A Citizen as a Slave of the State?
Oligarchic Perceptions of Democracy
in Xenophon

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O NE OF THE CRITICISMS leveled at the Athenian
democratic constitution, though not so prominent in
comparison with other criticisms,[1] was that it imposed
burdensome obligations to its wealthy citizens. The most im-
portant among these obligations were the liturgies—the *choregia*
and the *trierarchia*—and the *eisphora*.[2] The attitude of the wealthy

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[1] For example, the 'theoreticians' against democracy (mainly Plato and
Aristotle) do not deal with this issue in detail. The Old Oligarch alludes to
it, when he mentions that under the democracy the wealthy citizens become
poor and the poor wealthy ([Xen.] *Ath.Pol.* 1.13). See for this criticism A. H.
M. Jones, *Athenian Democracy* (Oxford 1957) 54–57; cf. E. Harris, "Was all
Criticism of Athenian Democracy Necessarily Anti-Democratic?" in U. Bul-
trighini (ed.), *Democrazia e anti-democrazia nel mondo greco* (Alessandria 2005)
11–24, according to whom criticism of democracy often pointed to real
flaws, entailed certain reforms, and does not necessarily imply an anti-
democratic stand; the specific criticism which is the topic of my paper
(about the financial administration) is not included in Harris' study. Never-
theless, there is no conclusive evidence that reforms of democracy *were due* to
its critics. Criticism might have contributed to these reforms, but it seems
more probable that democrats decided reforms after observing the failure of
some practices.

[2] The *trierarchia* and the *eisphora* were related to the city's preparation for
war: in the first, wealthy citizens were asked to undertake the preparation
and maintenance of a trireme, while the *eisphora* was a tax for war which was
imposed for the first time in 428 B.C. (Thuc. 3.19.1). The *choregia* had a
longer history, the beginning of which coincided with the Cleisthenic re-
forms of the end of sixth century (508/7): wealthy citizens had to undertake
the financing and the training of a chorus for one of the city's festivals. For

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towards these obligations was ambivalent: on the one hand, these services constituted a source of prestige and glory and confirmed their high status (especially the *choregia*, which had a strong public and performative aspect). On the other, they also aroused complaints, since they fostered the impression that the city exploited its wealthy citizens financially. These complaints were institutionalized in ancient Athens: Attic oratory provides rich evidence about the procedure of the *antidosis*, by which a wealthy citizen could avoid a liturgy by indicating a wealthier one, and hence more suitable, to undertake it.[3]

In this study I address some passages of Xenophon which show how wealthy Athenians were disposed towards their obligations to the democratic city and which have attracted less scholarly attention.[4]

The first two passages occur in Xenophon's *Symposion*.[5] This

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the history of these obligations see P. Wilson, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia* (Cambridge 2000) 11–103; M. Christ, *The Bad Citizen in Classical Athens* (Cambridge 2006) 143–171; P. Liddel, *Civic Obligation and Individual Liberty in Ancient Athens* (Oxford 2007) 262–272.

[3] This procedure also included an exchange of property. See V. Gabrielsen, "The *Antidosis* Procedure in Classical Athens," *ClMed* 38 (1987) 7–38; M. R. Christ, "Liturgy Avoidance and *Antidosis* in Classical Athens," *TAPA* 120 (1990) 147–169.

[4] J. Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens* (Princeton 1998), does not include these passages among criticisms of democracy (he does not examine Xenophon at all). Wilson, *Athenian Institution* 184–187, and Liddel, *Civic Obligation* 262–272, do not comment on all of them. R. Seager, "Xenophon and Athenian Democratic Ideology," *CQ* 51 (2001) 385–397, and Christ, *The Bad Citizen* 184–190, take some of them into consideration, but do not examine them systematically and in combination. The commentaries on Xenophon deal with these passages, but do not explore their ideological implications: see for the *Symposion* A. J. Bowen, *Xenophon. Symposium* (Warminster 1998); B. Huss, *Xenophons Symposion. Ein Kommentar* (Stuttgart 1999). L.-A. Dorion, *Xénophon. Mémorables* (Paris 2000–2011) II 127, is the only scholar, to my knowledge, who observes the connection between *all* the passages treated in this paper and focuses on their philosophical implications.

[5] The dates of Xenophon's works are very controversial. Hence, I treat these passages according to their importance for my argument and not in their (even hypothetical) chronological order: the *Symposion* is dated between

work was probably written in the 390s; its dramatic date can be firmly placed in the period of the Peloponnesian War.[6] In the first passage, Charmides, a wealthy Athenian citizen, explains why, in his opinion, being poor secures a more peaceful life than being rich.[7] More provocatively, he claims that by being poor, he resembles a tyrant, because he is absolutely free, whereas before he was clearly a slave:[8]

"Your turn, Charmides," said Callias, "to say why you take pride in poverty." "Well," he said, "there is agreement as follows, that it is better to be brave than fearful, to be free than a slave, to receive attentions than give them, and to be trusted by one's country than distrusted. Now when I was a rich man in this town, first of all I was fearful that people might break into my house and take my property and do me some personal hurt. Second, I used to cultivate the sycophants, knowing that I was more likely to be hurt by them than vice versa. You see, I was always being required by the city to spend money and I couldn't get away from the place (καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ προσετάττετο μὲν ἀεί τί μοι δαπανᾶν ὑπὸ τῆς πόλεως, ἀποδημῆσαι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ <u>ἐξῆν</u>), whereas now, however, when I am deprived of my foreign estates and I can't farm my Attic properties and my household goods have been sold, I lie full length and sleep sweetly, and I've become trusted by the city, and I don't get threats any more—I do that to others—and I can come and go like a free man (οὐκέτι δὲ ἀπειλοῦμαι, ἀλλ' ἤδη ἀπειλῶ ἄλλοις, ὡς <u>ἐλευθέρῳ τε ἔξεστί μοι</u> καὶ ἀποδημεῖν καὶ ἐπιδημεῖν). I am now like a

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384–378 and the *Memorabilia* probably after 393, but here the controversy is greater (see Dorion, *Xénophon. Mémorables* I CCXL–CCLII). However, as Dorion rightly notes, given Xenophon's unity of thought, the search for the exact date of composition of his works is unproductive.

[6] The date is debated, the main question being whether it precedes or follows Plato's *Symposion*. See the introductions in the commentaries (n.4 above). On the contrary, its dramatic date can be established, 422 B.C.; see Bowen, *Xenophon. Symposium* 9.

[7] Cf. Dem. 10.70 for a similar distinction between the peaceful life of an *idiote*s and the precarious one of the politician.

[8] Xen. *Symp.* 4.31–32, transl. Bowen (adapted).

tyrant, when once I was plainly a slave" (καὶ εἰμὶ νῦν μὲν τυράν-
νῳ ἐοικώς, τότε δὲ σαφῶς δοῦλος ἦν).

In the second passage, Callias, another wealthy citizen and host of the banquet,[9] remarks that the city treats its wealthy citizens as slaves and praises Socrates' inner wealth, that of his soul (4.43–45):

"It is worth realizing how wealth of this sort [that is wealth of the soul] produces the people who are truly free (ἄξιον δ' ἐννοῆσαι ὡς <u>καὶ ἐλευθερίους</u> ὁ τοιοῦτος πλοῦτος παρέχεται). Here is Socrates, for instance, my source of this wealth: he never tried to serve me by score or weight, but just kept giving me as much as I could carry away; and now here is me, envious of no one. Instead, I display my generosity to all my friends and I share the wealth in my soul with any who want it. As for the most luxurious of my possessions, that's the leisure you see me forever enjoying: I can gaze at what's worth gazing at, and I can listen to what's worth listening to, and (the thing that I rate highest) I can spend all day at my leisure with Socrates. He too fails to be impressed by the people who can claim most gold; he spends all his time with the people he likes (οἳ ἂν αὐτῷ ἀρέσκωσι, ἀνάγκην οὖσαν)." That was how Antisthenes spoke. "By Hera," said Callias, "I particularly envy you your wealth because the city doesn't impose upon you and treat you as its slave (νὴ τὴν Ἥραν, ἔφη, τά τε ἄλλα ζηλῶ σε τοῦ πλούτου καὶ ὅτι οὔτε ἡ πόλις σοι ἐπιτάττουσα <u>ὡς δούλῳ χρῆται</u>), nor do people get angry if you don't make them loans."

The third passage comes from the second book of the *Memorabilia*, from the intriguing dialogue between Socrates and Aristippus about virtue and leadership. This dialogue raises many issues (historical, philosophical, and literary),[10] but my

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[9] The choice of these persons is not accidental. For their wealth see J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford 1971) *s.vv.*

[10] See now the valuable commentary by Dorion, *Xénophon. Mémorables* II ad loc. Cf. for recent studies and further bibliography D. M. Johnson, "Aristippus at the Crossroads: The Politics of Pleasure in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*," *Polis* 26 (2009) 204–222, who treats hedonism, and M. Tamiolaki, "Public et privé dans le dialogue de Socrate avec Aristippe," *EPlaton* 6

focus will be on Aristippus' assertion that he refrains from belonging to the category of those who exercise leadership because these people are treated by the city as domestic slaves, and that he prefers instead to abstain from political life altogether (*Mem.* 2.1.8–10, transl. J. R. Smith):

"and I do not for a moment put myself in the category of those who want to be rulers (καὶ οὐδαμῶς γε τάττω ἐμαυτὸν εἰς τὴν τῶν ἄρχειν βουλομένων τάξιν). For considering how hard a matter it is to provide for one's own needs, I think it absurd not to be content to do that, but to shoulder the burden of supplying the wants of the community as well. That anyone should sacrifice a large part of his own wishes and make himself accountable as head of the state for the least failure to carry out all the wishes of the community is surely the height of folly. For states claim to treat their rulers just as I claim to treat my servants. I expect my men to provide me with necessaries in abundance, but not to touch any of them; and states hold it to be the business of the ruler to supply them with all manner of good things, and to abstain from all of them himself (καὶ γὰρ ἀξιοῦσιν αἱ πόλεις τοῖς ἄρχουσιν ὥσπερ ἐγὼ τοῖς οἰκέταις χρῆσθαι. ἐγώ τε γὰρ ἀξιῶ τοὺς θεράποντας ἐμοὶ μὲν ἄφθονα τὰ ἐπιτήδεια παρα-σκευάζειν, αὐτοὺς δὲ μηδενὸς τούτων ἅπτεσθαι, αἵ τε πόλεις οἴονται χρῆναι τοὺς ἄρχοντας ἑαυταῖς μὲν ὡς πλεῖστα ἀγαθὰ πορίζειν, αὐτοὺς δὲ πάντων τούτων ἀπέχεσθαι). And so, should anyone want to bring plenty of trouble on himself and others, I would educate him as you propose and number him with 'those fitted to be rulers': but myself I classify with those who wish for a life of the greatest ease and pleasure that can be had (ἐμαυτόν γε μέντοι τάττω εἰς τοὺς βουλομένους ᾗ ῥᾷστά τε καὶ ἥδιστα βιοτεύειν)."

Cf. 2.1.13–14, "I do not shut myself up in the four corners of a community, but am a stranger in every land (ἀλλ' ἐγώ τοι, ἔφη, ἵνα μὴ πάσχω ταῦτα, οὐδ' εἰς πολιτείαν ἐμαυτὸν κατακλείω, ἀλλὰ ξένος πανταχοῦ εἰμι)"

These passages[11] deserve, in my opinion, closer scrutiny for

(2009) 139–149, where I advance a political interpretation.

[11] Relevant to these are also two passages of the *Oeconomicus* which could

the following reasons. First, because of the equation between a citizen and slave of the city: complaints by the wealthy about their obligations towards the city are attested in other sources as well,[12] but they are not expressed in these terms. During the classical period the term 'slavery' was used polemically,[13] so Xenophon's terminology seems deliberately marked and thus raises several issues: Why is the metaphor of slavery used in this context? What are its ideological implications? How could free people *par excellence*, such as the wealthy Athenian aristocrats, conceive themselves as slaves? Did this reflect a historical reality or is Xenophon's presentation exaggerated? Second, because of the alternatives which accompany these complaints: Aristippus privileges apolitical life,[14] and Charmides seems to put forth a similar option when he says that now he will be free

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serve as a background for the topic of this paper. In the first, Socrates, echoing Charmides, deplores the rich Critobulus for the obligations the city imposes to him (2.6–7). In the second (7.2–3), Ischomachus, a wealthy aristocrat, comments ironically on his *kalokagathia*, precisely because of his obligations towards his city. See S. Pomeroy, *Xenophon. Oeconomicus. A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford 1994) ad locc. Cf. *Cyr.* 8.35–48, where Pheraulas, newly rich, complains along the same lines about his new life.

[12] See Christ, *The Bad Citizen* 151–155, for evidence about arguments for exemption from liturgies, mainly from the orators. Plato (*Resp.* 563D, *Leg.* 698A–B) raises the issue of slavery for the democratic citizens, but with regard to the law. And Aristotle problematizes the issue raised by Aristippus, when he states that living according to the constitution (*politeia*) *should not* be considered slavery (*Pol.* 1310a30).

[13] So for example the characterization of the Athenian allies as slaves; see K. A. Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece* (Chicago 2004) 128–132.

[14] Aristippus is a philosopher, the main advocate of hedonism, so this dialogue has been widely interpreted from a purely philosophical angle. Nevertheless, Xenophon's philosophical works should not be examined independently of his other works. They have strong political connotations and are in line with his overall thought. I have pursued this argument first in M. Tamiolaki, *Liberté et esclavage chez les historiens grecs classiques* (Paris 2010) 371–394, but I intend to return to this topic in more detail on another occasion. For the present study, it would not be far-fetched, I think, to examine Aristippus' assertions in combination with Charmides' and Callias'.

to stay in Athens or to leave it. Both of them thus present as alternatives a life *out of the context of the Athenian democracy*. This again prompts questions about how wealthy Athenians conceived of their position under this constitution: did they feel out of place?[15] Would they prefer to live elsewhere? Finally, it is noteworthy that these criticisms do not appear in the historical writings of Xenophon, but in his Socratic works. More importantly, the context is similar: with the exception of Aristippus' statements, these statements are uttered in a context of praise of Socrates' poverty. Xenophon's choice of this genre (the Socratic dialogue) calls for an explanation: either he intended to link these criticisms specifically to Socrates in an effort to praise his frugal way of life or he deliberately chose a new genre to express more openly these criticisms of democracy.[16]

I explore these issues in what follows. The study is in three parts: first, a (sketchy) description of the relationship between rich and poor people in the Athenian democracy which can serve as a background for the study of Xenophon's passages;[17] second, I analyze the ideological implications of these passages. Third, I turn to Xenophon *as an author* and examine the passages in the context of his political thought.

[15] Cf. [Xen.] *Ath.Pol.* 1.20, who implies that opponents of democracy should rather live outside of Athens.

[16] Cf. J. Ober, "How to Criticize Democracy in Late Fifth and Fourth-Century Athens," in *The Athenian Revolution* (Princeton 1996) 156, who speaks of the "new genres in which criticism could adequately be expressed" and mentions Ps-Xenophon's pamphlet. It may not be accidental that Xenophon too was also constantly experimenting with genres. It should be noted that in these Xenophontic passages, the democratic community is not explicitly mentioned. Yet these criticisms should be considered, in my opinion, as criticisms of democracy, since in Athens there was no great experience of another regime.

[17] I should clarify here that I do not mean to imply that every wealthy Athenian was necessarily an aristocrat. But concerning the wealthy people who appear in Xenophon's works, taking into consideration the ideas they express, as well as Xenophon's oligarchical preferences, it is reasonable to assume that they are indeed both wealthy and aristocrats.

1. *Rich and poor citizens in the Athenian democracy*[18]

In a famous passage of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, the answer of the young Euthydemus to Socrates' question "What is the *demos*?" is "the poorer classes" (τοὺς πένητας τῶν πολιτῶν).[19] The background of this answer is Socrates' previous assertion that knowing what democracy is is equivalent to knowing what the *demos* is. Although the focus on the lower classes represents rather an oligarchic perspective on the Athenian democracy, these statements reflect a tension which was inherent in this regime: since the *demos* was made up chiefly of the lower classes, the immediate implication was that democracy cared more for the interests of this class. In fact, under the democracy, both rich and poor alike had grounds for discontent: the rich, because the government did not give priority to the interests of their class, and the poor, simply because they were poor.[20] In order to resolve this tension, Athenian democratic ideology insisted on the fact that democracy was concerned with *all* the citizens, regardless of their status.[21] A characteristic example of this democratic discourse is Pericles' famous statement in the Funeral Oration about equality before the law (Thuc. 2.37.1, transl. Jowett):

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[18] The distinction rich/poor may seem too schematic (as there must certainly have been gradations in poverty and wealth, as well as intermediate stages; see J. K. Davies, *Wealth and the Power of Wealth in Classical Athens* [New York 1981] 9–14), but this is how the Athenians viewed men: see Christ, *The Bad Citizen* 185 (cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1291a33–34). For the size of the Athenian population and the proportions of rich and poor in the fourth century see M. H. Hansen, *Demography and Democracy: The Number of Athenian Citizens in the Fourth Century B.C.* (Herning 1985); cf. Davies 15–37 for the size of the liturgical class.

[19] Xen. *Mem.* 4.2.37. Cf. [Xen.] *Ath.Pol.* 1.1.2, Pl. *Resp.* 557A.

[20] Poor people would perhaps be displeased under any regime, but an oligarchic regime would probably not care about mitigating this feeling.

[21] Cf. J. Ober, in *The Athenian Revolution* 149, for the role of ideology: "Ideology mediated between the reality of social inequality and the goal of political equality, and thereby arbitrated class tensions that elsewhere in Greece led to protracted and destructive civil wars."

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But while the law secures equal justice to all alike (πᾶσι τὸ ἴσον) in their private disputes, the claim of excellence is also recognized.

In general, whenever democracy was praised, the class issue (that is, whether one class was treated more favorably than the other) tended to be concealed: passages in the ancient authors that praise the basic acquisitions of democracy—equality before the law, equality of speech, freedom in everyday life—do not differentiate between the rich and the poor. It seems then that the Athenians were well aware of this tension and tried to keep a balance between the two classes of the population.

In the course of the fifth century this balance was further improved in at least two additional ways: first, by the promotion of an ideological assimilation between the rich and the poor. This assimilation was certainly in the interest of the poor and aimed at facilitating their coexistence with the rich. Two important factors contributed to this assimilation. The first concerned the benefits deriving from Athenian citizenship: all the Athenians, regardless of their status, enjoyed the privileges of citizenship[22] and, more importantly, viewed themselves *against* other groups which did not belong to this category: metics, slaves, and women.[23] The second factor was the growth of the

[22] On Athenian citizenship see generally P. B. Manville, *The Origins of Citizenship in Ancient Athens* (Princeton 1990).

[23] For slavery see for instance, M. I. Finley, "The Freedom of the Citizen in the Greek World," *Talanta* 7 (1976) 1–23, and recently, R. Osborne, "The Economics and Politics of Slavery at Athens," in *Athens and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge 2010) 85–103 (with updated bibliography); for the metics see D. Whitehead, *The Ideology of the Athenian Metic* (Cambridge 1977) 109–124. For the place of women see Cl. Mossé, *La femme dans la Grèce antique* (Paris 1983) 17–90; R. Sealey, *Women and Law in Classical Greece* (Chapel Hill 1990) 12–49; S. Blundell, *Women in Classical Athens* (London 1998) 113–149. See also recently R. W. Wallace, "Tecmessa's Legacy. Valuing Outsiders in Athens' Democracy," in I. Sluiter and R. Rosen (eds.), *Valuing Others in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden 2010) 137–154, who presents some tendencies toward inclusiveness of women in the Athenian democracy of the later fifth and fourth centuries.

Athenian empire. In an interesting passage of Thucydides, Pericles claims that *all* the Athenians take pride in the Athenian empire, that is why they should try to maintain it:[24] the Athenian empire, as has been noted, thus contributed to an effacement of the distinctions between the rich and the poor.

The second way whereby a balance between rich and poor became possible was by enhancing the prestige and social status of the wealthy citizens: this was achieved, among other ways, through the liturgies, which could indeed represent some burden for the wealthy citizens, but it was precisely the prestige that these services assigned to the people who undertook them that countered the negative feeling about a burdensome task that they might reasonably arouse. This prestige was a privilege mainly of the upper class,[25] and it is obvious that democracy exploited the aristocratic *ethos* in order to reduce (if not avoid) possible complaints of the upper class against the democratic constitution.[26]

The situation altered during and after the Peloponnesian War. An accumulation of experiences and radical events challenged the balance between the rich and the poor:[27] rich people lost their properties and poor people became poorer. It is remarkable that although Pericles states (in an idealized manner) in the Funeral Oration that both poor and rich people willingly sacrificed themselves for the city (Thuc. 2.42.4), Thucydides states in his narrative a bit later that the Athenians fined Pericles, precisely on economic grounds (loss of their

[24] Thuc. 2.63.1, with S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* I (Oxford 1991) 337–338. Cf. R. Balot, *Greed and Injustice in Classical Athens* (Princeton 2001) 172–179.

[25] See A. Duploy, *Le prestige des élites* (Paris 2006) 12–35.

[26] Cf. Christ, *The Bad Citizen* 171, for the appeal to *philotimia*, and Liddel, *Civic Obligation* 266–268, for the *choregoi* as *euergetai*.

[27] To avoid misunderstandings, I do not mean to propose that ancient Greek democracy worked perfectly before the Peloponnesian War and degenerated afterwards, but rather that the war was a crucial event that challenged some basic functions of this regime.

properties etc.).[28] Furthermore, it was during that period that the city increased the financial obligations of the wealthy citizens: the *eisphora* was initiated in 428, a few years after the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, and the *trierarchia* became more demanding.[29] Moreover, the democratic constitution, especially after the disaster in Sicily, was seriously contested: not only oligarchical governments emerged as a reaction to the Athenian disaster, but also on a theoretical level, democracy was criticized.[30] Finally, in the years during and after the Peloponnesian War, another important event is attested, the (first?) massive enfranchisements of slaves: slaves who participated in the battle of Arginusae and in the restoration of democracy under the leadership of Thrasybulus were probably freed.[31] This aspect of Athenian life is not adequately documented in our sources,[32] but it certainly affected the Athenian

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[28] Thuc. 2.65.2: οἱ δὲ δημοσίᾳ μὲν τοῖς λόγοις ἀνεπείθοντο καὶ οὔτε πρὸς τοὺς Λακεδαιμονίους ἔτι ἔπεμπον ἔς τε τὸν πόλεμον μᾶλλον ὥρμηντο, ἰδίᾳ δὲ τοῖς παθήμασιν ἐλυποῦντο, ὁ μὲν δῆμος ὅτι ἀπ’ ἐλασσόνων ὁρμώμενος ἐστέρητο καὶ τούτων, οἱ δὲ δυνατοὶ καλὰ κτήματα κατὰ τὴν χώραν οἰκοδομίαις τε καὶ πολυτελέσι κατασκευαῖς ἀπολωλεκότες,

[29] Christ, *The Bad Citizen* 157–158, 162.

[30] It is also interesting that Thucydides makes Cleon, the Athenian demagogue *par excellence*, maintain that it is difficult to exercise leadership under the democracy (3.37.1 ff.). Although we cannot be sure whether the historical Cleon expressed this view, this statement reflects the problems that post-Periclean democracy had to face.

[31] Ar. *Frogs* 693–694; see F. Bourriot, "L'évolution de l'esclave dans les comédies d'Aristophane et l'essor des affranchissements au IVᵉ siècle," in *Mélanges d'histoire ancienne offerts à William Seston* (Paris 1974) 35–47. Cf. M. Tamiolaki, "La libération et la citoyenneté des esclaves aux Arginuses: Platéens ou Athéniens? Un vers controversé d'Aristophane (*Gren.* 694) et l'idéologie de la société athénienne," in A. Gonzalès (ed.), *La fin du statut servile? (affranchissement, libération, abolition)* (Besançon 2008) 53–63. For the privileges granted to those who participated in the restoration of democracy, evidence comes from *IG* II² 10; for the issues raised by this inscription see M. Osborne, *Naturalization in Athens* II (Brussels 1982) 26–43.

[32] This topic is vast and complex; see P. Hunt, *Slaves, Warfare and Ideology in the Greek Historians* (Cambridge 1998), who maintains that historians de-

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mentality, since it contributed to a certain blurring of the boundaries between the free and the slaves.[33]

These developments challenged the grounds for solidarity between the rich and the poor: the loss of the properties of the wealthy, in combination with the increase of their obligations towards the city, gave further justification to their complaints about both democracy in general and the poor in particular.[34] The poor, on the other hand, also lost their grounds for ideological assimilation with the wealthy: since the empire was lost, an important unifying element between the two classes was lost as well. Moreover, the common conceptualization of poor and rich *against* slaves was also threatened: the enfranchisements of slaves may have contributed to this, but it must also be relevant that in texts of the fourth century the poor are mentioned on a par with slaves[35] (presumably because of their—allegedly common—miserable condition).

liberately suppressed the role of slaves in warfare for ideological reasons. Cf. also my treatment in Tamiolaki, *Liberté et esclavage* 82–98, 137–154, 190–201, 264–287, which takes into consideration the historians' narratological priorities as well.

[33] Although enfranchisement did not entail Athenian citizenship: the enfranchised slave usually acquired a status similar to that of a metic. See R. Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free: the Concept of Manumission and the Status of Manumitted Slaves in the Ancient Greek World* (Leiden 2005) 307–334.

[34] For the changes in the population of the wealthy Athenian citizens and their reduced participation in politics in the fourth century see the illuminating chapter of C. Taylor, "A New Political World," in R. Osborne (ed.), *Debating the Athenian Cultural Revolution: Art, Literature, Philosophy and Politics, 430–380 B.C.* (Cambridge 2007) 72–90.

[35] See for example Xen. *Hell.* 2.3.48 (transl. J. Marincola in R. B. Strassler [ed.] *The Landmark Xenophon's Hellenika* [London 2011]): "But I always do battle with extremists, Kritias, whether they are men who think that a good democracy must allow slaves and those so poor they would betray the state for a drachma to share in government (ἐκείνοις μὲν ἀεί ποτε πολεμῶ τοῖς οὐ πρόσθεν οἰομένοις καλὴν ἂν δημοκρατίαν εἶναι, πρὶν [ἂν] καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι καὶ οἱ δι᾽ ἀπορίαν δραχμῆς ἂν ἀποδόμενοι τὴν πόλιν †ἀρχῆς† μετέχοιεν)," with Tamiolaki, *Liberté et esclavage* 268–270. Cf. [Xen.] *Ath.Pol.* 1.10–12 for an assimilation of metics and slaves; it is also interesting that the Old Oligarch presents slaves as having appropriated the democratic principles of freedom of speech, freedom in everyday life, etc.

2. *A citizen as a slave of the state: ideological implications*

It is against this background that I will analyze the passages of Xenophon mentioned above. Although Xenophon was not a supporter of democracy and although he lived many years in exile, his works are an important source for the function and problems of the Athenian democracy in the classical period.[36] Concerning the topic of this study, more specifically, Xenophon's passages certainly reflect the reform of the *eisphora* which is dated around 378.[37] This reform aimed at reducing the difficulties in collecting the *eisphora* by the establishment of standing *symmoriai* and the introduction of tax collectors (the *proeispherontes*). Not least, for this reason, I will argue tentatively, in this part of my paper, that the equation between a citizen and a slave of the city and the consequences resulting from it (choice of apolitical life, of living away from Athens, etc.), might not constitute simply an idiosyncratic invention of Xenophon for the sake of his Socratic dialogues, but had serious ideological implications and could reflect more widespread views about democracy. My analysis will be largely based on the approach, mainly advanced by Josiah Ober, according to which Athenian writers "appropriate preexisting vocabulary for discussing problems, but they often deploy this vocabulary in self-consciously innovative ways."[38]

Let us examine first the implications of the equation between a citizen and a slave of the state. One of the most prominent ideals of democracy was individual freedom. According to a famous passage in Aristotle (*Pol.* 1417a40–b17), this freedom included living as one likes (τὸ ζῆν ὡς βούλεταί τις), as opposed to the life of the slave which was determined by

[36] An example of this is the condemnation of the generals after the battle of Arginusae. See recently B. J. Dobski, "Athenian Democracy Refounded: Xenophon's Political History in the *Hellenica*," *Polis* 26 (2009) 316–338 (with further references).

[37] For this reform see R. W. Wallace "The Athenian *Proeispherontes*," *Hesperia* 58 (1989) 473–490, and Christ, *The Bad Citizen* 165–166.

[38] Ober, in *The Athenian Revolution* 146.

the master.[39] Individual freedom was not totally separable from collective freedom (of the *polis* or of the democracy),[40] and this is why our sources tend to underline it usually in conjunction with collective freedom (and/or democracy). Herodotus, in a famous passage about the overthrow of tyranny in Athens, establishes a connection between the fall of tyranny, democracy, and individual freedom.[41] Pericles, too, in the Funeral Oration, praises the freedom of the Athenians in their everyday life under the democracy (Thuc. 2.37.1). Individual freedom, no matter its limits and ambiguities,[42] was an essential ideal of democracy.[43] Freedom concerned all citizens (regardless of their political preferences or status). As a response to this, and in order to further differentiate themselves from the mass, aristocrats coined a new term in the late fifth century, *eleutherios*, which referred to the (superior) freedom of the aristocrat and

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[39] See M. H. Hansen, "Ancient Democratic *Eleutheria* and Modern Liberal Democrats' Conception of Freedom," in A.-C. Hernández, *Démocratie athénienne, démocratie moderne, tradition et influences* (Geneva-Vandœuvres 2009) 318–320.

[40] See especially Raaflaub, *The Discovery of Freedom* 1–5, 44–53.

[41] Hdt. 5.78: Ἀθηναῖοι μέν νυν ηὔξηντο. δηλοῖ δὲ οὐ κατ' ἓν μοῦνον ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ ἡ ἰσηγορίη ὡς ἐστὶ χρῆμα σπουδαῖον, εἰ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι τυραννευόμενοι μὲν οὐδαμῶν τῶν σφέας περιοικεόντων ἦσαν τὰ πολέμια ἀμείνονες, ἀπαλλαχθέντες δὲ τυράννων μακρῷ πρῶτοι ἐγένοντο. δηλοῖ ὦν ταῦτα ὅτι κατεχόμενοι μὲν ἐθελοκάκεον ὡς δεσπότῃ ἐργαζόμενοι, ἐλευθερωθέντων δὲ αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ἑωυτῷ προεθυμέετο κατεργάζεσθαι.

[42] Individual freedom in ancient Greece was not comparable with the modern concept of 'right'. See the illuminating discussion by R. W. Wallace, "Law, Freedom and the Concept of Citizens' Rights in Democratic Athens," in J. Ober and C. Hedrick (eds.), *Demokratia. A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern* (Princeton 1996) 105–119. Moreover, it was subject to ambiguities, resulting from the excesses of applying the principle of "living as one likes." See Liddel, *Civic Obligation* 20–24. Cf. n.48 below.

[43] See again Hansen, in *Démocratie athénienne* 339, who strongly defends this view: "I find it incomprehensible that scholars can deny that the Athenian democrats cherished individual freedom 'as an ideal'. Whether they lived up to their ideal is a different question."

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was linked with his leisure (*schole*).[44]

Given this framework, it would be tempting to interpret the equation between a (wealthy) citizen and a slave of the state as a means of an even more radical challenge of the traditional equation between (democratic) freedom and citizenship: since aristocrats were contemptuous of democratic freedom, then why would they fear being compared (metaphorically) with slaves? After all, this did not really challenge the superior kind of freedom they represented.[45] But this equation could have another ideological function as well: it placed aristocrats in a comparable (though not similar) position with the poor, who could also be assimilated with slaves—albeit for different reasons: because of their miserable situation. In this way, wealthy aristocrats could express their grievances against democracy without provoking the indignation of the poor.

A second element that is worth analyzing in Xenophon's passages is the implication about an infringement upon individual freedom. Xenophon's characters convey the impression that they do not live as they wish under the democracy (thus the expressions ἐλευθέρῳ τε ἔξεστί μοι and οἳ ἂν αὐτῷ ἀρέσκωσι, ἀνάγκην οὖσαν). These statements deserve special attention, because the principle of "living as one wishes" is considered, as we noted above, one of the basic traits of democratic freedom.[46] However, this principle is highly controversial, since its arbitrary application can lead to excesses

[44] A nice example of this is illustrated by Xenophon's Ischomachus, the wealthy aristocrat whom Socrates meets at the Stoa of Zeus *Eleutherios* (Xen. *Oec.* 7.1). For the concept of *eleutherios* see K. A. Raaflaub, "Democracy, Oligarchy and the Concept of the 'Free Citizen' in Late Fifth-Century Athens," *Political Theory* 11 (1983) 517–544.

[45] The radical aspect of this equation becomes more apparent if one considers Pericles' exhortations to the Athenians about their obligation to sacrifice themselves for the democratic city (Thuc. 2.61.2, 2.63.1 ff.).

[46] In the terms of I. Berlin ("Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Liberty. Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty* [Oxford 2002] 178) this is the type of positive freedom: "The 'positive' sense of the word 'liberty' derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master."

(lawlessness, anarchy): it is thus commented upon *negatively* by the main theoretical opponents of democracy, Plato and Aristotle, who see in democracy an inherent tendency to license.[47] It is interesting in this perspective that in Xenophon's passages we have an oligarchic (re-)appropriation and redefinition of this principle: aristocrats employ this principle, but redirect its meaning towards new connotations. "Living as one wishes" is now viewed as a positive, though unattainable, *desideratum* for the wealthy aristocrats.[48] Is this an ideological distortion of the oligarchic criticism of democracy? Or is it, perhaps more probably, another means of bridging the ideological gap between the rich and the poor and more broadly between aristocrats and democrats?

Charmides' assertion that his poverty allows him to live like a tyrant, whereas before he was a slave, is also linked with the principle of "living as one wishes." Leaving aside the strong ironical connotations of this statement,[49] the implication here concerns the absolute freedom that tyranny represents[50] and the complete absence of restrictions. Tyranny was an ambivalent term in the classical period: it could have neutral or even positive overtones, but it was clearly loaded with negative connotations in the course of the fifth century, since it was conceived as a constant political threat to the democrats:[51] to

[47] Pl. *Resp.* 557B, 561A, 562B, 562E, 563–564A; *Leg.* 694A: Arist. *Pol.* 1317a40–b13.

[48] Note also Charmides' statement "I lie full length and sleep sweetly," which can be interpreted as an ironic comment on the pleasure under the democracy advocated by the Athenian democratic discourse (cf. Thuc. 2.38). It should be noted, however, that, this aristocratic re-appropriation of the "living as one wishes" principle is also far from uncontroversial.

[49] Charmides was in fact one of the Thirty tyrants. See See Huss, *Xenophons Symposion* 263–264.

[50] See for example K. A. Raaflaub, "Athens 'Ideologie der Macht' und die Freiheit des Tyrannen," in D. Balcer et al. (eds.), *Studien zum Attischen Seebund* (Konstanz 1984) 45–86.

[51] See K. A. Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue: The Function of Tyranny in Fifth-Century Athenian Democracy," in K. Morgan (ed.), *Popular Tyranny.*

be characterized as a tyrant was thus equivalent to being anti-democrat. In this perspective, the tyrant's absolute 'freedom' was not considered something positive, but rather the ultimate evil.[52] If we take then into account the ideological history of the term, it is obvious that Charmides again makes an innovative claim here: he employs a term which is viewed negatively by the democrats and invests it with a new positive meaning.

Finally, we can examine the alternatives presented by Xenophon's characters: Charmides is vague about this, but he implies a life outside of Athens, while Aristippus overtly praises apolitical life. Here we can observe again an aristocratic appropriation of another concept frequently employed by the democrats, that of *apragmosyne*. According to the democratic ideology, the ideal Athenian citizen was meant to participate actively in the affairs of the state: in the Funeral Oration Pericles characterizes the *apragmon* as useless.[53] But this is not the whole story: the *apragmones* in classical Athens were also often the enemies of democracy and empire. This is illustrated by Pericles' statement in his third speech (Thuc. 2.63.3):

> The men of whom I was speaking, if they could find followers, would soon ruin a city, and if they were to go and found a state of their own, would equally ruin that. For inaction is secure only when arrayed by the side of activity (τὸ γὰρ ἄπραγμον οὐ σώζε-

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Sovereignty and its Discontents in Ancient Greece (Austin 2003) 59–93.

[52] In texts of the classical period we also find the expressions *demos tyrannos* (Ar. *Eq.* 1111–1114) and *polis tyrannos* (Thuc. 1.122.3, 1.124.3). L. Kallet-Marx, "*Demos Tyrannos*: Wealth, Power and Economic Patronage," in *Popular Tyranny* 155–180, argues that the Athenians, because of their wealth, prosperity, and sumptuous buildings (symbols of tyrannical status), would not find the collective identification of Athenian *demos*-as-tyrant unappealing. Nevertheless, regardless of how the Athenians might have felt, it is important that these characterizations appear in contexts critical of the Athenian democracy. Consequently, tyranny is a term that was used polemically (and in a negative sense) by both democrats and oligarchs.

[53] Thuc. 2.37.1. See L. B. Carter, *The Quiet Athenian* (Oxford 1986) 26–51, for the view that quietists were mostly aristocrats. Cf. P. Demont, *La cité grecque archaïque et classique et l'idéal de tranquillité* (Paris 1990) 235–236.

ται μὴ μετὰ τοῦ δραστηρίου τεταγμένον); nor is it expedient or
safe for a sovereign, but only for a subject state, to be a servant.

So, to return to Xenophon, this statement reflects a change
that democracy underwent during the fourth century: the
reduced participation of wealthy citizens in politics.[54] The
Xenophontic passages here examined reveal that this change
was also ideologically invested. By appealing to *apragmosyne* in a
context of criticism of democracy, aristocrats again give this
concept a new meaning: they use a concept that democrats had
used *against* them, in order to promote a *positive* (in their
opinion) alternative.[55]

3. *The case of Xenophon*

In the preceding analysis I studied Xenophon's passages in
the broader context of the relationship between rich and poor
citizens in the Athenian democracy and presented some of
their ideological implications. I will now turn to Xenophon.
There is much scholarly controversy about how Xenophon
viewed Athenian democracy. He certainly admired Sparta and
its constitution, but the extent to which he was inimical to
democracy is difficult to define.[56] The passages examined in
this study allow for two observations.

First, the view expressed by Aristippus, according to which
people who exercise leadership in the city resemble domestic
slaves, because they do not enjoy good things, is radical even in
the context of Xenophon's thought. A constant thread of his

[54] See Taylor, in *Debating the Athenian Cultural Revolution* 83–84.

[55] Most probably, this is not a real alternative and results from disillusion-
ment (mainly with democracy: after all, the Sicilian disaster was also viewed
as a failure of the Athenian *polypragmosyne*).

[56] See for instance Seager, *CQ* 51 (2001) 385–397, and V. Gray, "Le
Socrate de Xénophon et la démocratie," *EPh* 2 (2004) 141–176. Cf. also R.
Kroeker, "Xenophon as a Critic of the Athenian Democracy," *History of
Political Thought* 30 (2009) 197–228, a nuanced presentation of Xenophon's
political views which shows that he was not entirely hostile towards democ-
racy and Athens in general. But the evidence is not enough to support the
conclusion that Xenophon was openly favorable towards democracy.

thought is that the ideal leader (be it a ruler or a general or a master of the household like Ischomachus) takes care of his subordinates and secures their prosperity.[57] Although these relationships are hierarchical and asymmetrical and thus not devoid of ambiguity,[58] the ultimate goal of the leader should be the resolution of tensions and the well-being of the governing and governed alike. The fact that Xenophon does not apply his theory to democracy is, in my opinion, telling: it suggests that indeed all kinds of *archontes* can take care of their *archomenoi*, *except* the democratic leaders. Xenophon's marked terminology thus indicates that his ideal cannot fit with democracy.

My second and final point concerns genre: it is interesting, as noted earlier, that most of these judgments about the system of financial administration under democracy appear in a Socratic context: either Socrates himself praises (his) poverty, or his pupils, following their master, have recourse to the same argument, which they further develop.[59] What could this choice of genre suggest? These views are expressed in the course of a Socratic dialogue, often in a humorous and satirical context, which allows for exaggeration. Consequently, it might seem more appropriate for Xenophon, who was also an aristocrat, to present them in such a (less 'risky'[60]) context. I think, however, that this presentation had also a deeper function related to Xenophon's proclaimed aim in his Socratic works, the defense

[57] See now on this topic V. Gray, *Xenophon's Mirror of Princes. Reading the Reflections* (Oxford 2011).

[58] See in detail M. Tamiolaki, *Liberté et esclavage* 289–369, where I analyze the ambiguities related to the concept of voluntary submission in Xenophon.

[59] The case of Aristippus is somewhat exceptional, but again Aristippus responds to an issue which was first raised by Socrates.

[60] Here I may give the impression of slipping towards Straussian thinking (see especially for the Socratic works, L. Strauss, *Xenophon's Socrates* [Ithaca 1972]), but this should not be pressed too far. I think, like many scholars who currently study Xenophon, that Xenophon is subtle, subtler than we assumed him to be in the past, but I do not endorse Straussian views about Xenophon's possible 'hidden messages'.

of Socrates. Socrates was condemned by the democracy and democracy was, as stated in the *Memorabilia*, the rule of the poor. By commenting on Socrates' poverty in a context of complaint by the wealthy Athenians about the consequences of wealth, Xenophon presented his master in closer intellectual proximity to the wealthy aristocrats than with the mob of Athens, who condemned him to death.

Now, whether Xenophon's presentation is idiosyncratic or instead depicts accurately the perceptions of the oligarchs of his time is an acute question which we will probably never be able to answer with certainty. However, the accumulation of political terminology in Xenophon's philosophical works allows us to assume that these works, despite their peculiarity and proclaimed Socrates-centered purpose, reflected, though filtered, significant political realities: the tensions that were inherent in the democracy and the intellectual and ideological responses that this constitution prompted in its opponents (Xenophon himself included).[61]

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