



ELECTRYONE

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΥΩΝΗ

The concept of the refugee and immigrant in the ancient Greek world: privileges and limitations.

Ioannis Papadomarkakis, Maria Kaila

University of the Aegean

Rhodes, Greece

gpapadom@otenet.gr

kaila@rhodes.aegean.gr

ABSTRACT: This article examines the ways in which the literature of classic Greece depicts the concepts of migration and displacement. Different literature styles, such as history, drama and comedy approach the theme, underlining in this way the dense social impact it occupied. Through the revisiting of various classic extracts, this research aims to illustrate the way classic Greece was standing towards both the forcibly exiled and the willingly migrated, to the degree at least, this permeated classic works. Finally, this work aims to draw parallels between the past and today, regarding how the refugee is perceived.

KEY-WORDS: Metic, ostracism, asylum, ikesia.

Although biopolitics is a theoretical term to describe a new technology of power that emerged in 18th- and 19th-century Europe for the management of populations (Foucault in Rozakou, 2012), the actual need to manage moving populations is an antique one, since “Both history and literature of Ancient Greece are rich with the theme of exile” (Gorman, 1994: 403).

Examining the reasons behind displacement one soon realizes that to a degree these very same reasons remain active until today, proving it to be a human condition intact by time. Interestingly, leaving one’s country could be a deliberate or an undesired situation, could be imposed both by internal or external enemies and conditions. More specifically, constant invasions of people that were pressing for more land were tormenting Greeks, a situation documented by Herodotus describing Persian intentions, in his work *Historiae*:

γῆν γὰρ ἐκτίμεθα ὀλίγην καὶ ταύτην τρηχέαν, μεταναστάντες ἐκ ταύτης ἄλλην σχῶμεν ἀμείνω. εἰσὶ δὲ πολλαὶ μὲν ἀστυγείτονες, πολλαὶ δὲ καὶ ἐκαστέρω, τῶν μίαν σχόντες πλέοσι ἐσόμεθα θωμαστότεροι. οἶκός δὲ ἄνδρας ἄρχοντας τοιαῦτα ποιέειν (HPOΔ 9.122.2).

since the land we possess is small and also rugged, let us change from it and inhabit another which is better: and there are many near at hand, and many also at a greater distance, of which if we take one, we shall have greater reverence and from more men. [It] is reasonable too that men who are rulers should do such things; (transl. G. C. Macaulay).

Herodotus’ above extract demonstrates that strong civilizations felt entitled and even obliged to expand their territories to the expense of the others, an entitlement still very present today. In a world not still meticulously protected by international law in order to prevent war (a fragile legal construct that only was possible after the devastating events of WW2), violently displaced population were an often phenomenon, with people escaping to safer havens, with the consequence of alienating themselves from the core-right of citizenship.

Regarding exile as a result of internal violence, it is worthwhile to remind that during antiquity competing ‘poleis’ (city – states) of the Greek world were both in incessant conflicts between themselves and in frequent civil wars, a reality that led to massive

displacements. This was only aggravated by natural disasters and the absence of technologies to predict or prevent those (Gray, 2018). This is demonstrated by Euripides's Medea:

ἐπὶ δὲ ξένα ναίεις χθονί, τᾶς ἀνάνδρου κοίτας ὀλέσσασα λέκτρον, τάλαινα, φυγὰς δὲ χώρας ἄτιμος ἐλαύνῃ (EYP Μηδ 435).

On strange soil you now dwell, you have lost your marriage-bed, your husband's love, poor wretch, and you are being driven from this land an exile without rights.

Similarly, the tragedy of losing one's homeland is also depicted by Euripides in Bacchae:

ἐγὼ θ' ὁ τλήμων· βαρβάρους ἀφίζομαι γέρων μέτοικος (EYP Βακχ 1355).

Child, what a terrible disaster we have all come to—unhappy you, your sisters, and unhappy me. I shall reach a foreign land as an aged immigrant.

The same tragic approach of one losing his mother land, feeling mostly vulnerable and exposed is found in Euripides' Medea:

τίς με δέξεται πόλις; τίς γῆν ἄσυλον καὶ δόμους ἐχεγγύους ξένος παρασχὼν ῥύσεται τούμῳ δέμας; οὐκ ἔστι (EYP Μηδ 387).

What city will receive me? What friend will give me a safe country and a secure house and rescue me? There is no one.

In addition, except invasions from outside pressing populations away from their homeland, exile was a mechanism of forceful cleansing of political opponents, resulting to the same condition of losing both one's land of origin and citizenship. Thus the deprivation of homeland could be an emergent escape from violent and threatening for certain individuals internal affairs, but also an enforced, legally previewed, punishment for certain heavy crimes. As depicted by Euripides in his Heracleidae:

Ἀργεῖος ὢν γὰρ αὐτὸς Ἀργείους ἄγω ἐκ τῆς ἐμαυτοῦ τούσδε δραπέτας ἔχων, νόμοισι τοῖς ἐκεῖθεν ἐψηφισμένους θανεῖν (EYP Ηρακλ 140).

I am an Argive myself, and I seek to take away these Argives who have run away from my own country, persons sentenced by the laws of that country to die.

Further clarifying the juridical status of the Greek term φυγάς ‘fygas’ (refugee) Treves (1943) reminds that there were ‘fygades’ who were neither outlaws nor άτιμοι ‘atimoi’, but simply considered politically and potentially dangerous as for instance, the victims of ostracism, which was a preventive state mechanism, serving the principle of removing citizens viewed as a potential threat to the democracy, due to their popularity.. The use of exile as a legal punishment is a very archaic form of retaliation for citizens viewed as a threat for the local community and progressed from the purely punitive form, as illustrated by Plato in his work Protagoras:

ὅς δ’ ἂν μὴ ὑπακούῃ κολαζόμενος καὶ διδασκόμενος, ὡς ἀνίατον ὄντα τοῦτον ἐκβάλλειν ἐκ τῶν πόλεων ἢ ἀποκτείνειν (ΠΛ Πρωτ 325b).

and should cast forth from our cities or put to death as incurable whoever fails to respond to such punishment and instruction .

Similarly, Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics states:

τοὺς δ’ ἀνιάτους ὅλως ἐξορίζειν (ΑΡΙΣΤ ΗΝικ 1180a) .

and to banish the incorrigible out of the state altogether .

Additionally, abandoning homeland could be a free choice for reasons of pursuing seclusion (mostly by intellectuals in roman era), expressing disappointment and disapproval regarding internal political affairs, or simply pursuing improved quotidian standards, such as in the popular paradigm of the μέτοικοι ‘metikoi’ (metics) institution. Even famous Oedipus was for a while thought to be a foreigner who moved in Thebes and this self persuasion of foreignness allowed him the choices that led to his destruction, as described by Sophocles:

ὄν πάλαι ζητεῖς ἀπειλῶν κἀνακηρύσσων φόνον τὸν Λαίειον, οὗτός ἐστιν ἐνθάδε. ξένος λόγῳ μέτοικος, εἶτα δ’ ἐγγενὴς φανήσεται Θηβαῖος (ΣΟΦ ΟΤ 452).

the man whom you have been seeking this long while, uttering threats and proclaiming a search into the murder of Laius, is here, ostensibly an alien sojourner, but soon to be found a native of Thebes (transl. Sir R. Jebb).

Independently of what metics were running away from, they could find themselves in the peril of being exterminated by totalitarian regimes of the host country that under the pretext of their “not belonging” they were simply yearning to appropriate metics’ often big properties, as demonstrated by Xenophon in his work *Hellenica*:

ἔδοξε δ’ αὐτοῖς, ὅπως ἔχοιεν καὶ τοῖς φρουροῖς χρήματα δίδόναι, καὶ τῶν μετοίκων ἕνα ἕκαστον λαβεῖν, καὶ αὐτοὺς μὲν ἀποκτεῖναι, τὰ δὲ χρήματα αὐτῶν ἀποσημήνασθαι (ΞΕΝ Ελλ 2.3.21).

One measure that they resolved upon, in order to get money to pay their guardsmen, was that each of their number should seize one of the aliens residing in the city, and that they should put these men to death and confiscate their property .

It is worthwhile mentioning, that the psychological impact of exile was not only losing communication with the beloved ones, but also practically becoming religiously excommunicated (Gorman, 1994:403). As Gorman states “The exile’s physical security was tenuous”. Cut off from the legal and customary codes of one’s own land, one existed without rights as a foreigner. Any kind of travel in the ancient world was dangerous, but flight into exile was especially precarious (1994: 411). These conditions fragilized human life so much that the complex institution of asylum was conceived. So sacred asylum was for ancient Greek society that there was a legend Gods were disguising to check people’s values by observing how they would behave to strangers (Auffarth, 1992).

Within this frame, it is fair to say that asylum, was an early protected basic human right, and a compelling actuality for current times. The need to grant asylum might be a disguised form of self protection: life of ancient populations was fragile and exposed to all kind of possible misfortunes. Ancient Greeks were particularly preoccupied with rapid transformations of fate. As Auffarth states “Overnight wealthy ship owners and merchants could become beggars through shipwreck” (1992: 202) explaining the need to invest the concept of asylum with the membrane of divine duty. Aeschylus, in his work *Suppliants*, which is about the Danaids fleeing from Egypt and seeking refuge in Greece, famously illustrated the moral obligation towards refugees:

Φρόντισον καὶ γενοῦ πανδίκως εὐσεβῆς πρόξενος τὰν φυγάδα μὴ προδοῦς, τὰν ἕκαθεν ἐκβολαῖς δυσθέοις ὀρμέναν· (ΑἴσΧ Ικ 419),

Take counsel, and, as is your sacred duty, prove yourself our sacred champion. Do not betray the fugitive who has been impiously cast out and driven from afar (transl. Herbert Weir Smyth)

Similarly, in another extract of *Suppliants*, Aeschylus eloquently describes the legal obligations towards refugees:

ἡμᾶς μετοικεῖν τῆσδε γῆς ἐλευθέρους κάρρυσιάστους ζῦν τ' ἀσυλία βροτῶν· καὶ μήτ' ἐνοίκων μήτ' ἐπήλυδων τινα ἄγειν· ἐὰν δὲ προστιθῆ τὸ καρτερόν, τὸν μὴ βοηθήσαντα τῶνδε γαμόρων ἄτιμον εἶναι ζῦν φυγῆ δημηλάτῳ (A1ΣΧ Ικ 609).

That we are settlers in this land, and are free, subject to no seizure, and secure from robbery of man; that no one, native or alien, lead us captive; but, if they turn to violence, any landholder who refuses to rescue us, should both forfeit his rights and suffer public banishment.

Moreover, it has been stated “The institution of sanctuary has been a marker of general social cohesion: the community that protects its own” (Marfleet, 2007: 138). Another tool designed to protect humans from this violent transformation of fate, or at least to restrict its impact, was the concept of *ικεσία* ‘ikesia’ (supplication). The ones imploring for protection were falling on their knees, resorting to a cross culturally understood gesture (Auffarth, 1992). In any case, so intense was the perception of exile that the formation of asylum served as a partial countermeasure that was conceived to soothe the anguish of the exiled. According to Gorman “the anguish of separation was so palpable to the classical mind, [which] was one of the powerful motivations for the emergence of a partial corrective in the form of Asylum” (1994:413).

Eloquently describing the image of an *ικέτης* ‘iketis’ (suppliant), deeply impressing the ones that were enjoying stability and safety, Aeschylus writes in his work *Suppliants*:

αἰδοῖα καὶ γοεδνὰ καὶ ζαχρεῖ' ἔπη ζένους ἀμείβεσθ', ὡς ἐπήλυδας πρέπει (A1ΣΧ Ικ 195).

And let your words be gentle, close to tears and full of need, as fitteth sojourners (transl. G. Murray).

Evidently, it is fair to say that refugees were generating genuine feelings of awe and compassion to the locals, who were perceiving refugees' fates as an inhuman state of alienation, thus deserving support, despite possible social and political implications caused by their arrival at another place (Syropoulos:2017). Within this frame, Plato writes in his work "the Laws":

πρὸς δ' αὖ τοὺς ξένους διανοητέον ὡς ἀγιώτατα συμβόλαια ὄντα· σχεδὸν γὰρ πάντ' ἐστὶ τὰ τῶν ξένων καὶ εἰς τοὺς ξένους ἀμαρτήματα παρὰ τὰ τῶν πολιτῶν εἰς θεὸν ἀνηρητημένα τιμωρὸν μᾶλλον. ἔρημος γὰρ ὢν ὁ ξένος ἐταίρων τε καὶ συγγενῶν ἐλεινότερος ἀνθρώποις καὶ θεοῖς· ὁ δυνάμενος οὖν τιμωρεῖν μᾶλλον βοηθεῖ προθυμότερον, δύναται δὲ διαφερόντως ὁ ξένιος ἐκάστων δαίμων καὶ θεὸς τῷ ξενίῳ (ΠΛ Νομ 729e)

Further, a man should regard contracts made with strangers as specially sacred; for practically all the sins against Strangers are—as compared with those against citizens—connected more closely with an avenging deity. For the stranger, inasmuch as he is without companions or kinsfolk, is the more to be pitied by men and gods; wherefore he that is most able to avenge succors them most readily, and the most able of all, in every case, is the Strangers' daemon and god (transl. by R.G. Bury)

The alienation of the refugee from his native environment was conceived to be so devastating that -even if one would manage to repatriate- the everlasting shadow of feeling an outcast would follow him. Aesopos eloquently metaphorically describes the odd condition of the refugee that returns home, as being a foreigner in the foreign land and a foreigner in his own land:

οὕτω καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἱ τὰς πατρίδας ἀπολιμπάνοντες καὶ τὰς ἀλλοδαπὰς προκρίνοντες οὕτε ἐν ἐκείναις εὐδοκιμοῦσι καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων ἀποστρέφονται (ΑἰΣΩΠ Μυθ 125.1).

The same occurs with humans: The ones that abandon their country and prefer foreign countries, not only don't prosper there, but alienate themselves from their own.

So strenuous was the experience of exile that even Athenians, upon their return back to Athens, were exploiting their situation of being foreigners in the past, as a painful

situation, stressing their relief of having this “foreignness” lifted from them, as Andokides states in his work “on the mysteries”:

ἔτι δὲ εἰδότες μὲν οἷόν ἐστι πόλεως τοιαύτης πολίτην εἶναι, εἰδότες δὲ οἷόν ἐστι ξένον εἶναι καὶ μέτοικον ἐν τῇ τῶν πλησίων, ἐπιστάμενον δὲ οἷον τὸ σωφρονεῖν καὶ ὀρθῶς βουλευέσθαι, ἐπιστάμενον δ' οἷον τὸ ἀμαρτόντα πράττειν κακῶς (ANΔOK 1.144).

Nay more, I not only know what it is to be the citizen of a city such as this; I know what it is to be an alien sojourning in the lands of neighboring peoples; I have learnt the meaning of self-control and good sense; I have learnt what it is to suffer for one's mistakes. (transl. K. J. Maidment)

It is worth while mentioning that since exiled, ostracized and politically prosecuted citizens could lose their citizenship and valuable metics could lose their foreignness, the valuable element of citizenship could be perished or gained. As Isayev put it : “This flexibility allows for kin to become estranged and for strangers to lose their foreignness [...]. Ancient narratives show a deep interest in the process of such transformations, the articulation of belonging and the porosity of citizenship categories.” (2017: 80).

But more than pity and owe for war stricken refugees, Athenians of the classic era felt general acceptance towards the foreigners who voluntarily left their countries to live in Athens (metics). Rubinstein states “there was a general consensus among the Athenians, rich and poor alike, that immigrants contributed positively to the Athenian community as a whole, as traders, craftsmen, and soldiers” (2018: 2), citing both Isocrates and Xenophon.

Of course this positive outlook for metics pre-required the active demonstration of individual merit: «Permission is to be granted only after an application process and an unspecified vetting procedure and only to those metics who are deemed ἀξιοὶ ἀξιοί, “worth”, “deserving” or “valuable» (Robinson, 2018). Anyways, possibilities an exile had of being granted citizenship in the city where he had taken refuge were very limited and pre-requirements were very strict. Metropolitan Greek cities were more cautious while colonial cities provided looser conditions for an exile to be naturalized Greek (Charlesworth, 1945).

Nevertheless, this positive outlook for foreigners might have been tightly connected and directly proportional to metics' wealth that allowed Athenians to overlook their being foreign. This might explain the sarcastic contradiction Aristophanes creates in his work 'Birds': while Chorus chants about the idyllic conditions that await newcomers, Pisthetairos maltreats his slave:

τί γὰρ οὐκ ἔνι ταύτῃ καλὸν ἀνδρὶ μετοικεῖν; Σοφία, Πόθος, ἀμβρόσια Χάριτες τό τε τῆς ἀγανόφρονος Ἑσυχίας εὐήμερον πρόσωπον. ΠΙ. ὡς βλακικῶς διακονεῖς. οὐ θᾶπτον ἐγκονήσεις; (ΑΡΙΣΤ. Ορν. 1319 ΧΟ).

Everything beautiful haunts this place To which wandering man may aspire; Wisdom is here and ambrosial Grace, And kindly Calm with her sun-lit face; Oh, here is the heart's desire! Pisthetaerus: Was there ever a stupider slave? Quicker! Quicker! To work, you knave! (Transl. G. Murray).

Furthermore, the above mentioned positive outlook of the metics was abated by many inhibitions conceived to apply only for them. More specifically, before foreigners could be proven worthy they were expected to have a citizen functioning as a guarantee for them (prostatis) as Aristotle reminds in his Politics:

πολλαχοῦ μὲν οὖν οὐδὲ τούτων τελέως οἱ μέτοικοι μετέχουσιν, ἀλλὰ νέμειν ἀνάγκη προστάτην, ὥστε ἀτελῶς πως μετέχουσι τῆς τοιαύτης κοινωνίας (ΑΡΙΣΤ Πολ 1275a12)

in many places even the right of legal action is not shared completely by resident aliens, but they are obliged to produce a patron, so that they only share in a common legal procedure to an incomplete degree .

Similarly, Aristophanes in his work Knights demonstrates that Athenians were not taking foreigners very seriously, considering them -at least intellectually- inferior.

ἀλλ' οἷσθ' ὃ μοι πεπονθέναι δοκεῖς; ὅπερ τὸ πλῆθος. εἴ που δικίδιον εἶπας εὖ κατὰ ζένου μετοίκου, τὴν νύκτα θρυλῶν καὶ λαλῶν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς σεαυτῶ, ὕδωρ τε πίνων κάπιδεικνὺς τοὺς φίλους τ' ἀνιῶν, 350 ὧρου δυνατὸς εἶναι λέγειν. ὧ μῶρε τῆς ἀνοίας. (ΑΡΙΣΤ Ιππ 347)

Shall I tell you what has happened to you? Like so many others, you have gained some petty lawsuit against some alien. Did you drink enough water to inspire you?

Did you mutter over the thing sufficiently through the night, spout it along the street, recite it to all you met? Have you bored your friends enough with it? And for this [350] you deem yourself an orator. You poor fool!

Also, in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, another reminder of how foreigners were seen, under a comic scope:

*εἶτα ξαίνειν εἰς καλαθίσκον κοινήν εὐνοίαν ἅπαντας καταμειγνύοντας· τοὺς τε μετοίκους κεί τις ξένος ἢ φίλος ὑμῶν, κεί τις ὀφείλη τῷ δημοσίῳ, καὶ τούτους ἐγκαταμεῖζαι (ΑΡΙΣΤΟΦΑΝΗΣ, *ΛΥΣΙΣΤΡΑΤΑ*, 580)*

Then into a common basket of good will comb out the wool, the entire compound mix, including foreigners, guests, and allies, anyone useful to the public good (transl. I. Jonhston).

In any case, metics were an irrefutable resource of capital as payers of regular taxes and an additional tax (μετοίκιον), only granted equal tax treatment if they would greatly benefit Athens, as Xenophon writes in his *Hellenica*:

*πρὶν δὲ ἡμέρας δέκα γενέσθαι, πιστὰ δόντες, οἵτινες συμπολεμήσειαν, καὶ εἰ ξένοι εἶεν, ἰσοτέλειαν ἔσεσθαι, ἐζῆσαν πολλοὶ μὲν ὀπλίται, πολλοὶ δὲ γυμνήτες (ΞΕΝΟΦΩΝ, *ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ* 2.4.25)*

And having given pledges that whoever fought with them should be accorded equality in taxation with citizens even if they were foreigners, they marched forth before ten days had passed, a large body of hoplites with numerous light troops (transl. L. Brownson).

Nevertheless and within all limitations, metics were allowed to prosper immensely mainly through trade, developing a mutual profitable relationship for both the tax receiving state and for the metics' individual wealth. This wealth though could make them a desirable and easy prey. Lysias, other than being a famous orator, was a metic and a profoundly rich man, referring to the only speech he orated himself to the criminal treatment that metics suffered, being totally discriminated, from the regime of the thirty tyrants. This work is titled *Against Eratosthenes* and here follow two eloquent extracts:

Εἶτ' ὃ σχετλιώτατε πάντων, ἀντέλεγες μὲν ἵνα σώσειας, συνελάμβανες δὲ ἵνα ἀποκτείνῃς; καὶ ὅτε μὲν τὸ πλῆθος ἦν ὑμῶν κύριον τῆς σωτηρίας τῆς ἡμετέρας, ἀντιλέγειν φῆς τοῖς βουλομένοις ἡμᾶς ἀπολέσαι [...] (ΛΥΣ 12.26)

So then, most abandoned of mankind, you spoke in opposition to save us, but you helped in our arrest to put us to death! And when our salvation depended on the majority of your body, you assert that you spoke in opposition to those who sought our destruction.

And elsewhere in the same work of Lysias':

καὶ οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸ ἐλάχιστον μέρος τῆς οὐσίας ἐλέου παρ' αὐτῶν ἐτυγχάνομεν. ἀλλ' οὕτως εἰς ἡμᾶς διὰ τὰ χρήματα ἐξημάρτανον, ὥσπερ ἂν ἕτεροι μεγάλων ἀδικημάτων ὀργὴν ἔχοντες, οὐ τούτων ἀζίους γε ὄντας τῇ πόλει, ἀλλὰ πάσας «μὲν» τὰς χορηγίας χορηγήσαντας, πολλὰς δ' εἰσφορὰς εἰσενεγκόντας, κοσμίους δ' ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς παρέχοντας καὶ πᾶν τὸ προσταπτόμενον ποιοῦντας, ἐχθρὸν δ' οὐδένα κεκτημένους, πολλοὺς δ' Ἀθηναίων ἐκ τῶν πολεμίων λυσαμένους τοιούτων ἠξίωσαν οὐχ ὁμοίως μετοικοῦντας ὥσπερ αὐτοὶ ἐπολιτεύοντο (ΛΥΣ. Κ.Ερατ.12, 20-25).

And not even in respect of the smallest fraction of our property did we find any mercy at their hands but our wealth impelled them to act as injuriously towards us as others might from anger aroused by grievous wrongs. This was not the treatment that we deserved at the city's hands, when we had produced all our dramas for the festivals, and contributed to many special levies; when we showed ourselves men of orderly life, and performed every duty laid upon us; when we had made not a single enemy, but had ransomed many Athenians from the foe. Such was their reward to us for behaving as resident aliens far otherwise than they did as citizens. .

Metics were also a valuable human capital as conscribed soldiers, as Thucydides states in his work "Historiae":

Περὶ δὲ τὸ φθινόπωρον τοῦ θέρους τούτου Ἀθηναῖοι πανδημεῖ, αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ μέτοικοι, ἐσέβαλον ἐς τὴν Μεγαρίδα Περικλέους τοῦ Ξανθίππου στρατηγοῦντος (ΘΟΥΚ 2.31.1)

Towards the autumn of this year the Athenians invaded the Megarid with their whole levy, resident aliens included, under the command of Pericles, son of Xanthippus.

But, even when metics are called to war duties they could be attributed a role away from direct military spotlight:

τοσοῦτοι γὰρ ἐφύλασσον τὸ πρῶτον ὅποτε οἱ πολέμιοι ἐσβάλοιεν, ἀπὸ τε τῶν πρεσβυτάτων καὶ τῶν νεωτάτων, καὶ μετοίκων ὅσοι ὀπλῖται ἦσαν (ΘΟΥΚ 2.13.7).

this was at first the number of men on guard in the event of an invasion: it was composed of the oldest and youngest levies and the resident aliens who had heavy armor.

On the contrary, sometimes they prove to be exactly in the very spotlight of war affairs, proving themselves indispensable, as Aeschylus describes in his work “Seven against Thebes”:

προσίσταται Παρθενοπαῖος Ἀρκάς· ὁ δὲ τοιόσδ’ ἀνήρ μετοικος, Ἄργει δ’ ἐκτίνων καλὰς τροφάς. [...] ἐλθὼν δ’ ἔοικεν οὐ καπηλεύσειν μάχην, μακρᾶς κελεύθου δ’ οὐ καταισχυνεῖν πόρον (ΑἰΣΧ Επτ 548)

He does not seem to have come to do any petty trading in the battle, nor to shame the making of his long journey—he is Parthenopaeus of Arcadia. Such is the man, and aiming to make full payment for the fine support given him in Argos, his adopted land (transl. H. Weir).

Independently on how useful metics were as tax payers and as conscribed soldiers, they were denied rights such as real estate acquisition by Athenian law, safeguarding this privilege only for Athenians. On the contrary, they were subjects to the strictest of laws, namely the capital penalty, as Lysias describes in his work “against corn dealers”:

Καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἀνάβητε. εἰπέ σὺ ἐμοί, μέτοικος εἶ; Ναί. Μετοικεῖς δὲ πότερον ὡς πεισόμενος τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς τῆς πόλεως, ἢ ὡς ποιήσων ὅ τι ἂν βούλη; Ὡς πεισόμενος. Ἄλλο τι οὖν ἢ ἀξιοῖς ἀποθανεῖν, εἴ τι πεποίηκας παρὰ τοὺς νόμους, ἐφ’ οἷς θάνατος ἢ ζημία; (ΛΥΣ Κ.Σιτ.22.5)

Tell me, sir, are you a resident alien? Yes. Do you reside as an alien to obey the city's laws, or to do just as you please? To obey. Must you not, then, expect to be put to death, if you have committed a breach of the laws for which death is the penalty? I must ...

The fact that metics were generally viewed as individuals that deserved a lower position compared to Athenians, is best demonstrated by the fact that in case a metic was murdered by an Athenian citizen the previewed punishment (delivered by a court, Palladion, that could only decree smaller punishments) was exile and not the capital punishment, which was generally previewed for homicides (Kamen, 2013). Even more, metics unlike citizens could be made to undergo judicial torture, as revealed by Lysias in his work “against Simon” (although there is a dispute whether Simon was a metic or a slave):

εἰ μὴ τοῦτό γε τὸ παιδίον, ὃ ἐπικουρῆσαι μὲν μοι οὐκ ἂν ἐδύνατο, μὴνῦσαι δὲ ἴκανόν ἦν βασανιζόμενον, εἴ τι ἐγὼ ἐξημάρτανον (Λυσ, ΣΙμ. 33)

Save only this child, who would have been unable to support me, but was capable of giving information under torture upon any crime that I might commit!

Therefore, Plato (in his work “the Republic”), in an imaginary scenario where anarchy prevails, illustrates the expected repercussion with an image where Athenians and metics are deemed equal:

Καὶ καταδύεσθαι γε, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὦ φίλε, εἰς τε τὰς ἰδίας οἰκίας καὶ τελευτᾶν μέχρι τῶν θηρίων τὴν ἀναρχίαν ἐμφυομένην. Πῶς, ἦ δ' ὅς, τὸ τοιοῦτον λέγομεν; Οἶον, ἔφην, πατέρα μὲν ἐθίξεσθαι παιδί ὅμοιον γίγνεσθαι καὶ φοβεῖσθαι τοὺς υἱεῖς, ὕδον δὲ πατρί, καὶ μήτε αἰσχύνεσθαι μήτε δεδιέναι τοὺς γονέας, ἵνα δὴ ἐλεύθερος ἦ· μέτοικον δὲ ἀστῶ καὶ ἀστὸν μετοίκῳ ἐξισοῦσθαι, καὶ ζένον ὡσαύτως (Πλ Πολ 563a).

And, my friend, "I said," for it to filter down to the private houses and end up by anarchy's being planted in the very beasts?" "How do we mean that?" he said. "That a father," I said, "habituates himself to be like his child and fear his sons, and a son habituates himself to be like his father and to have no shame before or fear of his parents—that's so he may be free; and metics on an equal level with towns man and towns man with metic, and similarly with the foreigner." (transl. A. Bloom).

And similarly Isocrates writes in his Panegyricus:

οὐ δὴ που πάτριόν ἐστιν ἠγεῖσθαι τοὺς ἐπήλυδας τῶν ἀτοχθόνων, οὐδὲ τοὺς εὖ παθόντας τῶν εὖ ποιησάντων, οὐδὲ τοὺς ἰκέτας γενομένους τῶν ὑποδεξαμένων (ΙΣΟΚΡ 4.63).

it is not ancestral custom for immigrants to set themselves over the sons of the soil, or the recipients of benefits over their benefactors, or refugees over those who gave them asylum .

Despite any discrimination against metics, Athenians firmly believed that their city-state was excelling in tolerance towards foreigners, so Plato writes in his Meno:

καί μοι δοκεῖς εὖ βουλευέσθαι οὐκ ἐκπλέων ἐνθένδε οὐδ' ἀποδημῶν· εἰ γὰρ ξένος ἐν ἄλλῃ πόλει τοιαῦτα ποιοῖς, τάχ' ἂν ὡς γόης ἀπαχθείης (ΠΛ Μεν 80b).

You are well advised, I consider, in not voyaging or taking a trip away from home; for if you went on like this as a stranger in any other city you would very likely be taken up for a wizard .

But, even Spartans, totally different from open-minded cosmopolitan Athenians were allowing foreigners to live among them, not trusting them though with sensitive subjects:

οἱ δὲ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, ἐπειδὴν βούλωνται ἀνέδην τοῖς παρ' αὐτοῖς συγγενέσθαι σοφισταῖς καὶ ἤδη ἄχθονται λάθρα συγγιγνόμενοι, ξενηλασίας ποιοῦμενοι τῶν τε λακωνιζόντων τούτων καὶ ἐάν τις ἄλλος ξένος ὦν ἐπιδημήσῃ, συγγίγνονται τοῖς σοφισταῖς λανθάνοντες τοὺς ξένους, καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐδένα ἐῶσιν τῶν νέων [342d] εἰς τὰς ἄλλας πόλεις ἐξίεναι, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ Κρήτες, ἵνα μὴ ἀπομανθάνωσιν ἃ αὐτοὶ διδάσκουσιν (ΠΛ Πρωτ 342c).

And when the Spartans wish to converse unrestrainedly with their sophists, and begin to chafe at the secrecy of their meetings, they pass alien acts against the laconizing set and any other strangers within their gates, and have meetings with the sophists unknown to the foreigners; while on their part they do not permit any of their young men .

Greek Tragedians seem to consider this tolerance of foreigners a distinctively Greek value, since they present non-Greeks as especially hostile to strangers, such as Egyptians in Euripides' *Helen* and *Iphigeneia at Tauris* (Syropoulos: 2017). Finally, within their own internal battle of where to set the borderlines in the evasive duality between “ourselves” and the “others” the Athenians had obvious pride in their origin,

claiming their connection to their land as a moral advantage, according to Isocrates in his work “Panathenaicus”:

ὄντας δὲ μήτε μιγάδας μήτ' ἐπήλυδας, ἀλλὰ μόνους αὐτόχθονας τῶν Ἑλλήνων, καὶ ταύτην ἔχοντας τὴν χώραν τροφὸν, ἐξ ἧσπερ ἔφυσαν καὶ ταύτην ἔχοντας τὴν χώραν τροφὸν, ἐξ ἧσπερ ἔφυσαν, καὶ στέργοντας αὐτὴν ὁμοίως ὥσπερ οἱ βέλτιστοι τοὺς πατέρας καὶ τὰς μητέρας τὰς αὐτῶν (ΙΣΟΚΡ. 12.124).

who were neither of mixed origin nor invaders of a foreign territory but were, on the contrary, alone among the Hellenes, sprung from the soil itself, possessing in this land the nurse of their very existence and cherishing it as fondly as the best of children cherish their fathers and mothers .

Similarly, Herodotus, makes the same claim in his “Historiae”:

έόντες Ἀθηναῖοι συγχωρήσομεν τῆς ἡγεμονίης, ἀρχαιότατον μὲν ἔθνος παρεχόμενοι, μοῦνοι δὲ έόντες οὐ μετανάσαι Ἑλλήνων (HP. Ἱστ. 7.153.1) .

if we allow hegemony to fall to other hands, we that are an ancient breed and the only ones who did not migrate from another land .

Concluding and citing from Gray: “citizenship-in-exile practices in ancient Greece [...] are welcome as a refreshing and critical look into refugeeness as a depoliticized identity of human beings in need [...]. Also, a more complex and open-ended understanding of citizenship can, as in the ancient Greek case, open a rich variety of opportunities for political interaction and agency on the part of both the displaced and their hosts” (Gray, 2018:8,16).

In this sense, it might be essential to remind to ourselves that the currently pressing matters of refugee waves towards the western world, due to a wide variety of causes such as wars, poverty, terrorism, political persecution etc, which in turn creates pressing circumstances for examining asylum cases, is in fact a very ancient phenomenon. The challenge for host countries to demonstrate their humanitarian face protecting refugees, while simultaneously dealing with xenophobic reactions from their citizens, remains unaltered for millennia, reflecting the unsolved internal split between “us” and “the others”.

Bibliography

Auffarth, C. (1992). Protecting Strangers: Establishing a Fundamental Value in the Religions of the Ancient Near East and Ancient Greece. *Numen*, 39(2), 193–216. doi:10.1163/156852792x00032

Charlesworth, M. P. (1945). *Political Refugees Elemer Balogh: Political Refugees in Ancient Greece* (from the period of the tyrants to Alexander the Great). Pp. xvi+134. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1942. Paper boards, 7s. 6d. *The Classical Review*, 59(01), 23–24. doi:10.1017/s0009840x00087576

Gorman, R. (1994). Poets, Playwrights, and the Politics of Exile and Asylum in Ancient Greece and Rome. *International Journal of Refugee Law*. 6(3)

Gray, B. (2018). Citizenship as Barrier and Opportunity for Ancient Greek and Modern Refugees. *Humanities*, 7(3), 72. doi:10.3390/h7030072

Isayev, E. (2017). Between hospitality and asylum: A historical perspective on displaced agency. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 99(904), 75–98. doi:10.1017/s1816383117000510

Marfleet, P. (2007). Refugees and history: why we must address the past. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 26(3), 136–148. doi:10.1093/rsq/hdi0248

Kamen D. (2013). *Status in Classical Athens*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Rozakou, K. (2012). The biopolitics of hospitality in Greece: Humanitarianism and the management of refugees. *American Ethnologist*, 39(3), 562–577. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1425.2012.01381.x

Rubinstein, L. (2018): Immigration and Refugee Crises in Fourth-Century Greece: An Athenian Perspective, *The European Legacy*, DOI: 10.1080/10848770.2018.1423785

Syropoulos, S. (2017), “Refugees and the tolerance of the Other in Greek Tragedy”, in G. Leineweber (ed.) *Wayferares*, Verlag Expeditionen, Literature Caravan Edition, 118-145

Treves, P. (1943). Political Refugees in Ancient Greece. By E. Balogh, with the collaboration of F. M. Heichelheim. Pp. xvi + 134. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1943. 7s. 6d. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 63, 132–133. doi:10.2307/627022

Notes:

Greek texts retrieved from the web platform Gate of Greek Language in <http://www.greek-language.gr/digitalResources/index.html>

English translations retrieved from web platform Perseus in <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>, unless otherwise specifically mentioned.