἕτερον μέρος εἰς τὰς πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς λειτουργίας τὸ δὲ ἕτερον εἰς τὴν τῶν συσσιτίων δαπάνην, τῆς δὲ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν τὸ ἕτερον μέρος τὸ πρὸς τὰς ἐσχατίας, τὸ δὲ ἕτερον πρὸς πόλιν, ἵνα δύο κλήρων ἑκάστῳ νεμηθέντων ἀμφοτέρων τῶν τόπων πάντες μετέχωσιν, “It is necessary therefore for the land to be divided into two parts, of which one must be common and the other the private property of individuals; and each of these two divisions must again be divided in two. Of the common land one portion should be assigned to the services of religion, and the other to defray the cost of the common meals; of the land in private ownership one part should be the district near the frontiers, and another the district near the city, in order that two plots may be assigned to each citizen and all may have a share in both districts” (transl. H. Rackham 1932).

21 Capdetrey 2007, 136.

22 Capdetrey 2007, 138.

sovereignty, and the prerogatives that come with it, over a very large area that is otherwise structured into different land statuses.²³ We can thus identify crown estates, heirs to Persian but also Macedonian traditions, including the *paradeisoi*, or “paradises”, and the *dōreai*, or “concessions”, some of which are attached to civic territories. We can also mention the royal *katoikiai*, on which military colonists endowed with *klēroi* were settled. Such communities were not organised into cities, except when this status was granted to them on an exceptional basis, as was the case with Tyriaion in Phrygia, which became a *polis* thanks to Eumenes II after the Peace of Apamea in 188 BCE.²⁴

Public land is land that belongs collectively to the city, which defines its boundaries (at least internally) and grant rights over it, e.g. grazing rights. This is recognised in sources through the use of the adjective *dēmosios/dēmosia*, as in the treaty between Heraclea by Latmos and Pidasia in 323-313/2 BCE: the Pidasians obtain the right to “build dwellings in the city on public land (ἐν τῇ δημοσίᾳ) wherever they wish”.²⁵ This category does not pose any particular difficulty, except in two cases. On the one hand, it may be subject to royal interference, as in Asia Minor in particular. Even though cities are, by definition, outside the *chōra basilikē*, they do not all have the same status in relation to the kingdom. We will not go into this very complex matter here, which is less a general system than a case-by-case approach. We will simply emphasise, with Capdetrey, that “the spatial consequences (of these distinctions) are sometimes (...) difficult to establish”.²⁶ On the other hand, the question of the relationship between public land and sacred land has long been raised: should they be considered as opposing categories or, on the contrary, should sacred land be seen as a dependency of public land? An inscription from Akraiphia in Boeotia, dating from the second half of the third century BCE,²⁷ mentions a Theban who “re-mitted the loan that the city owed him on the mortgage of the sacred land of Apollo” (ἐπὶ [τῇ] ἱερῇ γῇ τ[ῷ] Ἀπόλλωνος). In other words, the Akraiphians had control over the sanctuary’s properties and could use them to secure a loan, which implies that it was considered alienable, even if this was only to be done as a last resort. There are also examples of land being designated as both public and sacred: this is the case in a Hellenistic inscription from Thebes, which refers to [τ]ὴν δημοσί[αν καὶ] ἱερὰν γῆν, “public and (at the same time) sacred land”.²⁸ Two recent articles by Denis Rousset and Michele Faraguna seem to

23 For different types of land, see Capdetrey 2007, 135-66.

24 *I.Sultan Dağı* 393, with Capdetrey 2012, 331-32.

25 *SEG* 47.1563, ll. 27-28: ἐξεῖναι δὲ Πιδασεῦσιν οἰκοδομεῖσθαι οἰκῆσι[μα] | ἐν τῇ πόλει ἐν τῇ δημοσίᾳ οὗ ἂν βούλωνται.

26 Capdetrey 2007, 196.

27 Migeotte 1984, 16B, ll. 1-7.

28 *IG* VII 2446, with the restoration proposed by Rousset 2013, 125-27: [Οἱ]δε ἀπεγράψαντο ἐπιληψόμενοι γεω[ργεῖν τ]ὴν δημοσί[αν καὶ] ἱερὰν γῆν, instead of [τῇ]ν δημοσίαν καὶ τὴν ἱερὰν γῆν.

me to have resolved the relationship between public and sacred land.²⁹ The outcome is that sacred land is jointly owned by the *polis* and the god. It should be added that sacred domains also exist in kingdoms, with varying degrees of integration.³⁰

This leaves the last category, that of private land, appropriated by individuals within the territory of the cities, if we disregard for now the case of royal concessions. This citizen ownership is evidenced notably by deeds of sale, the corpus of which was established by Jean Game in 2008.³¹ One example is a deed from Amphipolis, in south-eastern Thrace, dated to the middle of the third century BCE,³² in which Kissos, son of Hekataios, buys from Sōsikratēs, son of Andronikos, “the house and the adjoining land” (τὴν οἰκίαν καὶ τὸ οἰκόπεδον τὸ προσόν), with Antigonos son of Machatas and Nikandros son of Leōnidas as neighbours. This is followed by the price (73 *chrysoi*, that is gold staters of Attic weight³³), the names of the guarantors and the witnesses. It is this type of land, *idia gē* or *chōra*, that interests me most here, in its connection with citizenship.

2.2. *Second general remark on land*: it fulfils two functions, the first of which is production through its use by individuals and communities. We will not dwell on this well-known and well-studied point,³⁴ particularly thanks to archaeological work. While it does not reveal the actual forms of ownership, it does allow us to observe methods of exploitation in terms of farming, livestock breeding, use of natural resources and craftsmanship.

More interesting for my argument is the second function of land ownership, which is to serve as a financial tool,³⁵ as land and territories generate income, *prosodoi*. Regardless of who owns it—a king, a city, a sanctuary, or an individual—, land is perceived as a means of generating revenue and, beyond that, of carrying out multiple operations. The Greeks were particularly familiar with this function, as evidenced by the equivalence between the two, or even the replacement of one by the other. Thus, as Plutarch explains,³⁶ when Sulla intervened in Greece during the first war against Mithridates (86 BCE), he decided to punish

29 Rousset 2013 and Faraguna 2023b, 236: these studies follow on from Papazarkadas 2011, which focuses on Athens. See also Blok 2017, 58–59 and 77, with n. 129 on the sharing of the land between the city and the god(s).

30 Capdetrey 2007, 167–89.

31 Game 2008.

32 Game 2008, 40–41, no 12 (*I. Amphipolis actes XII*).

33 I would like to thank Frédérique Duyrat for the lengthy discussion we had about the prices mentioned in these deeds of sale.

34 See Bresson 2015, which, among other things, provides a welcome overview of “Agricultural production” and “The economy of the agricultural world” for the Classical and Hellenistic periods.

35 See Faguer forthcoming.

36 Plut. *Sull.* 19.6 (about Sylla and the Thebans): καὶ τῆς χώρας αὐτῶν ἀποτεμόμενος τὴν ἡμίσειαν τῷ Πυθίῳ καὶ τῷ Ὀλυμπίῳ καθιέρωσεν, ἐκ τῶν προσόδων κελεύσας ἀποδίδοσθαι τὰ χρήματα τοῖς θεοῖς ἅπερ αὐτὸς εἰλήφει, “He also took away half of their territory and

the Thebans, who had initially shown hostility towards the Romans, by taking away “half of their territory” and giving it to the gods of Delphi and Olympia, which made little sense in territorial terms. The aim of the operation was, in fact, to use the income (*prosodoi*) from these lands to repay the forced loan that he himself had taken out on these two sanctuaries. In practice, the Thebans were temporarily deprived of the revenues from this half of the *chōra*. Even if there was an effective transfer of ownership, it certainly only lasted until the amounts levied had been repaid. The exact opposite happened slightly later in Oropos, a city with a sanctuary protected by the same Sulla. The Oropians saw the revenues from their territory literally made sacred, as they were allocated to the hero Amphiaraos against the greed of the publicans.³⁷ In the grounds for the *Senatus Consultum* that validated the general’s decision in 73, the formula used by the Greek ambassadors is striking, as it refers to the delineation of revenues as if they were territories: “Lucius Sulla has delimited (πρ(ο)σώρισεν) the disputed revenues for the god Amphiaraos, so that on these lands they [the Oropians] do not pay tax to the publican”.³⁸ Here we see that the shift to sacred status provides better protection for these revenues.

Once this equivalence has been established, what are the mechanisms by which the lands, all types being taken together, generate income? The sale of produce is only the first stage in the process of extracting value. One thinks next of all the levies collected by states: the royalties due to the Hellenistic kings, such as the *phoros*, which was imposed in a context of hegemony;³⁹ but also taxation by the cities, in other words the charging of varied *tele*, “which has a patrimonial character” and concerns the relationship between the city and its territory;⁴⁰ or the collection of the special *eisphora* tax: this is not really comparable to a land tax, but its assessment, *timēma*, is certainly based primarily on the value of land, even if this is not the only form of wealth taken into account⁴¹. Land also generates income through lease contracts, where the lessors may be cities, shrines or individuals.⁴² Finally, land enables financial transactions, which in turn trigger the circulation of money. This is the case when land ownership guarantees, in one way or another, a dowry,⁴³ or a public or private loan: the

consecrated it to Pythian Apollo and Olympian Zeus, giving orders that from its revenues the moneys should be paid back to the gods which he had taken from them” (transl. B. Perrin 1916).

37 *IG VII*² 2, 308 (= *RDGE* 23), with Müller 2019.

38 *IG VII*² 2, 308, ll. 21–23: ταύτας τε τὰς προσόδους, περὶ ὧν ἄγεται τὸ πρᾶγμα, Λεύκιος Σύλλας τῷ θεῷ Ἀμφιαράῳ πρ(ο)σώρισεν ὥπως ὑπὲρ τούτων τῶν χωρῶν πρόσδοον τῷ δημοσιῳνῇ μὴ τελῶσιν, “Lucius Sylla delimited the disputed revenues for the god Amphiaraos, so that on these lands they [= the Oropians] would not pay tax to the publican”.

39 Chankowski 2007, 306.

40 Chankowski 2007, 303.

41 Pernin 2007.

42 Pernin 2014.

43 See the *horoi* studied by Finley 1985² and now by Faguer forthcoming.

guaranteed sums might be (re-)invested. One example is the practice of *prasis epi lysei*, “sale with the option to repurchase”, which consists of selling land and property in order to obtain a mortgage loan: in this configuration, the vendor is in fact the borrower, while the buyer is the creditor. This type of sale is so called because the borrower has the option to repurchase his land at a later date.⁴⁴

3. First pattern: from citizenship to land ownership

After these preliminary remarks, we return to the main question of this chapter, namely how land ownership and the status of *polites* are linked, and in what direction(s)—or pattern—those links operate. The first pattern is one in which citizenship status gives legal access to land. This is the traditional and best-known land tenure system, which applies in all cities, except, for instance, when a person’s property has been confiscated. The importance of land ownership in ideological terms implies protection through registration in the archives: the recording of citizens’ names, of course,⁴⁵ but also of transactions affecting ownership rather than actual cadastral registration.⁴⁶ We can cite the details of a transaction provided in a sales register from Tenos dating from the end of the third century BCE. This is deed 39, a repurchase under a *prasis epi lysei*:

Ἰφικρίτη Χαιρέλα Ἐλαιθυαῖς μετὰ κυρίων Τιμοκράτου Χαιρέλα Χαβυσσίσου [= Χαβυσσίου] Θεστιάδου παρ’ Ἀρχαγόρου Μορυχίωνος Δονακέως ἐπρίατο τὴν οἰκίαν καὶ τὰ χωρία τὰ ἐν Ἐλεῖθυαίῳ πάντα ὅσα ἐπρίατο Ἀρχαγόρας παρ’ Ἰφικρίτης, οἱ γείτονες Κλεαγόρας, Ἀριστοφάνης, δραχμῶν ἀργυρίου πεντακισχλίων.

Iphikritē, daughter of Chairelas, Eleithyaïs, in the presence of her tutors Timokratēs and Chairelas, son of Chabyssios, Thestiadai, purchased from Archagoras, son of Morychiōn, Donakeus, the house and land located in Eleithyaion, which Archagoras had purchased in its entirety from Iphikritē, with Kleagoras and Aristophanēs as neighbours, for 5,000 drachmas of silver” (IG XII, 5, 872, ll. 101-103).⁴⁷

Private property is expressed by using the names of individuals followed by their patronymic. The individuals involved here are given a tribal adjective, the equivalent of the Athenian demotic,⁴⁸ but no ethnic, which shows that they are all citizens of Tenos.

44 Faguer 2020.

45 On this issue, see now Boffo, Faraguna 2021 and, for the Hellenistic period more specifically, 693-750.

46 Pernin 2023, 418-19.

47 Transl. by Faguer 2020, pp. 162-63, with a detailed explanation of this type of sale.

48 Faguer 2020, 162, n. 18.

In terms of exploitation, the most common mode associated with citizen ownership is that in which the citizen tills the land with one or more slaves, which forms a first well-identified “statutory cluster” throughout the period considered. This is better known in Athens than elsewhere, particularly because of literary sources from the fourth century BCE, such as Xenophon’s *Oikonomikos* and the many civil cases pleaded by Demosthenes or attributed to him. In the speech *Against Kallikles*,⁴⁹ we see the slave Kallaros working alongside his master, the son of Tisias, to maintain an estate planted with vines and fig trees. This is also the case in Menander’s *Dyskolos* (317 BCE), where we see the wife of Knēmon, the “Grumpy One”, returning to live at the home of her son from a previous marriage. The latter owns a small estate (*choridion*), which he farms with a single slave (*oiketēs*) bequeathed to him by his father.⁵⁰ Slaves were sometimes hired on a seasonal basis to reinforce the permanent workforce, as shown in the speech *Against Nikostratos*.⁵¹ Legally, slaves formed a separate category, alongside other property such as money and furniture.⁵² However, in this context, they could, so to speak, be “immobilised by destination”:⁵³ this means that they were then included in a set of immovable property to which they were assigned. We know of a boundary marker, *horos*, found in the fourth century BCE in the deme of Thorikos in Attica, marking the boundaries of a mining estate that included “a workshop, a house, a garden and slaves”: all of which belonged to Euthydikē daughter of Epicharinos of Eleusis.⁵⁴ This is more than a mortgage boundary marker; it is a property boundary marker that may also serve as a dowry boundary marker for this *epiklēros*.⁵⁵ In terms of the actual farming, however, there is no particular specialisation of the slave who works his master’s land and is attached to his *oikos*. This is shown by the corpus of Delphic manumissions (second century BCE–first century CE), which are overwhelmingly carried out by contract of sale to Apollo. This corpus, by far the most abundant in the Greek world with nearly 1,300 deeds, contains only about 15 references to servile occupations and no reference to agricultural work: in reality, this is not surprising, as the vast majority of slaves were not highly qualified and were therefore “multi-purpose, serving in the house or in the fields”,⁵⁶ with little value to the seller.⁵⁷ But they were there and essential to the running

49 [Dem.], *Against Kallikles* (undatable) 13 and 31, with Hervagault, Mactoux 1974, 80.

50 Men. *Dys.* 23–27 (prologue).

51 [Dem. = Apollodoros], *Against Nikostratos* 6 and 21 (366–365 BCE).

52 Ismard 2019, 28–29.

53 Velissaropoulos-Karakostas 2011, II, 16.

54 SEG 51.162: Θεοί| ὄρος ἐ[ρ]γαστη|ρίου καὶ οἰκί|ας καὶ κήπου| καὶ ἀνδρα|πόδων καὶ| Εὐθυδικῆς| Ἐπιχαρίνο| Ἐλευσινίω| θυγατρὸς ἐ[π]ικλήρου.

55 Faguer forthcoming, Annex C, “Catalogue des bornes hypothécaires”, B297.

56 Mulliez 2021, 161.

57 Concerning Classical Athens, Lewis 2018b, 170–172 has already pointed out that the purchase of slaves was very affordable.

of the estate. Beyond these owners who worked with a few slaves, there were, regardless of the size of the plots, large and even very large landowners in the Hellenistic period, with land concentration undoubtedly increasing from the second century BCE onwards,⁵⁸ and these large landowners employed managers, *epitropoi*, to supervise agricultural work. In Pseudo-Aristotle's *Oikonomika*,⁵⁹ these managers must have been of servile status or origin, since there were two types of slaves: *epitropoi* and *ergatai*, or “workers”. In the Hellenistic period, they were more commonly referred to as *διοικῆται*⁶⁰ or *οἰκονομοί*,⁶¹ but there is no evidence that they were not free-born.

Returning to the link between land and citizenship, it should be noted that being a freedman did not lead to ownership, as it did not lead to citizenship, unlike Roman practices. Some sale contracts did specify that, upon the death of the master, his property would go to the freedmen: this is the case in Delphi with Seleucos and Aphrodisia, freed by Chrēsimos in 145/4 BCE,⁶² who are to receive the latter's possessions, expressed in the form τὰ ὑπάρχοντα (l. 16). However, as the person himself is a freedman,⁶³ there is no chance that he owned land, and we must therefore consider that τὰ ὑπάρχοντα refers only to movable property, money, or even slaves, since a freedman could own these in turn.

In this pattern, land ownership is a right, a possibility, restricted to *politēs*, but not an obligation. After all, the wealth of Demosthenes' father did not include any land ownership, as evidenced by the inventory of the estate.⁶⁴ The result is a partial disconnection between citizenship and effective ownership. Citizens are therefore not necessarily, nor exclusively, landowners, regardless of the reason for this situation. Some of them may thus change their relationship to the land and become tenants. One example is the leases of Thespiiai in Boeotia,⁶⁵ which date from the second half of the third century BCE and prove that there was abundant land available for rent in this city, with some 130 plots leased in the sacred or public domain. Robin Osborne has clearly shown, with regard to this

58 As seems to be shown by archaeological survey data, which must be treated with the necessary caution: see Alcock 1993, 58-63 (with the caveats of Rousset 2004); Bintliff 2019, 130-32.

59 *Oec.* 1.5.1 (1344a25).

60 *Plut. Arat.* 41.2.

61 More precisely, the present participle *οἰκονομών* is used, as in the case of Arrhidaïos, the manager of the *dōrea* of Laodikē, granted by the Seleucid King Antiochos II in 254/3 BCE (*I.Didyma* 492 C, l. 55 = Austin 2006, 173). On these managers, see Chandezon 2011.

62 *CID V* 532 and *Choix Delphes* 131 (145/4 BCE, ll. 16-17): εἰ δὲ μεταλλάξει Χρήσιμος τὸν βίον, λαβέτωσαν τὰ ὑπάρχοντα Χρησίμου Σέλευκος καὶ Ἀφροδισία καὶ τὰ ποτὶ γὰν νομιζόμενα αὐτοῖς φροντιζόντων πάντα, “upon the death of Chrēsimos, Seleukos and Aphrodisia shall receive the property of Chrēsimos and shall themselves attend to all the funerary rituals” (transl. D. Mullicez).

63 *CID V*, 337 (162/1 BCE).

64 *Dem. Against Aphobos I*, 9-11.

65 Pernin 2014, 101-42.

case, that the leasing of land was part of a dual economic strategy: firstly that of the city and its sanctuaries because of the *prosodoi* thus generated, but also, at least in part, that of a civic elite, certainly landowners elsewhere, who leased the land and thus received a significant income from the surplus generated once the rent had been paid.⁶⁶ The same situation is observed in Classical Athens by Claire Taylor:⁶⁷ she has shown that, despite exceptions, land leases served in demes less to compensate for the lack of land ownership among poor citizens than to reinforce their poverty, since it was mainly the wealthy who were lessees. Leasing also concerned non-citizens, including foreigners and freedmen. Lysias' speech *On the Sacred Olive Tree*⁶⁸ mentions, among others, Alkis *apeleutheros* of Antisthenēs, who leased a plot of land. As for the poorest citizens, they could as well, we must assume, hire out their labour, or at best become managers, as Xenophon envisions in *Œconomicus*.⁶⁹ In general, however, the relationship of poor citizens to land remains difficult to detect in written sources⁷⁰, as well as in archaeological sources.⁷¹ It is particularly hard to assign them, whether as owners or tenants, the smallest or most marginal plots that can be identified on the ground. In any case, in this pattern, poorer citizens do not lose their personal status or the rights attached to it, particularly political rights.

4. Other beneficiaries of land ownership: *enkektēmenoi* and beneficiaries of royal concessions

However, are citizens really the only ones with access to land ownership, as is generally claimed? This is not certain.

4.1. Beneficiaries of *enktēsis*

The first case to consider is that of beneficiaries of *enktēsis*,⁷² which represents precisely a “right of acquisition”, a rather paradoxical privilege. On the one hand, it shows that the land market is not accessible to just anyone, since authorisation must be obtained in order to become a landowner. On the other hand, it proves that non-citizens have the ability to become landowners, since this right of acquisition is not always accompanied by *politeia*. The two privileges can of

66 Osborne 1988, 295-97. But the elite were not the only ones concerned, and there was real socio-economic diversity among the tenants, according to Pernin 2014, 140 about the leases of Thespiiai.

67 Taylor 2017, 163-65.

68 Lys. 7 *On the sacred olive tree* (after 397/6 BCE): the history of the plot is given § 4-11.

69 Xen. *Œc.*, 1.3-4.

70 On ways for quantifying poverty among the Athenians beyond the rhetoric of literary sources, see Taylor 2017, chap. 2.

71 Jameson 1994, 61-63.

72 See already Faraguna 2024, 130.

course be combined, as in a decree from Delphi dating from the middle of the second century BCE in honour of Biaios, son of Aristodamos of Naupactus, who obtained more than ten *philantrōpa* from the city, among which *politeia* in eighth position and *enkētēsis* in ninth.⁷³ *Politeia* qua naturalisation includes full access to land ownership, implying that Biaios could in fact choose between the comprehensive privilege and a lesser one such as *enkētēsis*.⁷⁴ However, *enkētēsis* is not always linked to citizenship. In Boeotia, *empasis*, according to dialectal terminology, is linked to *proxenia*, and *politeia* is never explicitly granted, except in very rare cases: thus, the honorific decrees of cities and the Hellenistic *koinon* routinely grant the titles of *proxenos* and *euergētēs*, *empasis gēs kai oikias*, *isoteleia* (equality of taxes) or *ateleia* (exemption of taxes), *asphaleia* (personal security) and *asylia* (inviolability) and *τὰλλα πάντα καθάπερ κῆ τῆς ἄλλης προξένους κῆ εὐεργέτης*, “all other privileges enjoyed by other *proxenoi* and *euergetai*”, without *politeia* being possibly included in this last expression.⁷⁵

However, *enkētēsis*, as granted to foreigners, is not quite equivalent to citizens’ access to property, as can be seen in the case of Classical and Hellenistic Athens, where it continued until the middle of the second century BCE: it may suffer various restrictions relating to the object, area, duration or beneficiaries.⁷⁶ However, the decrees of other cities are not always as detailed, and it is impossible to say whether an *enkētēsis gēs kai oikias* included any limitations from the outset. In any case, *enkētēsis* did not remain a privilege that was never applied. Epigraphic sources regularly mention “propertied” people, as in an honorific inscription from the deme of Haleis in Kos dating from the reign of Augustus,⁷⁷ where the *enektēmenoi* (l. 6) appear between the *katoikeuntes*, the “residents”, and the *geōrgeuntes*, the “cultivators”. In this case, as can be seen

73 FD III 152, ll. 13-17: εἶμεν δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ πρόξενον καὶ εὐεργέτα[ν] τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ τὰς πόλιος καὶ αὐτὸν καὶ ἐκγόνους· ὑπαρχέτω δὲ αὐτῷ ἀσφάλεια καὶ προμαν[τεία] καὶ προδικία καὶ ἀτέλεια πάντων καὶ ἀσυλία· εἶμεν δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ἰσοπολιτείαν πάντων ὅ[σων] καὶ Δελφοῖς, καὶ γᾶς καὶ οἰκίας ἔγκτησιν, καὶ προεδρίαν ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶνις πάντοις οἷς ἂ πόλις | τίθητι καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τίμια ὅσα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις προξένοις καὶ εὐεργέταις τὰς πόλιος ὑπάρχει, “that he, and his offspring, be *proxenos* and *euergētēs* of the sanctuary and the city; that he obtain personal security, the right to consult the oracle first, the right to access the courts first, general exemption from taxes, protection against seizure of property; that he may also have the *isopoliteia* of everything enjoyed by the Delphians (a very nice formula where the term is equivalent to *metousia*), the right to acquire land and a house, a seat of honour in the theatre at all competitions organised by the city, and all other privileges reserved for other *proxenoi* and *euergetai* of the city”.

74 On this choice made between various privileges, see BE 1993, no. 372 (Gauthier); Chaniotis 1996, 103-04; Faguer 2021, 66; Müller 2026b, 489-91.

75 E.g. IG VII² 3, 18 (*proxenia* from Tanagra for Histiēos son of Aristōn of Miletus, end of the third century BCE).

76 Faguer 2021.

77 IG XII 4, 1142 (ll. 4-8), which mentions τοῖ κατοικεῦντες | ἐν τῷ δάμῳ τῷ Ἀλεντίῳ καὶ τοῖ | ἐνεκτημένοι καὶ τοῖ γεωργεῦντες | ἐν Ἀλεντί καὶ Πέλῃ, τῶν τε πολειτῶν | καὶ Ῥωμαίων καὶ μετοίκων.

from the list of statuses in the text, these *enektēmenoi* may be citizens who are not originally from the deme, resident foreigners (*metoikoi*) or Romans who have been granted the privilege of acquisition.

4.2. Beneficiaries of royal concessions

Another category of people who may find themselves in a position of land ownership within the territory of a city are the beneficiaries of royal concessions called *dōreai*, already mentioned above in relation to types of land. A *dōrea* is an estate that a king grants to a relative or prominent figure and which may be appended to a civic territory. Take, for example, the Seleucid officer Larichos, who around 275-270 BCE received land near the city of Priene in Asia Minor. The Prieneans, in addition to the civic honours they bestowed upon him, granted him an *ateleia* covering “all the herds and slaves he owns on his own estates as well as in the city”.⁷⁸ This clause means that Larichos owned land within the city’s territory, and therefore benefited in one way or another from an *enkētēsis*. But he also owned his own land, *idia ktēmata*, located both within and outside the civic territory, so to speak. Priene was able to grant him *ateleia* on these estates, an exemption that was advantageous to its beneficiary, implying that the city controlled taxation. This is explained by the fact that the royal estate in question, although located outside the boundaries of the *polis stricto sensu*, was attached to Priene, which gave Larichos’ rights greater security and “a very advanced form of ownership”.⁷⁹ At the same time, however, a distinction is made between the public territory of the city proper and these private estates, which were taken from royal land and retain the mark of their origin. In reality, as we know, the king can always reclaim what comes under his sovereignty.⁸⁰ What this text shows, therefore, is the intertwining of various land statuses with different levels of integration.⁸¹

5. *Perioikoi* and *paroikoi*: owners of lower status?

Last category of non-citizen owners: certain free populations who reside on the territory of a city and whose ties to citizens are complex to define. The best definition was given by Philippe Gauthier: they are people “established in a more or less stable manner, within or on the margins of civic communities, who enjoyed a specific status”.⁸² It should be noted from the outset that it can be very difficult to identify such groups in the sources, due to lexical uncertainties.

78 *I.Priene B-M* 30, ll. 5-7: ὑπάρχειν δὲ Λαρίχοι ἀτέλεια καὶ τῶ[γ] | κτηνῶν καὶ τῶν σωμάτων ὅσα ἂν ὑπάρχει ἐν τε [τ]οῖς ἰδίοις κτήμασι | καὶ ἐν τῇ πόλει, with Gauthier 1980.

79 Capdetrey 2007, 152-53.

80 On this distinction between sovereignty and ownership, see Capdetrey 2021, 366.

81 Capdetrey 2007, 147-58.

82 Gauthier 1988 (= 2011, 55).

The same term, *paroikos*, for example, was used in the Hellenistic period to refer, in certain contexts and certain places, to “resident foreigners”, but much more frequently to “local” rural populations, particularly in Asia Minor; these populations are sometimes also referred to by ethnonyms or even other names, which does not simplify the situation. Therefore, only specific analyses are possible, and generalisations are rather risky in this area. Here we will consider two cases: the *perioikoi* of Lacedaemon and the *paroikoi* of Priene.

The *perioikoi* of Lacedaemon are a well-known case, at least for the Classical period.⁸³ They formed a group of “peripheral inhabitants”, found mainly in Laconia but also in Messenia.⁸⁴ They were both free (insofar as they were neither helots nor ordinary slaves) and at the same time subordinate to the Spartans:⁸⁵ they served as a supply of military manpower, but were not involved in any decisions of the central State, because they were not citizens of Sparta. This situation continued until the Roman intervention in 195 BCE, and in the Hellenistic period the *perioikoi* even became demographically far more numerous than the *Homoioi*. As for their economic activity, which is of primary interest to us here, it is no longer considered today that they specialised in crafts or trade,⁸⁶ if only because the essential basis of wealth in the Greek city-states remained the land. The *perioikoi*, who together with the *Homoioi* formed the group referred to in the sources as the Lacedaemonians, therefore occupied the land they worked. The sources are not very forthcoming about this land ownership, but they do exist. The first is found in Xenophon, who explains that the kings of Sparta owned land in the perioikic cities: Lycurgus “had given (the king) in many of the perioikic cities enough *exairetos* land of such a size that he never lacked goods in measured quantities, nor distinguished himself by his wealth”.⁸⁷ The adjective *exairetos* can be understood in two different ways: either as referring to land “cut-up” from the plots owned by the *perioikoi*, or as “choice land”, which would imply plots of lesser quality for the other inhabitants. A second reference can be found in Aristotle: regarding the *eisphorai* that the Spartans are generally reluctant to pay, he mentions the fact that they “own most of the land”,⁸⁸ which implies that they do not own all of it, and the most plausible candidates here for owning the rest seem to be the *perioikoi*. However, the question is not that

83 The most comprehensive work on the topic is Ducat 2008.

84 See Shipley 2006, 58-59, who has a minimum of 23 confirmed or probable sites in Laconia and 10 in Messenia, for the Archaic and Classical period (700-300 BCE).

85 Müller 2023a, 70-71. In the same line, see already Gallego 2005.

86 Ridley 1974.

87 Xen. *Lac.* 15.3: γῆν δὲ ἐν πολλαῖς τῶν περιόικων πόλεων ἀπέδειξεν ἐξαίρετον τοσαύτην ὥστε μήτ' ἐνδεῖσθαι τῶν μετρίων μήτε πλούτῳ ὑπερφέρειν (transl. E.C. Marchant and G.W. Bowersock 19682, slightly modified). Zurbach 2017, 478-79.

88 Arist. *Pol.* 2.1271b 14-16: διὰ γὰρ τὸ τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν εἶναι τὴν πλείστην γῆν οὐκ ἐξετάζουσιν ἀλλήλων τὰς εἰσφοράς, “as most of the land is owned by them, they do not scrutinize each other’s contributions” (transl. H. Rackham 1944).

simple, as it seems difficult that the Spartans, given their number, were the main owners of the entire Lacedaemonian territory.⁸⁹ If we are talking here about the Spartan territory proper, this leaves the problem of the *perioikoi*'s land unsolved. The third, much clearer attestation comes from Plutarch, concerning the measures planned by Agis IV and then implemented by Cleomenes III in the second half of the third century BCE. Agis intended to carry out a *gēs anadasmus*, which concerned citizens (4,500 *klēroi*) and *perioikoi* "capable of bearing arms" (15,000 *klēroi*).⁹⁰ These figures represent exactly half of the distribution attributed to the Archaic lawgiver Lycurgus, and Stephen Hodkinson has clearly shown that they were a genuine Hellenistic invention of the tradition.⁹¹ But the notion of perioikic *klēroi* is indeed present. We are therefore dealing with a population that lives in cities, *poleis*, classified as dependent,⁹² and which does not have the same citizenship as the Spartans: yet it has access to what must be called land ownership within the limits of its own civic territories, where it enjoys a particular and very poorly known form of *politeia*.

The second case is that of the *paroikoi* of Asia Minor. They are found in numerous inscriptions, at least one of which, in Pergamon in 133,⁹³ mentions registers, *apographai*, which must have had a twofold fiscal and military purpose. The Pergamon decree carried out a vast statutory upgrading process during this time of crisis, marked by the revolt of Aristonikos: several servile statuses were elevated to the category of *paroikoi*, while the latter, along with a multitude of other intermediary statuses, gained access to *politeia*. These populations are also likely, in the sources, to bear other names, such as the Pedieis ("the inhabitants of the Plain", *i.e.* of the Meander), who are found in the territory of Priene at the end of the fourth century BCE and who certainly form one of the many

89 Ducat 2008, 60-61, who believes that Aristotle, through the phrase "the majority of lands", is referring here only to those lands that are "valuable". The Stagirite's reasoning remains difficult to explain.

90 Plut. *Agis* 8 compared to Plut. *Lyc.* 8.3. Such measures were considered seditious, as shown in the speech by [Dem.], *On the treaty with Alexander* 15 (336-331 BCE: the orator refers here to the treaty defining the common peace and the functioning of the Corinthian League [338 BCE], renewed in 336 under Alexander): ἔστι γὰρ ἐν ταῖς συνθήκαις ἐπιμελεῖσθαι τοὺς συνεδρεούντας καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τῇ κοινῇ φυλακῇ τεταγμένους ὅπως ἐν ταῖς κοινωνούσαις πόλεσι τῆς εἰρήνης μὴ γίνωνται θάνατοι καὶ φυγαὶ παρὰ τοὺς κειμένους ταῖς πόλεσι νόμους, μηδὲ χρημάτων δημεύσεις, μηδὲ γῆς ἀναδασμοί, μηδὲ χρεῶν ἀποκοπαί, μηδὲ δούλων ἀπελευθερώσεις ἐπὶ νεωτερισμῷ, "it is provided in the compact that it shall be the business of the delegates at the Congress and those responsible for public safety to see that in the cities that are parties to the peace there shall be no executions and banishments contrary to the laws established in those cities, no confiscation of property, no partition of lands, no cancelling of debts, and no freeing of slaves for purposes of revolution" (transl. J.H. Vince, slightly modified).

91 Hodkinson 2000, 43-60 and 69-70.

92 On the notion of dependent cities in relation to perioikic cities, see Shipley 1997, and Hansen, Nielsen 2004, 28.

93 *I.Pergamon* I 249.

local variations of the nebulous *paroikoi*.⁹⁴ A decree passed by the Prieneans in 296/5 BCE in favour of a certain Megabyxos refers to their situation.⁹⁵ In this decree, in which the citizens remind us that they are indeed autonomous, in other words outside royal sovereignty, the character is granted a series of privileges, including *gēs enketēsis*. As we saw in the case of Athens, the restrictions imposed on such acquisitions are specified. The price of the estate must not exceed five talents, but it is the spatial limits that are interesting. It must be located at least 10 stadia from the territory of Ephesus, probably for security reasons, and above all it must not encroach on the land owned by the Pedieis. As noted in relation to the Larichos concession, there are therefore portions of territory within the *chōra* of Priene itself that fall under its administration, but are not wholly owned by it. Whatever status the name Pedieis conceals, one immediately thinks of local peasants subject to royal taxation. However, the text clearly refers to *ktēmata*, in other words land belonging to them and which cannot be appropriated, at least by the city. Given the terminology used, it is difficult to see how these Pedieis can be considered anything other than owners of their land or beneficiaries of a “mature form of ownership”, to use Capdetrey’s expression for the *dōraei*. In an epigraphic dossier concerning King Lysimachus,⁹⁶ dated around 285 BCE, we see the Pedieis (but are they always the same people?) revolting against Priene and devastating the *chōra*, with the help of, among others, their neighbours from Magnesia on the Meander. The Prieneans are then helped by the king. Perhaps we should understand that this hostility is due to the heavy tax burden imposed on them by the Prieneans. As Faraguna rightly pointed out in 2020,⁹⁷ the situation therefore appears to be “fluid”, in the sense that within the territory of the city itself, different statuses with regard to the sovereignty of the king and that of the city are juxtaposed, like a patchwork, with varying levels of land ownership.

94 According to the most likely hypothesis, these *paroikoi* who inhabit and partially exploit civic land are most certainly the heirs of the *laoi* who previously worked royal land in outlying villages: Capdetrey 2021, 376, who takes up the thesis of Papazoglou 1997; see also Gagliardi 2009/10.

95 *I.Priene B-M* 16 (ll. 10-15): δεδóσθαι δὲ αὐτῶι ἀτ[έλειαν] μὲν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα καθότι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις προξένου[ς καὶ] εὐεργέταις, γῆς δὲ ἔγκτησιν ἄχρι τετάρτων π[έντε] ἀπεχούσης τῶν ὕρων τῶμ πρὸς τετ[η]ν Ἐφεσίην μὴ ἐ[λ]λάσσονι σταδίων δέκα· τῶν δὲ κ[τ]ημάτων ὧν [οἱ Πε]διεῖς κέκτηνται μὴ εἶναι αὐτῶι κτ[ή]σασθαι, “that he be granted, on the one hand, *ateleia* and other privileges as granted to other *proxenoi* and *energetai* and, on the other hand, the right to acquire land worth up to five talents, at a distance of no less than 10 stadia from the boundaries of the *chōra* of Ephesus; as for the properties belonging to the Pedieis, he shall not be allowed to acquire them”. See Thonemann 2012, 35.

96 *I.Priene B-M* 2-4.

97 Faraguna 2020, 257-58.

6. Second pattern: from land ownership to citizenship

Let us return to the citizen. So far, we have seen situations where citizens had the opportunity to acquire land without being obliged to do so, *i.e.* *politeia* was a requirement for land ownership, apart from the specific cases mentioned above. But this link can also be seen in the opposite direction, since in some cities, in addition to birth, it was land ownership that conditioned access to citizenship. It was therefore not possible to be a full citizen without being a landowner. Land, in the form of a *klēros*, thus functioned as the pillar of the census mechanism within political regimes that were necessarily oligarchic, the *timēma* being the legal criterion *par excellence* for the existence of an *oligarchia* as understood by the Greeks.⁹⁸

The most obvious case is once again that of Sparta in the Classical and Hellenistic period. The Spartan system linking citizenship to land is clearly explained by Aristotle in Book 2 of *Politics*:

Παρά δὲ τοῖς Λάκωσιν ἕκαστον δεῖ φέρειν, καὶ σφόδρα πενήτων ἐνίων ὄντων καὶ τοῦτο τὸ ἀνάλωμα οὐ δυναμένων δαπανᾶν, (...) μετέχειν μὲν γὰρ οὐ ῥᾶδιον τοῖς λίαν πένησιν, ὅρος δὲ τῆς πολιτείας οὗτός ἐστιν αὐτοῖς ὁ πάτριος, τὸν μὴ δυνάμενον τοῦτο τὸ τέλος φέρειν μὴ μετέχειν αὐτῆς.

Among the Spartans, everyone has to contribute, although some of them are very poor and unable to find money for this expense (...); it is not easy for the very poor to participate, yet their ancestral regulation of the citizenship is that it is not to belong to one who is unable to pay this tax.⁹⁹

Citizenship is conditional on participation in communal meals (*syssitia* or *phiditia*), which itself requires a monthly contribution, depending on the possession of sufficient land, cultivated by slave labour, the helots. This system has been extensively analysed for the Archaic and Classical periods by Hodkinson in his seminal work *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, published in 2000.¹⁰⁰ In this dialectical system, where the *klēros* is central, there is an interdependence between the labour of the helots and the existence of the citizens. In terms of exploitation, it is now well established that the helots were slaves, “whose property was limited and controlled by the city”.¹⁰¹ Aristotle refers to them as *douloi* in Book 7 of *Politics* (1330a25-27). Among the restrictions established in the Archaic period was the prohibition on selling them outside the city or

98 On this topic, see Müller forthcoming (a) and Simonton forthcoming.

99 Arist. *Pol.* 2.1271a 29-37 (transl. H. Rackham 1944, slightly modified).

100 Hodkinson 2000, *inter alia* 4, and *passim*; Zurbach 2017, 475-83.

101 Zurbach 2021, 229. See previously Ducat 1990, 23, Hodkinson 2000, 113-17, and Lewis 2018b, chap. 3 “Helotic Slavery in Classical Sparta”.

freeing them.¹⁰² Helots performed “a multifaceted function of production and service”.¹⁰³ That said, they had a special relationship with the land, since they cultivated the citizens’ *kleroi* and this was their main task, beyond their domestic duties. However, they enjoyed a significant advantage, as they apparently remained attached to the estate they cultivated, even when it changed hands.¹⁰⁴ Of course, the same owner could undoubtedly reorganise their places of work according to the needs of exploitation. But the stability of the helot breeding shows that such movements must have been fairly limited, even though changes of ownership were, on the contrary, frequent. As for the economic duties incumbent upon the helots, no Archaic source specifies the amounts involved. Plutarch’s text, which mentions precise figures for a possible tax, *apophora*, is all the more questionable given that, in the passage in question, the term refers not to the rent paid by the helots, but to the income from each plot of land within the system attributed to Lycurgus.¹⁰⁵ Judging by a text by Tyrtaeus,¹⁰⁶ from the Archaic period onwards, the most likely system of taxation was sharecropping,¹⁰⁷ whereby the producer provided his master with a certain proportion of the harvest. The helots thus retained a share of the production, which enabled them to provide for themselves and reproduce,¹⁰⁸ living more independently than any chattel slave working for his master elsewhere in Greece. In any case, the Spartans’ goal was to collect a rent that would allow citizens to maintain their status and participate in communal meals.¹⁰⁹

While helotage was a particular form of slavery over which the city retained a certain degree of control, the land itself was privately owned by the Spartans, even if it was worked by people other than the owners. Hodkinson has clearly shown that the idea of equality of land ownership in Sparta in the Archaic and

102 Zurbach 2017, 477.

103 Ducat 1990, 53.

104 Hodkinson 2000, 117-25.

105 Plut. *Lyc.* 8.4: 70 *medimnoi* of barley for a man, 12 *medimnoi* for a woman, and an equivalent quantity of liquid products (oil, wine), see Lévy 2003, 119-20; Ducat 1990, 56-57.

106 Tyrtaeus frg. 6 West (= Pausanias 4.14.4-5): ὥσπερ ὄνοι μεγάλοις ἄχθεσι τειρόμενοι | δεσποσύνοισι φέροντες ἀναγκαίης ὑπὸ λυγρῆς | ἥμισυ πᾶν ὅσων καρπὸν ἄρουρα φέρει, “like asses worn out by heavy burdens, bringing to their masters out of grievous necessity half of all the produce that the land brings forth” (transl. D.G. Gerber 1999).

107 Zurbach 2017, 479-80, after Hodkinson 2000, 125-31.

108 Ducat 1990, 64.

109 Arist. *Pol.* 2.1272a 2-3 (comparison with the Cretan system): γεωργοῦσί τε γὰρ τοῖς μὲν οἱ εἰλωτες, τοῖς δὲ Κρησὶν οἱ περίοικοι, “it is the helots who cultivate the land on behalf of the [Spartans], and the *perioikoi* for the Cretans”. Plut. *Lyc.* 24.3: οἱ δὲ εἰλωτες αὐτοῖς εἰργάζοντο τὴν γῆν, ἀποφορὰν τὴν εἰρημένην τελοῦντες, “the Helots tilled their land for them, and paid them the produce mentioned above” (transl. B. Perrin 1914, slightly modified; a reference to 8.4?), or “the fixed rent”. See also Plut. *Inst. Lac.* 41 (239D): οἱ δὲ εἰλωτες αὐτοῖς εἰργάζοντο τὴν γῆν ἀποφέροντες ἀποφορὰν τὴν ἄνωθεν ἵσταμένην, “the Helots tilled the land for them, paying a return which was settled in advance” (transl. F.C. Babbitt, slightly modified).

Classical periods was a myth,¹¹⁰ invented from the Hellenistic period onwards to justify, in particular, the reforms of the revolutionary Kings Agis IV and Cleomenes III.¹¹¹ Land ownership was fundamentally unequal, and the number of large landowners grew steadily between the eighth and fourth centuries BCE.¹¹² In addition, after the defeat at Leuctra in 371, there was a drastic reduction in the territory where the Spartans' estates were located, as they lost Messenia, some 90,000 hectares according to Hodkinson, retaining only 50,000 hectares in Laconia.¹¹³ This gradual evolution is responsible for the situation encountered in the middle of the third century BCE. In 244, just before the arrival of Agis, the number of citizens had fallen to 700, according to Plutarch: ἀπελείφθησαν οὖν ἑπτακοσίων οὐ πλείονες Σπαρτιάται, καὶ τούτων ἴσως ἑκατὸν ἦσαν οἱ γῆν κεκτημένοι, "thus there were left of the Spartans not more than 700, and of these there were perhaps a hundred who possessed land".¹¹⁴ The correct understanding of this passage was provided by Alexander Fuks:¹¹⁵ there were 700 citizens left, 100 of whom owned land (*gē*) in addition to their *klēros*, which means that 600 still owned (but only) a *klēros*; the rest of the former citizens had fallen into a category of downgraded citizens, sometimes equated, without any certainty, with the *Hypomeiones*, the "Inferiors".¹¹⁶ One may, however, wonder whether all these new poor really lost all their political rights, since at least some of them were found in the Assembly, according to Plutarch.¹¹⁷ We see here a double movement, already identifiable but to a lesser extent in Classical times. The first is a very significant accumulation of land ownership in the hands of a small number of people: such accumulation necessarily had repercussions on the organisation of estates and the intensive or extensive nature of farming, in other words on the work of the helots themselves. The second movement, a corollary of the first, is that of a reduction in many other estates, resulting in the emergence of "minor landowners". These landowners, who did not own enough land to pay their dues or who had to mortgage their estates to wealthy landowners,¹¹⁸ fell into the category of downgraded Spartans, who were necessarily much more numerous than the remaining *Homoioi*, perhaps up

110 An "invention of tradition": Hodkinson 2000, 44.

111 On the historical context of the reforms of Agis and Cleomenes, see Cartledge, Spawforth 2002², 38–58.

112 Hodkinson 2000, 104.

113 Hodkinson 2000, 437.

114 Plut. *Agis* 5 (transl. B. Perrin 1921, slightly modified).

115 Fuks 1984, 235 and 240. See Doran 2018, 80–84.

116 Fuks 1984, 242–43. It should be noted that the word *Hypomeiones* appears only once in the sources relating to the conspiracy of Cinadon in 400/399 in Xen. *Hell.* 3.3.6, and that, moreover, the disqualified *Homoioi* may still have been Spartans (Lévy 2003, 48; Ducat 2016, 388). On this category, see also Doran 2018, 72–73.

117 Plut. *Agis* 9, with Hodkinson 2000, 437.

118 Hodkinson 2000, 437; Cartledge, Spawforth 2002², 42.

to three times as numerous.¹¹⁹ I agree with Hodkinson in assuming that, even though these people could no longer claim the status of *Homoioi*, they retained their land, insofar as it was private.¹²⁰ The *Homoioi* were therefore not the only ones with access to land ownership among citizens.

To this must be added the property owned by women, of which Aristotle writes, for the last third of the fourth century BCE, that two-fifths was in their hands,¹²¹ through the dual mechanism of dowry and land inheritance.¹²² In the middle of the third century BCE, this female property certainly increased further, judging by the role played by the women of the Eurypontid royal family, notably Agēsistrata and Archidamia, mother and grandmother of Agis IV.¹²³ By contrast, the situation of women in terms of land ownership varied greatly in other cities during the Hellenistic period.¹²⁴ In general, inheritance systems and property devolution practices did not favour them, even though one finds wealthy women and landowners, particularly at the top of the social hierarchy.

To go back to Sparta, such was the situation in the middle of the third century BCE. It remained necessary to own sufficient land in order to retain citizenship status: this legal requirement had not changed, and even reached a point of extreme pressure due to changes in the distribution of property, which led to a concentration of land ownership. It was precisely this discrepancy between the legal status of citizens and economic reality that triggered the crisis, to the point where one might wonder what the “civic body” had actually become at that time: as Hodkinson writes, “the united Spartan citizen body, composed of men who could realistically be described as Peers, had ceased to exist”.¹²⁵

In the last third of the century, acute signs of oliganthropy appeared in other regions, particularly in several Thessalian cities such as Larissa¹²⁶ and Pharsalus. We know of a politography in Pharsalus,¹²⁷ where the names of 177 people

119 Fuks 1984, 246-48.

120 Hodkinson 2000, 146, n. 15.

121 Arist. *Pol.* 2.1270a 23-25.

122 Hodkinson 2000, 94-103, and, more detailed, Hodkinson 2004.

123 Plut. *Agis* 4.

124 Van Bremen 1996, 261-72. On the Athenian situation in the Classical period, see de Ste. Croix 1970 and Blok 2017, 131-136 (on dowry and inheritance); see also, p. 261 and n. 47, the discussion on the metic Archippē, who was successively married to the bankers of servile origin Pasiōn and Phormiōn, and who possessed a large wealth, particularly in landed property: the (unsolved) question is whether Archippē ultimately remained a metic or became a citizen. In any case, such a landed property could have come, albeit indirectly, from an *enktesis* grant.

125 Hodkinson 2000, 440.

126 Larissa (217-215 BCE): *IG IX 2*, 517, with Hatzopoulos 2014, 110-13.

127 Pharsalus (*I. Vallée Enipeus* 50): ἡ πόλις Φαρσαλίων τοῖς καὶ οὖς ἐξ ἀρχᾶς συμπολιτευομένοις καὶ συμπολ[εμισάντε]σσι πάντα προθυμία ἔδουκε τὰν πολιτείαν κατὰπερ Φαρσαλίοις τοῖς| ἐ[ξ] ἀρχᾶς πολ[ιτευομένοις]· ἔδουκαμ μὰ ἔμ Μακουνίαις τὰς ἐχομένας τοῦ Λουέρχου (χοῦ)|ρα[ς] ψιλᾶς πέλ[ε]θρα ἐξείκοντα ἐκάστου τοῦ εἰβάτα ἔχειν πατρουνεάν τὸμ πάντα χρόνον, “the city of the Pharsalians, to those who have already been *sympoliteuomenoi* since the

have been preserved, 154 of whom have no ethnic and 23 have neither a patronymic nor an ethnic. The latter were considered to be *Penestai*, in other words a local population of servile status, while the former were believed to be *Penestai* who had already been freed.¹²⁸ As a reward for their military collaboration, the beneficiaries were granted 60 *plethra* of land per person, or just over five hectares: this was not a case of granting *enketēsis*, but rather a genuine “allocation of plots” with the possibility of hereditary transmission. If these people obtained a plot of land, it might have been because they did not own any and till then cultivated the land as non-owner farmers, in a relationship of statutory dependence. In short, the aim was to replenish the civic body for political, economic and military purposes by settling groups or individuals who were probably already living in the *chōra* on land of which they became full owners.

7. Other timocratic systems involving land: Cyrene and Athens at the end of the fourth century BCE

The question is whether this type of timocratic link between land and citizenship can be observed elsewhere during the Hellenistic period. I will take only two examples here: the *diagramma* of Cyrene and the case of Athens at the end of the fourth century BCE.

The *diagramma* of Cyrene is perfectly clear on this conditional link. It is a text written by Ptolemy, son of Lagos, in 321 or 320, when the Ptolemaic ruler was not yet king, but only satrap of Egypt, and was interfering in a crisis that was shaking the city. This text is presented as a proposal to the Cyrenaicans, who still had to vote on laws to establish the constitution proper.¹²⁹ It defines successively the body of *politai*, citizens in the sense of nationality, then the *politeuma*, in the sense of the “acting civic body”, in other words the people from among whom the magistrates listed below would be chosen. This *politeuma*, immediately referred to as “the Ten Thousand”, seems quite large in numerical terms, especially since it replaces a previous body that was much smaller, that of the 1,000.¹³⁰ It must be selected according to two types of criteria: on the

beginning and have participated in military actions with all their zeal, has granted *politeia* on the same terms as for the Pharsalians who have been *politeuomenoi* since the beginning; it also gave, in the Makouniai, the bare (= arable) lands that make up the Louerchos basin: 60 *plethra* to each adult, to be owned by them forever as their hereditary property” (transl. Decourt 1990, modified).

128 Bouchon 2021, 169. *Contra* Oetjen 2014, 99-101, who suggests, without actually proving his hypothesis, that these people, called *sympoliteuomenoi* at the beginning of the decree, were military colonists settled by the Macedonian royal power, as part of an Antigonid colonisation program.

129 Laronde 1987, 89-91.

130 *IG Cyrenaica* 010800: Πολί|τευμα δ'ἔστω οἱ μυρίοι· ὑπαρχόντων δὲ οἱ φυγάδες οἱ ἐς Αἴγυπτον φυγόντες | [οὖ]ς ἂν Πτολεμαῖος ἀποδείξει καὶ οἷς ἂν τὸ τίμημα ἦι τῶν χρημάτων

one hand, Ptolemy's personal choice from among the former exiles who had returned home; on the other hand, a census criterion set out in a rather complex manner, but which is established at a wealth of 20 Alexander minas, or 2,000 Attic drachmas. The interesting point here is the way in which this wealth must be composed in order to be acknowledged as *timēma*: the legislator retains what he calls "immortal goods", *chrēmata athanata* (l. 7-8). This expression refers to goods that are supposed to be "non-perishable", in other words "permanent and unchanging over time":¹³¹ by definition, therefore, they are land and/or real estate. The property that gives the right of entry here includes that of men and their wives, which implies that the latter are also legal owners, as in Sparta. A variant of this property may consist of debt securities based on "immortal" property.¹³²

The measures proposed in the *diagramma* of the Libyan city are reminiscent of those that were in force twice in Athens at the end of the fourth century BCE.¹³³ In 322, the regent of the kingdom of Macedonia, Antipater, won the victory at Crannon in Thessaly during the Lamian War against the Greeks led by the Athenians. The peace terms imposed by the Macedonians¹³⁴ included a property qualification, *timēsis*, of 2,000 drachmas, implemented in Athens by Phocion, an episode recounted by Diodorus and Plutarch.¹³⁵ This amount is the same as in Cyrene, and the *politeuma* is almost identical in numerical terms. This cannot be a mere coincidence and is evidence of a shared political engineering. According to Diodorus, the *politeuma* fell from 21,000 to 9,000, a decrease of almost 60%. The question is what link there is between the census tax, forced exile and land. Neither Diodorus nor Plutarch specify what types of assets are required to meet the census tax: there is no indication that wealth must consist solely, or mainly, of land or real estate assets, but neither is there anything

τῶν ἀ[θ] | ἀνάτων σὺν τοῖς τῆς γυναικὸς μὲν εἴκοσι Ἀλεξανδρείων, δ' ἂν οἱ τιμ«η»τῆρ | ες τ«ω»μήσωσι ἐλεύθερον· καὶ ὅσοις εἰσὶ «ὀ»φειλόμενοι μναῖ εἴκοσι Ἀλεξάνδρειοι | σὺν τοῖς τῆς γυναικὸς ἐν ἀθανάτοις τετιμημένοις μὴ ἐλάσσονος τοῦ ὀφειλ[ή]ματος καὶ τοῦ τόκου καὶ ἀνταπομνόντων οἱ ὀφείλοντες κἂν οἱ γείτονες μ[η] | τιμὰς ἔχωσι, ἔστωσαν καὶ «ο»ὔτοι τῶν μυρίων μὴ νεώτεροι τριάκοντα ἐτών, "the *politeuma* should consist of the 10,000; should be part of it exiles having taken refuge in Egypt whom Ptolemy will appoint and those who are in possession of everlasting belongings estimated with those of their wife at 20 mines of Alexander, provided that the evaluators estimate them mortgage-free; furthermore those who hold debts valued 20 mines of Alexander with everlasting belongings of their wife estimated not lower than the debt plus the interests—and those indebted should confirm the debts upon oath—and even if their neighbours have no *timai*, those will also be part of the 10,000, if they are older than 30 years of age" (transl. *IG Cyrenaica* on line, slightly modified).

131 Velissaropoulos Karakostas 2011, II, 20.

132 Bencivenni 2003, 142, n. 87.

133 Bayliss 2011, 68-74.

134 Habicht 2006², 59-63.

135 Diod. Sic. 18.18.1-5 and Plut. *Phoc.* 27-28.

to rule this out. The required census did not only disadvantage the poorest. According to Andrew Bayliss' calculations,¹³⁶ 2,000 drachmas represented 666 *medimnoi* of barley, enough to feed a family of four for 24 years. But Bayliss rightly points out that such a threshold represents less a poverty line than the boundary between the "common people" and the "upper classes", as conceived by the latter. In any case, Antipater allowed the Athenians "to keep their city, their property and everything else", according to Diodorus, who uses the terms *ktēseis* and *ousiai*.¹³⁷ Whatever its nature and value, property is not seized. In fact, Athenians who fail to meet the census threshold are invited by Phocion "to enjoy their homes and be content to cultivate their fields (*geōrgēō*)" without causing unrest.¹³⁸ The "domination of the *chora*" by members of the *politeuma*, mentioned by Diodorus,¹³⁹ is thus more a reflection of political and economic hegemony than of legal exclusivity over land ownership. According to Diodorus, this primarily political operation had only positive economic effects: the Athenians, "now equipped with a stable government, fearlessly exploited their territory and quickly became wealthy" (*ἀταράχως πολιτευόμενοι καὶ τὴν*

136 Bayliss 2011, 72 (I've corrected a minor mix-up by the author between wheat and barley).

137 Diod. Sic. 18.18.4-5: Ὁ δὲ φιλανθρώπως αὐτοῖς προσενηχθεὶς συνεχώρησεν ἔχειν τὴν τε πόλιν καὶ τὰς κτήσεις καὶ τὰλλα πάντα· τὴν δὲ πολιτείαν μετέστησεν ἐκ τῆς δημοκρατίας καὶ προσέταξεν ἀπὸ τιμήσεως εἶναι τὸ πολίτευμα καὶ τοὺς μὲν κεκτημένους πλείω δραχμῶν δισχιλίων κυρίου εἶναι τοῦ πολιτεύματος καὶ τῆς χειροτονίας, τοὺς δὲ κατωτέρω τῆς τιμήσεως ἅπαντας ὡς ταραχώδεις ὄντας καὶ πολεμικοὺς ἀπῆλασε τῆς πολιτείας καὶ τοῖς βουλευμένοις χώραν ἔδωκεν εἰς κατοίκησιν ἐν τῇ Θράκῃ· οὗτοι μὲν οὖν ὄντες πλείους τῶν [δισ]μυρίων καὶ δισχιλίων μετεστάθησαν ἐκ τῆς πατρίδος, οἱ δὲ τὴν ὀρισμένην τίμῃσιν ἔχοντες περὶ ἑννακισχιλίους ἀπεδείχθησαν κύριοι τῆς τε πόλεως καὶ χώρας καὶ κατὰ τοὺς Σόλωνος νόμους ἐπολιτεύοντο· πάντες δὲ τὰς οὐσίας εἰάθησαν ἔχειν ἀναφαρέτους, "He dealt humanely with them and permitted them to retain their city and their possessions and everything else; but he changed the regime from a democracy, ordering that the *politeuma* should depend on a census of wealth, and that those possessing more than 2,000 drachmas should be in control of the *politeuma* and of the elections. He removed from the *politeia* all who possessed less than this amount on the ground that they were disturbers of the peace and warmongers, offering to those who wished it some land for settlement in Thrace. These men, more than 12,000 in number, were removed from their fatherland; but those who possessed the stated rating, being about 9,000, were designated as masters of both city and territory and conducted the government according to the laws of Solon. All were permitted to keep their property uncurtailed" (transl. R.M. Geer 1947, modified).

138 Plut. *Phoc.* 29.4: Ἐπιμελόμενος δὲ τῶν κατὰ τὴν πόλιν πρῶτος καὶ νομίμως, τοὺς μὲν ἀστείους καὶ χαρίεντας ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαῖς αἰεὶ συνέιχε, τοὺς δὲ πολυπράγμονας καὶ νεωτεριστάς, αὐτῷ τῷ μὴ ἄρχειν μηδὲ θορυβεῖν ἀπομαραινόμενους, ἐδίδαξε φιλοχωρεῖν καὶ ἀγαπᾶν γεωργοῦντας, "Furthermore, by managing the affairs of the city with mildness and according to the laws, he kept the men of education and culture always in office, while the busy-bodies and revolutionaries, who withered into insignificance from the very fact that they held no office and raised no uproars, were taught by him to be fond of home and to delight in tilling the soil" (transl. B. Perrin, slightly modified).

139 Diod. Sic. 18.18.5 (see n. 129).

χώραν ἀδεῶς καρπούμενοι ταχὺ ταῖς οὐσίαις προσανέδραμον).¹⁴⁰ But the situation was, in reality, more tense than Diodorus' source, Duris of Samos, would have us believe, as there were also more or less forced exiles and the question of land then returned to the forefront. Among the 12,000 men expelled from the system, an unknown number of volunteers (the wealthiest?) emigrated to Thrace, where Antipater assigned them land (*chōra*) and a city (*polis*).¹⁴¹ In the initial situation, therefore, there were many small, even very small landowners, or even many citizens who did not have access to land ownership due to lack of means. The operation was repeated sometime later in 317, when Demetrius of Phalerum, a former pupil of Aristotle at the Lyceum, was appointed governor of Athens by the Macedonian Cassander. The property qualification threshold established at that time was 1,000 drachmas, which should not be seen, however, as a kind of democratic opening.¹⁴² As pointed out by Graham Oliver,¹⁴³ the two oligarchic episodes of 322 and 317 certainly had significant repercussions on the allocation of property in Attica in the sense of land concentration.

These two regimes, like the one envisaged in the *diagramma* of Cyrene, should be considered oligarchies, in accordance with Aristotle's own definition of this type of constitution: a regime in which the holding of *archai*, "public offices", and therefore an essential part of citizenship, is restricted by a property qualification.¹⁴⁴ As far as Athens is concerned, between the end of the fourth century and the middle of the third century, these are in any case the only two periods for which we know of a restriction of the civic body based on wealth.¹⁴⁵

8. Conclusion: from land to *stasis*

Several points emerge from this preliminary outline.

Firstly, in the Hellenistic period (and indeed in the Classical period as well), private land ownership in a civic territory was not limited to citizens alone. There were categories of free non-citizens (*enkektemenoi*, beneficiaries of *dōreai*, *perioikoi*, *paroikoi*, etc.) who could hardly be said not to own land, regardless of any fiscal or military obligations they may have had towards citizens. This is true even if the concept of ownership can vary depending on the context, particularly when royal sovereignty is exercised nearby, as in Asia Minor.

140 Diod. Sic. 18.18.6.

141 Plut. *Phoc.* 28.4. See also Diod. Sic. 18.18.4-5 (note 137).

142 Diod. Sic. 18.74.3.

143 Oliver 2007b, 79-81.

144 Arist. *Pol.* 4.1292a 40-42, 1292b 1: this is the first type of oligarchy, out of four, according to Aristotle. As Caire 2016, 16-17 points out, the very idea of oligarchy implies a principle of restriction on the exercise of politics, whatever form it may take.

145 Luraghi forthcoming.

Secondly, the link between land and citizenship takes two main forms. Either citizens have the *capacity* to acquire land ownership without this being a statutory *requirement*: this is generally the case in Athens, but also in many other *poleis*, where land acquisition is a right granted to *politai* by birth or naturalisation. Or the link is much closer and the system becomes timocratic, since citizens are *required* to be landowners in order to retain their citizenship, else they risk losing it: this was the case in Sparta and Cyrene, although these two examples are by no means the only ones. The link between land and citizenship works in opposite ways in the two patterns and does not have the same economic and political consequences. In this respect, while it is easy to classify census-based regimes as oligarchies, the absence of a census is not enough to make other regimes democracies, as the criteria for “democraticity” are multiple and complex.¹⁴⁶

Thirdly: the Hellenistic period was shaken by numerous “land crises”, particularly in the second half of the third century BCE, linked to a growing concentration of land ownership, as already discussed by Rostovsteff.¹⁴⁷ This phenomenon was particularly noticeable in Sparta, where, as we have seen, it led not only to a change in forms of exploitation, but above all to what the Greeks called oliganthropy, which was nothing else than a decline in the number of citizens with full rights, resulting in the breakdown of the citizenship system. Land-based timocratic systems are, in fact, the most vulnerable socially, as they affect the primary resource, land, and are therefore those where the problems are most tangible, particularly in narrative sources. This concentration in land ownership, which should be explored for other regions, could be correlated with archaeologists’ findings of an increase in the size of estates throughout the period from the second century BCE to the third century CE.¹⁴⁸

Fourthly: these land crises led to situations that the Greeks called *staseis*. *Stasis* is by no means specific to the Hellenistic period, but it is widely present, as recent work by Benjamin Gray and Henning Börm has clearly shown.¹⁴⁹ According to Börm,¹⁵⁰ contemporary historiography has identified three types of causes of *stasis* in general: the involvement of factions in external conflicts; social tensions and “class struggle”; power struggles between the city’s elites, with the lower classes serving merely as pawns mobilised by these elites. Börm’s approach is to identify the reasons put forward by the Ancients themselves, first among which are economic causes. As Aristotle writes, all *staseis* concern issues

146 On the concept of “democraticity gradient”, see Azoulay forthcoming (b). On the difficulty of defining Hellenistic “democracies”, see Buffet forthcoming (a) and (b).

147 Rostovtseff 1989 [1941], 142–44.

148 Alcock 1993.

149 Gray 2015; Börm 2018 and 2019.

150 Börm 2018.

of property (*ousia*):¹⁵¹ wealth is certainly not based solely on land ownership, but the latter remains its cornerstone. Furthermore, even if there are immediate external causes to *stasis*, one can hypothesise that all episodes of turmoil occur in an economic context of glaring inequalities, particularly land inequalities. I therefore agree with Mirko Canevaro's proposal to take seriously for this period (literally, and not just as a commonplace in discourse) the assumption of class antagonism and not just conflicts within the elites,¹⁵² but I would associate it more specifically with land issues, a question that deserves further investigation.

151 Arist. *Pol.* 2.1266a 37-41: Δοκεῖ γάρ τισι τὸ περὶ τὰς οὐσίας εἶναι μέγιστον τετάχθαι καλῶς: περὶ γὰρ τούτων ποιεῖσθαι φασὶ τὰς στάσεις πάντας, "some persons think that the right regulation of property is the most important; for the question of property, they say, is universally the cause of *staseis*" (transl. H. Rackham, slightly modified).

152 Canevaro forthcoming (a).