

Anna Calcaterra

Jury Duty in Athens

Archaeological Evidence



Pinakion, National Museum of Finland

Bronze pinakia like this one were used during the fourth century BCE, and pinakia of other materials were used during other time periods. The first line contains the citizen's name and the second contains the deme he belonged to. The large letter at the beginning designates his section letter.



Kleroterion, Ancient Agora Museum

Pinakia would be inserted into the slots of the Kleroterion by somebody selected by lot.

Aristotle

- *The Athenian Constitution* (320s BCE) describes the process of choosing juries and assigning the chosen jury members to specific courts:
 - Jurors from the ten tribes are selected by the Nine Archons and Clerk of the Lawgivers by lot.
 - Each tribe is divided into ten sections and the sections are assigned one of the first ten letters of the alphabet (as seen above). There is a box for jurors from each section to place their pinakia. One name is drawn from each box at first; this person affixes the pinakia in the kleoterion as jurors are selected.
 - Using dice, the Archon of each tribe selects jurors. When a juror is selected, he draws an acorn out of an urn to determine which court he will serve in. Once this is determined, the person selected to affix the pinakia inserts them into the kleoterion based on their section letter.
- *The Athenian Constitution* also gives the qualifications for serving on a jury:
 - A citizen must be at least thirty years old, not in debt, and not having lost their rights.
 - If an unqualified person sits on a jury, he is brought to court and his fellow jurors decide on his punishment or fine.
- It also discusses payments of those involved in the courts, saying that those serving in the jury received half a drachma (equal to three obols) for payment.
- *Politics* states that it was Pericles (495 - 429 BCE) who first established payment for the juries.

Demosthenes

- Demosthenes' Orations 24 *Against Timocrates* (353 BCE) contains the Oath of the Heliasts, which was sworn by members of the Athenian jury, providing an idea of the standards and expectations for serving on an Athenian jury.
- Again, it is stated that a juror must be at least thirty years old.
- The juror swears to uphold Athenian democracy, oppose tyranny and oligarchy, agrees not to accept any bribes, and promises to be impartial and make his decision solely on the current charge being brought forward.
- This oath was sworn on Zeus, Poseidon, and Demeter.
- Orations 39 *Mantitheus against Boeotus 1* makes reference to the payment of the jurors through saying that a case cannot be brought to court if there are not sufficient funds to pay the jurors.

Aristophanes

- The comic plays of Aristophanes, writing in the fifth century BCE, also give insight into various norms surrounding serving on a juries in Athens, particularly surrounding the payment received for doing so.

- *Knights* makes multiple reference to a payment of three obols for serving on a jury. This number is also used in *Wasps*.
 - *Wasps* also says that showing up late for the courts means a member of the jury will not be paid.

Works Cited

- Aristophanes. *Acharnians. Knights*. Edited and translated by Jeffrey Henderson. Loeb Classical Library 178. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Aristophanes. *Clouds. Wasps. Peace*. Edited and translated by Jeffrey Henderson. Loeb Classical Library 488. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Aristotle. *Athenian Constitution. Eudemian Ethics. Virtues and Vices*. Translated by H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library 285. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935.
- Aristotle. *Politics*. Translated by H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library 264. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932.
- Demosthenes. *Orations, Volume III: Orations 21-26: Against Meidias. Against Androtion. Against Aristocrates. Against Timocrates. Against Aristogeiton 1 and 2*. Translated by J. H. Vince. Loeb Classical Library 299. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935.
- Demosthenes. *Orations, Volume IV: Orations 27-40: Private Cases*. Translated by A. T. Murray. Loeb Classical Library 318. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936.
- Lanni, Adriaan M. "Social Norms in the Ancient Athenian Courts," 1 *J. Legal Analysis* 691 (2009).
- Leena Pietilä-Castrén. "A Lost Pinakion Rediscovered." *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 85, no. 1 (2016).