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Author(s): JAMES WATSON

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# THE ORIGIN OF METIC STATUS AT ATHENS\*

## 1. Introduction

It is widely held as uncontroversial that throughout the classical period male inhabitants of Attica were divided between three distinct categories – Athenian citizens, metics (regularly translated as ‘resident aliens’) and slaves – and that Athenian society had, therefore, a tripartite structure.<sup>1</sup> The opportunities available to and requirements demanded of a man depended on his category. Those foreigners permanently resident in Attica – those with the legal status of ‘metic’ – were, unlike slaves, free, but, unlike citizens, they could not own land, vote in the Assembly, or serve as a *dikastes* or as a magistrate; in addition, metics were required to pay a poll tax (the *metoikion*) and to have a citizen sponsor (*prostates*).<sup>2</sup> In this paper I seek to challenge not the nature of the distinction between citizens and metics but instead the assumption that the distinction was made throughout the classical period. I suggest that the growth of the Athenian citizen population after the Persian invasion of 480–

\* All dates given in this paper that refer to antiquity are BC. This article is an expanded version of a paper delivered at the Classical Association Annual Conference 2009, held in Glasgow. To all those who commented on the paper on that occasion and have done so subsequently, and especially to Roger Brock, Ben Keim and Julia Shear, I am most grateful. I thank Caroline Vout for inviting me to submit this paper to CCJ, and for her patience in waiting for its completion. The thoughts developed here began as part of my doctoral research; I thank Robin Osborne for his supervision of my Ph.D. project and in particular for his comments on this paper, and I thank my examiners, Peter Rhodes and Paul Millett, for their helpful remarks on this and other sections of my thesis. I am indebted also to the anonymous readers for CCJ whose comments have helped to improve this piece. I would also like to thank my former students at Freman College, Buntingford, for all that I learned from them, and it is to them in gratitude that this paper is dedicated.

<sup>1</sup> Such a view of Athenian society can be found in both scholarly literature and in textbooks for those learning about Greek antiquity for the first time. Thus Hansen (1991) 86: ‘The population of Athens, like that of every city-state, was divided into three clearly differentiated groups: citizens; resident foreigners called metics (*metoikoi*); and slaves.’ Compare Balme and Lawall (1995) 13: ‘The adult male population of the city-state of Athens in 431 BC has been calculated as follows: citizens 50,000, resident foreigners 25,000, slaves 100,000. The resident foreigners (*metics*) were granted a distinct status; they could not own land in Attica or contract marriages with citizens, but they had the protection of the courts, they served in the army, they had a role in the festivals, and they played an important part in commerce and industry.’ Cf. Vlassopoulos (2007) for a rare challenge to this standard ‘tripartite’ understanding of Athenian society.

<sup>2</sup> The evidence for such a definition of metic status is collected in Whitehead (1977), which remains the fundamental study of Athenian metics, and to which all subsequent studies of metics (including this paper) are much indebted.

479 demands that the origin of metic status be situated around the middle of the fifth century, and that the occasion on which the Athenian polis first defined metic status is likely to have been the occasion on which it first took an interest in restricting who might become a citizen: in 451/0, with the passing of Perikles' citizenship law.

## 2. The Athenian citizen population, 480–450

In 1981, Cynthia Patterson offered what remains the most detailed study of the fifth-century Athenian citizen population.<sup>3</sup> Patterson begins her investigation by using the sizes of Athenian military forces during the Persian invasion of 480–479, as recorded by Herodotus, to reconstruct the size of the Athenian citizen population at that time.<sup>4</sup> We are told that the Athenians provided 180 triremes for the Battle of Salamis (Hdt. 8.44, 46); as a trireme required a crew of 200,<sup>5</sup> some 36,000 men would have been needed to man the Athenian fleet. Although 480 is likely to have been a time of almost complete mobilisation, we cannot just equate the crew requirement of the Athenian fleet with the total size of the Athenian citizen population in that year. As Patterson noted, it is possible that the Athenian triremes were neither fully-manned nor crewed solely by Athenian citizens at Salamis; if there were 150 Athenian citizens on each trireme, for example, there would then have been only a total of 27,000 Athenian citizens in the fleet which fought the battle.<sup>6</sup> Patterson takes such thoughts together with Herodotus' claim that the Athenians sent 8,000 hoplites to the Battle of Plataia (9.28), at a time when some hoplites must also have been with the fleet at Mykale, to suggest that 'in 480 Athens had about 9,000 fit hoplites and a total [citizen] population insufficient to man 180 triremes' – a citizen population she later quantifies as being of 25,000–30,000 men.<sup>7</sup>

To the evidence from 480–479 Patterson compares Thucydides' account of Athenian military affairs during the 450s (1.104ff.). Patterson notes that 'the activities of the Athenians between 459 and 454 definitely show audacity and energy and give an impression of an abundance of citizens. They apparently were not reluctant to operate on at least three fronts simultaneously (e.g. in Egypt, Aegina and Megara).'<sup>8</sup> Her

<sup>3</sup> Patterson (1981) ch. 3.

<sup>4</sup> The hazards of trying to reconstruct the total size of a population from figures recorded for the size of its military forces have long been recognised: Henige (1988) offers a critique of such attempts which, unless care is taken, can indeed result in producing 'numbers from nowhere'. Caution must, for example, be exercised when estimating what proportion of a population served in the military. Patterson seems to me, however, to treat the ancient figures prudently, and so I trust the results of her calculations here.

<sup>5</sup> Morrison, Coates and Rankov (2000) 107–8.

<sup>6</sup> Patterson (1981) 48–9.

<sup>7</sup> Patterson (1981) 49, 68. 30,000 is also the number of Athenian citizens given by Hdt. 5.97.3.

<sup>8</sup> Patterson (1981) 64.

conclusion is that ‘in all, some 40,000 Athenians is perhaps a minimum figure for the Athenian...population in the 450’s... It is important to realize the order of magnitude of the Athenian military force in the 450’s implicit in Thucydides’ account of these years. Certainly it should be at least clear that the Athenians in the 450’s would have had little difficulty in manning 200 ships at a time of complete mobilization.’<sup>9</sup> Patterson’s argument, therefore, is that the Athenian citizen population grew from some 25,000–30,000 in 480 to some 40,000–50,000 in 450.<sup>10</sup>

Can Patterson’s figures be accepted as plausible? Although we lack sufficient non-literary evidence to test Patterson’s claims,<sup>11</sup> we can test the figures she suggests for the Athenian population in 480 and 450 against figures that other scholars have considered plausible for 431. A. W. Gomme, using the figures given by Thucydides for the Athenian military at the start of the Peloponnesian War (2.13) – 29,000 hoplites (including some metic hoplites), 1,200 horsemen, 1,600 archers, and 300 triremes ready for active service – calculated a citizen population for Athens in 431 of 43,000.<sup>12</sup> Mogens Hansen, by contrast, started from a likely citizen population size of 25,000 in 400 and, allowing for population losses during the Peloponnesian War, calculated that there were some 60,000 Athenian citizens in 431.<sup>13</sup> Figures of this magnitude were also calculated by Peter Rhodes, who estimated the size of the Athenian citizen population in 431 from the evidence for numbers of hoplites and *thetes*; he concludes that there was ‘a total number of adult male citizens in the range 45,000–60,000’, and

<sup>9</sup> Patterson (1981) 65.

<sup>10</sup> Patterson (1981) 68. Patterson, in fact, suggests that the Athenian citizen population was 40,000–50,000 ‘in the early 450’s’, but here I take that population range to apply specifically to 450. My calculations may, therefore, if anything underestimate the rate of growth of the Athenian citizen population.

<sup>11</sup> Archaeological methods of calculating a population size, for example, tend to yield figures only for a single point in time. One such method, noted by Hassan (1981) 66, is to estimate the size of a site’s population (*P*) from its physical size; to do so, we must use the formula  $P = k \times a$ , for which we need to know the area of the site (*A*) and the likely population density (*k*), and which we need to modify to make an allowance for space in that area not used for habitation. The area of Athens enclosed by the Themistoklean Wall of 479 was 211 ha; if we assume 60 per cent of that area was used for habitation and allow a population density of 150 persons/ha (for which see de Angelis (2003) 149, Hansen (2006) 60–1), then we can estimate a total population for the city of Athens in 479 of some 18,990. This figure cannot help us here, however, as we have no way of relating it to the total citizen population of Attica, and because a calculation for 450, when the Themistoklean Wall still stood, would yield the same result. The so-called ‘shotgun method’, which relies heavily on the use of this site-area method of calculating population, may allow Hansen (2006) 27 to claim that the total population of the Greek world at the time of Alexander was 7.5 million, but it is of no use for those interested in studying how population size changes over time.

<sup>12</sup> Gomme (1933) table 1. Thucydides’ figures at 2.13 are defended by Akrigg (2007) 30–31 n. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Hansen (1988) 14–28. If Thucydides’ claim that the Athenians had 300 triremes ready for service is trusted, and if we assume that the Athenians were now capable of providing the full crew of 200 from their citizen body alone, Athens needed a citizen population of at least Hansen’s 60,000 just to crew its fleet.

he favours a figure 'at the upper end of that range'.<sup>14</sup> These are figures which we can use to test the population increase proposed by Patterson.<sup>15</sup>

If we calculate 'backwards' from a range of 43,000–60,000 for the Athenian citizen population in 431, we see that such a population size would have been produced by natural growth, at a rate of 0.5 per cent per year,<sup>16</sup> from one of 39,000–54,000 in 450 – figures very similar to the range of 40,000–50,000 proposed by Patterson for the Athenian citizen population during the 450s. In other words, the size of the Athenian citizen population proposed by Patterson for 450 is consistent with figures accepted as plausible for the number of Athenian citizens in 431, and so can itself be considered plausible. If we carry the calculation further back, however, we see that a citizen population of 43,000–60,000 in 431 (and of 39,000–54,000 in 450) would have been produced by natural growth (again at an annual growth rate of 0.5 per cent) only from one of 33,500–47,000 in 480 – a population range which seems implausibly high for Athens at that date. But if we calculate 'forwards' from Patterson's citizen population range of 25,000–30,000 in 480, we see that natural growth alone (again at a rate of 0.5 per cent per year) would yield a citizen population of 29,000–35,000 in 450, and of just 32,000–38,500 in 431 – figures surely too low for Athens at these dates. In short, these calculations (the results of which are displayed in Table 1) suggest that Patterson's suggested range of 40,000–50,000 for the Athenian citizen population in 450 is credible, but that natural growth alone from the range of 25,000–30,000 suggested by Patterson for the number of Athenian citizens in 480 – a range which also seems eminently plausible – would produce citizen populations of Athens in 450 and 431 that are unacceptably small.

**Table 1. Testing Patterson's figures for the Athenian citizen population in 480 and 450 (assuming natural growth at 0.5 per cent per year)**

	480	450	431
From 480 population of 25,000–30,000	25,000–30,000 (Patterson)	29,035–34,842 <u>Too low</u>	32,080–38,498 <u>Too low</u>
To 431 population of 43,000–60,000	33,509–46,757 <u>Too high</u>	38,918–54,304 <u>Plausible</u>	43,000–60,000 (Gomme/Hansen/Rhodes)

<sup>14</sup> Rhodes (1988) 271–6; I quote from 275–6.

<sup>15</sup> In the calculations which follow, I make use of a compound interest formula for population growth,  $F = S(1+r)^n$ , where  $F$  is 'final population',  $S$  is 'starting population',  $r$  is 'growth rate', and  $n$  is the number of years over which we want to plot the growth.

<sup>16</sup> Scheidel (2003) 122 suggests that the long-term annual growth rate of the Greek population is unlikely to have exceeded 0.45 per cent; the growth rate of 0.5 per cent per year I use in my calculations for natural population growth is, therefore, the most generous plausible long-term growth rate, rounded up. For justification of such a rate for short-term population growth, see below.

To put the problem implied by my calculations in different terms, plausible figures for the Athenian population size in 480 (Patterson's 25,000–30,000), 450 (Patterson's 40,000–50,000) and 431 (43,000 to 60,000 as proposed by Gomme, Hansen and Rhodes) cannot be connected by assuming a steady growth rate of 0.5 per cent per year between 480 and 431. Although a 450 population of 40,000–50,000 growing annually at a rate of 0.5 per cent would grow to 44,200–55,250 (and thus to the range 43,000–60,000 implied by the work of Gomme, Hansen and Rhodes) in the twenty years to 431, we have to postulate an annual growth rate of between 0.9 and 2.3 per cent to turn the 480 population of 25,000–30,000 into one of 40,000–50,000 thirty years later.<sup>17</sup> Growth at such a rate exceeds – and may potentially considerably exceed – that which demographers have considered to be plausible for natural population growth. Walter Scheidel has noted that 'it is unlikely that the mean long-term growth rate [for Greek populations] deviated significantly from a range of between perhaps 0.25% and 0.45% per year'.<sup>18</sup> Although population growth at a rate above this range would be possible in the short term, reasons for that higher growth rate would need to be found, and they are, I suggest, lacking for the Athenian population between 480 and 450.<sup>19</sup> We must instead, it seems, accept that whilst the Athenian population grew only by natural means between 450 and 431, between 480 and 450 the population was growing by both natural and by non-natural means.

<sup>17</sup> The annual growth rate of a population can be calculated using the compound interest formula discussed above, rearranged as  $r = \sqrt[n]{(F/S)} - 1$ . Growth in thirty years from 30,000 to 40,000 implies an annual growth rate of 0.9 per cent, from 25,000 to 40,000 a rate of 1.6 per cent, from 30,000 to 50,000 a rate of 1.7 per cent and from 25,000 to 50,000 a rate of 2.3 per cent.

<sup>18</sup> Scheidel (2003) 122; he goes on to note (122–4) that, 'Alleged annual growth rates of 2, 3 or 4% that have repeatedly been mooted in the literature entail...serious implications and would impel us to adopt a bizarre saltationist model of punctuated equilibria with short growth spurts and no growth for most of the time: at 3% per year, all growth that could possibly have occurred between the tenth and fourth centuries could be compressed into a single century, and the same may be possible for a 2% increase.'

<sup>19</sup> It would, for example, be inappropriate to postulate a 'baby boom' for the aftermath of the 'Persian wars' on the model of what happened after the Second World War. That 'baby boom' is connected with troops returning from prolonged overseas service; long-term service away from home was not the experience of Greeks in either 490 or 480–479, though it may have become more so for Athenians after 479 when the fight against the Persians was carried across the Aegean. Furthermore, Patterson (1981) 68–9 also noted two features of Athens in the second quarter of the fifth century which may have inhibited natural population growth, namely recovery from the devastation wreaked by Xerxes' forces, and the increasing urbanisation of Athens itself (and thus the increasing numbers of Athenians exposed to the health risks of living in an ancient city).

This implication of Patterson's figures was realised by Patterson herself: 'I think that one explanation of the "startling" increase in the Athenian population that should be considered is "non-natural increase", i.e. the admission or entry of non-Athenians into the demes and phratries, resulting in the creation of new Athenians.'<sup>20</sup> Patterson acknowledged that such a proposal 'may immediately be rejected by some on the grounds that it would be un-Athenian', but as she had argued – in a case which I hope to have strengthened here by my own calculations – the significant growth of the Athenian citizen population in the years after 480–479 can only satisfactorily be explained by accepting that, down to the middle of the fifth century, large numbers of non-Athenians – some 11,000–15,000 of them – gained Athenian citizenship.<sup>21</sup> These 'new Athenians' – those non-Athenians who gained citizenship between 480 and 450 – must have come from two 'sources' – existing non-citizen inhabitants of Attica, and immigrants to Attica.<sup>22</sup>

To suggest that several thousand immigrants arrived in Attica and gained Athenian citizenship in the thirty years after Xerxes' invasion, however, has implications for the 'uncontroversial' view of Athenian society outlined above. Why did those immigrants who moved to Attica after 480 become citizens, and not – as we have all been led to believe – metics? The most satisfactory answer to that question, I suggest, is that 'metic status' had not yet been created in 480, and that at that date it was possible for immigrants to Attica to become Athenian citizens. If the argument presented so far in this paper can be accepted, the 'standard view' of Athenian society, and above all the conventional wisdom about metics, needs to be revisited.

<sup>20</sup> Patterson (1981) 70.

<sup>21</sup> As the 480 population of 25,000–30,000 citizens would have grown naturally (at a rate of 0.5 per cent per year) to 29,035–34,842 citizens in 450, and as the total 450 citizen population was 40,000–50,000, we can see that the citizen population in 450 had also to include some 10,965–15,158 'new Athenians'; cf. table 2 below. Although some might query the suggestion that large numbers of immigrants came to and gained citizenship at Athens, the very arrival of those large numbers of immigrants seems not to be in doubt: Duncan-Jones (1980) 102–3, 106 argued for 'the existence of a massive metic component in the population of hoplite census at Athens', a component he numbered as greater than 12,000. Although I disagree that such persons were 'metics', Duncan-Jones' calculations are suggestive of the scale on which foreigners moved to Athens during the mid-fifth century.

<sup>22</sup> It is beyond the scope of this paper to speculate at length as to the likely geographical origin of those immigrants to Attica. It seems to me likely, however, that immigrants would have been attracted to Athens by the opportunities for employment offered by the need to reconstruct the city after the Persian sack and the need to maintain, and indeed replace, the trireme fleet; those who sought such an opportunity could have come from anywhere in the Greek world. Socio-political events in other *poleis* may also have spurred immigration to Athens. The case of Nikodromos, leader of a failed coup on Aegina in the early fifth century, is instructive: he and many of his followers relocated to Athens after their uprising against the ruling oligarchy was unsuccessful (Hdt. 6.90). The stability and ideology of democracy at Athens may, therefore, also have attracted immigrants from other *poleis*.

### 3. Dating the origin of metic status at Athens

The earliest literary usage of the word *metoikos* is by Aeschylus; he uses the word and its cognates in several of his tragedies, including the *Persians*, performed in 472 (line 319), and the *Suppliants*, performed in 463 (lines 609, 994). In inscriptions, the earliest text in which we find mention of *metoikoi* is a law of the deme Skambonidai (IG i<sup>3</sup> 244), dated to about 460.<sup>23</sup> That inscription, in particular, led Whitehead to remark that ‘there were undeniably officially-defined *metoikoi* in Athens at this time’,<sup>24</sup> and, as there is no good evidence that a definition of metic status was provided by Solon, scholars have tended to associate the establishment of metic status with the reforms of Kleisthenes in 508/7.<sup>25</sup> If, however, immigrants to Attica after Kleisthenes’ reforms became not citizens but metics, we are left without a convincing explanation for the scale of the growth of the Athenian citizen population evident after 480. We must instead, I suggest, consider that the establishment of metic status post-dates Kleisthenes’ reforms.<sup>26</sup>

Patterson anticipated that another objection to her claim that non-natural increase contributed significantly to the rapid growth of the Athenian citizen population after 480 would be that ‘the sources say nothing of it.’<sup>27</sup> Although the sources indeed do not record the admission of many thousands of immigrants to Athenian citizenship in the decades after Xerxes’ invasion, they do perhaps contain hints that immigrants

<sup>23</sup>The date of IG i<sup>3</sup> 244 is estimated from the forms of its letters. Hicks (1874) no. 1 noted that ‘the form of the letters is archaic’ and recorded a date in the 450s, but Lewis in IG i<sup>3</sup> suggests a date of c. 460. Meiggs (1966) included this inscription in his list of ‘undated inscriptions with early letter forms’ (his table 2, no. 8), and the evidence he collects would indeed suggest a date of around 460 for this text. It should be noted that the reference to metics is slightly restored (column C, line 7): τὸς μετοίκ[ος].... On this inscription, cf. Wijma (2009), esp. 189–199; Wijma’s dissertation as a whole is an important new contribution to scholarship on metics. I note that a *metaoikos* is referred to on a gravestone of the last decade of the sixth century (IG i<sup>3</sup> 1357); on that text see Baba (1984) and below.

<sup>24</sup>Whitehead (1977) 34.

<sup>25</sup>So Whitehead (1977) 145–7, even if he suggests that Kleisthenes has merely drawn up a ‘blueprint’ of the status, much of which remained to be realised. Bakewell (1997) prefers to date the origin of metic status to the 460s; I discuss his theory below.

<sup>26</sup>Possible support for this view may come from another text, the controversial so-called ‘Themistokles decree’ (Meiggs and Lewis (1988) no. 23). The text contains mention of ‘the foreigners who live at Athens’ (τοὺς ξένοις τοὺς οἰκοῦντας Ἀθήνησι, line 7); Whitehead (1977) saw this as a reference to metics, but there is no mention in the text of *metoikoi*. That the text uses a longhand formula for ‘resident aliens’ may suggest that formally-defined ‘metics’ (that is, ‘persons of metic status’) did not exist as early as 480. Even if the inscription is a fourth-century creation, rather than a genuine fifth-century decree, then the author’s choice not to use the word ‘metics’ may be part of his attempt to make his text seem authentically ‘old’; in this case, the text would, therefore, suggest that it was known in the fourth century that there was no metic status at the time of Salamis. On either interpretation, if we can trust it as evidence, this inscription may be taken to indicate that metic status had yet to be instituted in 480.

<sup>27</sup>Patterson (1981) 70.

to Attica could become Athenian citizens even after Kleisthenes' reforms. The author of the Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia* makes mention of 'newly-enfranchised citizens' (*neopolitai*) in the context of the reforms (21), and Aristotle in the *Politics* notes that Kleisthenes enrolled foreigners and resident slaves as citizens (1275b37). If such claims can be trusted, it would indeed seem as though the reforms of Kleisthenes did not prevent immigrants from gaining Athenian citizenship.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the procedure by which a man became an Athenian citizen was in the hands of the demes and phratries,<sup>29</sup> and that, until Perikles' citizenship law was passed in 451/0, the Athenian polis had not legislated as to whom the demes and phratries might admit.<sup>30</sup> Perikles' law ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 26, *Plut. Per.* 37) required that the demes and phratries enrol as citizens only those young men whose father was an Athenian citizen and whose mother's father had been an Athenian citizen.<sup>31</sup> From this it is routinely assumed that until 451/0 Athenian citizenship was open only to those young men whose fathers were Athenian citizens, but this is just an assumption: it is, therefore, possible that throughout the first half of the fifth century access to Athenian citizenship may in fact have been more open.

Intriguingly, evidence from after 451/0 survives to suggest that some demes did not enrol as citizens only those young men specified as eligible for Athenian citizenship in Perikles' law. Demosthenes 57, in which Euxitheos appeals against the decision of the deme of Halimous to strip him of citizen rights, is important in this regard:

<sup>28</sup> Rhodes (1981) 256, on [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 21, suggests that the *neopolitai* enrolled by Kleisthenes were those Athenians who had been deprived of citizenship after the expulsion of Hippias in 510 ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 13); the comment from the *Politics*, however, suggests that an alternative source for those *neopolitai* is possible.

<sup>29</sup> Patterson (1981) 8–14, 25–28; cf. Whitehead (1986) 97–104, Lambert (1993) 31–49 and Ogdin (1996) 127–9.

<sup>30</sup> Periklean legislation affecting whom the phratries might admit is suggested by Philokhoros fr. 35, on which see Andrewes (1961). Lambert (1993) 43–9 argues the case that such legislation be dated to 451/0, a view which sees the fragment as belonging to Philokhoros book 4. Theodoridis (2002) argues that the fragment is rather from book 3; if this were the case, it would record pre-Periklean legislation. As I argue in this paper, however, legislation on whom the demes and phratries might admit is most appropriately situated in a Periklean context.

<sup>31</sup> [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 26.3: καὶ τρίτῳ μετὰ τοῦτον ἐπὶ Ἀντιδότου διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν πολιτῶν Περικλέους εἰπόντος ἔγνωσαν μὴ μετέχειν τῆς πόλεως, ὅς ἐν μὴ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ἀστοῖν ἢ γεγονώς. The use of the word *astoi*, rather than *politai*, for 'citizens' has troubled some scholars; indeed Cohen (2000) argues for a distinction between *politai* (decision-making, office-holding persons) and *astoi* (local residents, who might include immigrants/metics), from which he re-interprets [Aristotle] as telling us that *politai* were chosen from the *astoi*. Thus Cohen claims that Athens was 'not an autochthonous society closed to new members under all but the most exceptional circumstances – as is now generally held – [but instead] actually offered relatively easy access into political participation to the progeny of immigrants who had assimilated into Athenian life' (49–50). Although I would agree with Cohen that Athens was – at least until the introduction of metic status – more open to immigrants than is often claimed, I feel he goes too far in distinguishing *astoi* from *politai*. On the ancient use of these words, see Blok (2005).

Euxitheos, who has to explain away his citizen father's foreign accent in his attempt to be re-enfranchised (§18–19), indicates that in 346/5 many *xenoi* whom the demes had made Athenian citizens were deprived of their citizenship in a polis-wide 'cleansing' of the citizen registers (§1–3, 49). The world that emerges from Demosthenes 57 is a corrupt one in which (some) individual demes(men) were open to admitting as citizens men without Athenian parentage (and indeed to depriving men with such parentage of their citizenship) – if it was in their financial or political interests so to do. Demosthenes 57 does not stand alone: there are also indications that other demes (including Sounion and one of the Potamos demes) had a reputation for granting citizenship improperly.<sup>32</sup> Even after Perikles' citizenship law of 451/0, it would seem that some demes (and presumably phratries too) were willing to enrol immigrants as citizens, regardless of the polis-law which decreed that they should not:<sup>33</sup> it is possible that this situation was merely a covert continuation of what had been open and regular before Perikles' law was passed. Such evidence is not conclusive, but it does suggest that the idea of immigrants gaining citizenship was far from unknown in classical Athens.

Demographic reasoning, moreover, suggests that the origin of metic status lies most probably in the 460s or the 450s. As argued above, a citizen population of 40,000–50,000 in 450 could have grown naturally to give a plausible number of citizens (44,200–55,250) in 431; as natural population growth can account for the increasing size of the Athenian citizen population after 450, we do not need to look for a date in the second half of the fifth century for the point at which immigrants ceased to gain citizenship. That point could, however, have fallen earlier than 450, provided that we understand that at whatever point we imagine metic status to have become operational for immigrants, the population had then already to have reached a level from which it could grow naturally to 40,000–50,000 in 450. Table 2 shows how many immigrants would have needed to become Athenian citizens before the establishment of metic status, were that establishment to have occurred in 470, 460, or 450.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> On all this, see Whitehead (1986) 291–301 and Index, s.v. 'bribery and corruption in deme registration'.

<sup>33</sup> On the potential independence of the demes with regard to admitting citizens, note Whitehead (1986) 47: 'When the vagrant Oedipus is told in lines 77–80 [of Soph. OC] that the "dēmotai" who will decide whether he may stay are those "here [in Kolonos], not in the asty", is it fanciful to think that a fleeting smile may have passed across the faces of some of the rural demesmen in the audience?... the allusion can hardly be to anything other than the deme assemblies and their local freedom of action.'

<sup>34</sup> Population figures in table 2 have (where applicable) been rounded to the nearest 10. I again assume natural population growth at a rate of 0.5 per cent per year. When I write here of the 'number of immigrants', I should really write 'number of "new Athenians"', as not all those non-Athenians who gained citizenship after 480 need have been immigrants. There is no way to quantify how many 'new Athenians' were immigrants and how many were non-Athenians already resident in Attica. As I consider it likely that the majority of the 'new Athenians' were immigrants, however, I refer only to immigrants here.

**Table 2: Demographic models for the growth of the Athenian citizen population 480–450 depending on the date of establishment of metic status**

Suggested year in which immigrants ceased to gain citizenship (y)	Citizen population size in 480 (C)	Natural population growth between 480 and y (B)	Population needed in y for natural increase from y to yield 450 population of 40,000–50,000 (A)	Number of immigrants needed between 480 and y to yield 450 population of 40,000–50,000 (A – B – C)	Number of immigrants needed per year (on average) between 480 and y to yield 450 population of 40,000–50,000
470	25,000–30,000	1,280–1,530	36,000–45,000	9,720–13,470	970–1,350
460		2,620–3,150	38,000–47,500	10,380–14,350	520–720
450		4,035–4,840	40,000–50,000	10,965–15,160	370–510

The results shown in table 2 allow certain suggestions to be made. It seems unacceptable that the Athenian citizen population stopped growing by immigration as early as 470, as it seems unlikely that approximately 10,000–13,500 men – a quantity equivalent to about 40 per cent of the 480 population – arrived in Attica and gained citizenship in the 470s alone. If we instead imagine metic status to have become operational for immigrants around 460, we would be impelled to imagine the arrival and acceptance as citizens of, on average, 5,000–7,000 men per decade – a figure which drops to just 3,700–5,050 men per decade (on average) if immigrants could gain citizenship down to 450. On demographic grounds, therefore, a date in the second half of the period 480–450 seems likeliest for the origin of metic status.

The apparent problem with dating that origin to the 460s or 450s is that the word ‘*metoikos*’ was already familiar to Athenians in the 470s and 460s, as noted above. It is not clear, however, that the words ‘*metoikos*’ and ‘*metoikein*’ should already be translated as ‘metic’ and ‘to be a metic’ when we find them in texts dating to the first half of the fifth century. As Whitehead notes, ‘*metoikein*’, during the classical period meant not only ‘to be a metic’ but also, simply, ‘to migrate’: ‘while an adequate translation of *metoikos* may elude us, its flavour is better captured by “immigrant” than

by such tired translation-ese as “resident alien”.<sup>35</sup> Such thoughts prompt a more general suggestion: could it be that in the first half of the fifth century when immigrants to Attica were described as *metoikoi* all that was meant by the term *metoikos* was ‘immigrant’?<sup>36</sup> The possibility that, until legislation was enacted to create a ‘metic status’ as a condition distinct from citizenship, all that was meant by *metoikos* was ‘immigrant’ (rather than ‘someone of metic status’), raises the further possibility that the ‘metics’ mentioned in the texts of the 470s and 460s were not ‘persons of metic status’ but rather just ‘immigrants’ – and thus potentially also citizens.

Although understanding those described as *metoikoi* during the first half of the fifth century as ‘immigrants (who gained citizenship)’ rather than ‘persons of metic status’ seems an attractive option, a problem remains: if *metoikoi* were citizens in the 460s, why do the cult regulations given in IG i<sup>3</sup> 244 distinguish between ‘demesmen of Skambonidai’ and ‘*metoikoi*’ (column C, lines 5–10)?<sup>37</sup> The distinction drawn by this inscription suggests that *metoikoi*, even if they are allowed to be ‘immigrant citizens’ (following my reasoning above), could be considered by some Athenians to be a discrete group distinguishable from other citizens during the 460s.

It is significant, however, that IG i<sup>3</sup> 244 gives us the regulations of a deme. If immigrants could gain citizenship during the first half of the fifth century, they gained that citizenship, as already noted, through being admitted by a deme and a phratry. It was thus the demes – perhaps particularly the urban demes like Skambonidai – which would have been faced not only with the arrival and registration as citizens of so many immigrants in the years after 480 but also with any dissatisfaction felt by existing citizens about the admission of foreigners to Athenian citizenship.<sup>38</sup> The creation of a ‘metic status’ by the polis cannot convincingly be seen as a ‘bolt from the blue’: it was presumably preceded by a growing sense that immigrants should not gain citizenship – a sense likely to have been fostered at a local level. What we may be seeing with the

<sup>35</sup> Whitehead (1977) 7. Whitehead also refers (6) to Barrett (1964) 323, in which a note on line 837 of Hippolytos reads ‘the *metoikos* is (in the first generation at least) a man who changes his dwelling from one land to another.’

<sup>36</sup> This possibility may also be suggested by IG i<sup>3</sup> 1357, the gravestone of the Anaxilas the Naxian, described as a *metaoikos*, found in the Kerameikos: Anaxilas is presumably literally an ‘immigrant’ from Naxos, though as he is still described as a Naxian it seems unlikely that he became an Athenian citizen. Baba (1984) is, I think, right not to see Anaxilas as a ‘metic’ (cf. Whitehead (1977) 64 n. 44), but I am not convinced by his argument (5) that the formal status of *metoikos* was created from the earlier descriptive status of *metaoikos* ‘in early years of the Delian League (Athenian Empire).’

<sup>37</sup> The reference to metics in this inscription is also discussed by Whitehead (1986) 81–2 and Parker (2005) 67.

<sup>38</sup> On the high number of metics in urban demes, see Wijma (2009) 188–9.

distinguishing of non-immigrant and immigrant citizens in Skambonidai as recorded in IG i<sup>3</sup> 244, therefore, is the answer of one particular deme faced with both the arrival of many immigrants seeking citizenship and a growing distaste amongst (some of) its members for enrolling those immigrants as citizens.<sup>39</sup> Rather than indicating that ‘metic status’ had been established already when it was inscribed, IG i<sup>3</sup> 244 may in fact show an early, local attempt to deal with immigrants – a preliminary stage in the process that would lead ultimately to the creation by the polis of a special status distinct from citizenship for all immigrants.

Highly relevant here is the reading of Aeschylus’ *Suppliants* offered by Geoffrey Bakewell.<sup>40</sup> In the play, the Argives are confronted by the arrival of the Danaids and need to resolve the issue of what status the newcomers are to enjoy in their city. Bakewell’s insight is that the status received by the Danaids is not only comparable to Athenian ‘metic status’ but also described in similar terms. Aeschylus does not just use the words ‘*metoikos*’ and ‘*metoikein*’, he also refers to the Argives serving as the *prostates* (citizen representative) of the Danaids (lines 963–5) and implies that the Danaids cannot own property (lines 957–63) – both of which were aspects of ‘real’ Athenian metic status.<sup>41</sup> Such a reading prompted Bakewell to suggest that when the *Suppliants* was performed in 463, metic status was ‘a recent innovation’, and that ‘the metic references [in the play] might...have been directed at the audience and intended as an explanation of the new status’; he sees the *Suppliants* as produced ‘within the climate leading to Pericles’ citizenship law’.<sup>42</sup>

Although Aeschylus use of ‘*metoikos*’ and ‘*metoikein*’ in the *Suppliants* could be explained away by translating the former as ‘immigrant’ and the latter as ‘to be an immigrant’, Bakewell’s observation that the status received by the Danaids is very similar to fully-formed metic status at Athens remains. Where Bakewell sees Aeschylus as explaining a recent innovation, however, I would prefer to see Aeschylus addressing a cause for concern in Athens of the 460s: the issue of immigrants. Tragedians, as has often been noted, regularly engaged with contemporary concerns in their plays,<sup>43</sup> and, whether we see Aeschylus exploring the vulnerability of immigrant citizens and suggesting that they may need some form of guardian, or whether we imagine him to have been laying out a proposal for a new system which would deny citizenship to

<sup>39</sup> Wijma (2009) 199 also sees the inscription as the ‘answer’ devised by the Skambonidai to the question of ‘metics’, though she and I differ in our understanding of the problem.

<sup>40</sup> Bakewell (1997).

<sup>41</sup> Bakewell (1997) 211–16.

<sup>42</sup> Bakewell (1997) 223.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. R. Osborne (1994) 149.

immigrants, it seems likelier that he was exploring a live issue rather than attempting to explain newly-enacted legislation. Interpreted in this way, the *Suppliants* adds weight to the suggestion that the 460s were a time when immigrants and their rights were very much on the Athenian agenda.

Therefore although we find references to ‘metics’ in texts of the 460s, I suggest those references reflect not that metic status had been initiated by or during the 460s but rather that that decade witnessed both growing concerns about the large numbers of immigrants who had been gaining citizenship at Athens and the airing of potential ways to deal with those concerns. There are in any case other reasons which make a date in the 460s for the introduction of metic status unlikely. A date prior to the performance of the *Suppliants* in 463 would force us to situate the origin of metic status in ‘Kimonian Athens’, which seems an unlikely context for a law restricting access to citizenship.<sup>44</sup> The reforms of Ephialtes might be thought to provide a more plausible context for the origin of metic status, but the lack of any suggestion in our sources that those reforms were interested in defining citizenship makes 462/1 another unlikely context for the origin of metic status.

The earliest occasion on which we know that the Athenian polis was interested in specifying whom the demes and phratries might admit as citizens was 451/0, when Perikles’ citizenship law was passed – a piece of legislation that certainly did rule out (in theory, even if it would not prove to be in practice in all demes) the possibility of immigrants gaining citizenship. Given the demographic likelihood that immigrants were gaining citizenship down into the 450s, that issues of immigrants’ rights had come to be a cause for concern in Athens during the 460s, and that there is no good evidence for an earlier institution of a non-citizen special status for immigrants, I suggest that 451/0 is in fact also the likeliest context for the introduction of metic status. As the law that denied citizenship to immigrants was not accompanied by a

<sup>44</sup> Kimon’s mother, Hegesipyle, was a daughter of the Thracian king (Hdt. 6.39, Plut. Kim. 4), and thus Kimon himself was not the son of an Athenian father and an Athenian mother; he would, therefore, be an unlikely patron of a law making persons of such parentage metics rather than citizens. Additionally, Kimon’s close relationship with Sparta (e.g. Plut. Kim. 16) may suggest that Athens in the 460s was not yet ready to close its citizenship to outsiders. Furthermore, the processes by which the Athenians’ self-confidence grew during the fifth century – the chief reason I suggest (see below) for the introduction of metic status – were still underway in the 460s (as they would be in the 450s), and, therefore, to date the origin of metic status to before 463 would seem inappropriate. In any case, one has the impression that the years between 480 and 462/1 were not remembered as ones of internal socio-political reform at Athens (e.g. [Arist.] Ath. Pol. 25.1), and Bakewell’s case that metic status was instituted prior to 463 is weakened by not providing a firm view on the circumstances in those years in which he sees the Athenians introducing that status.

law prohibiting immigration itself, the Athenians – who, therefore, presumably did not want to prevent foreigners becoming permanently resident in Athens – must have enacted alongside Perikles' citizenship law legislation that created a defined status – metic status – for the free men of foreign birth whom they (correctly) expected would continue to migrate to Athens. By 451/0, issues that had been faced in at least one deme, Skambonidai, during the 460s, had clearly come to be of such widespread concern that the polis was forced to enact its first citizenship law;<sup>45</sup> that in 451/0 the Athenians chose to deny citizenship to immigrants, rather than just marking them out as a discrete group of citizens as had Skambonidai, also suggests that attitudes towards immigrants had hardened during the 450s.

Consequently, from the evidence assembled in this section I suggest that it was in 451/0, when the Athenian polis first specified to the demes and phratries that only certain men – immigrants not amongst them – could become citizens, that the Athenians also first defined a distinct 'metic status' for those foreigners who might continue to become permanently resident in Attica.<sup>46</sup> By implication, therefore, it was only from 451/0 that the male inhabitants of Attica came to be separated into the three categories of citizen, metic and slave; until that year, the only official distinction – even if the evidence from the 460s suggests that on a local level immigrants were already seen by some to be a distinct group – was between citizen and slave, and thus very largely between Greek and non-Greek, and not between Athenian, other Greek and non-Greek as it became thereafter. In short, only for after 451/0 is the 'standard view' of Athenian society sketched at the outset of this paper actually valid,<sup>47</sup> and only in Athenian texts written after that year can we safely translate 'metoikos' as 'metic'.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> It does seem likely that such polis legislation was occasioned, at least in part, by pressure from the demes and phratries who had been at the 'front line' of dealing with immigrants (and local responses to them) during the thirty years after 480, rather than being imposed by the polis on sub-groups unconcerned about the issue.

<sup>46</sup> Although many scholars have doubted a link between Perikles' citizenship law and the origin of metic status, those scholars have also denied that there was any large-scale immigration to Attica before 450: thus Whitehead (1977) 149–50. Contrast the sensible remarks of Sealey (1994) 64: 'metic status may well have arisen at the time when citizenship was crystallizing; the two conditions may have developed in counterpoint'.

<sup>47</sup> That 451/0 was the date from which foreigners could not (or at least should not) have gained citizenship may also explain why Psammetikhos' gift of grain to Athens in 445/4 occasioned so many law-suits against improperly-enrolled citizens: Plut. *Per.* 37.

<sup>48</sup> It was presumably with the creation of metic status that the word *metoikos* acquired its technical meaning of 'someone with metic status', 'metic', rather than having only its earlier meaning of just 'immigrant'.

#### 4. Explaining the origin of metic status

A question that still needs to be addressed is why the Athenians – many of whom by 451/0 will themselves have been immigrants or their children – decided to deny citizenship to future immigrants. The explanation advanced for Perikles' citizenship law by the Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia* is that it was enacted 'on account of the large number of citizens' (26), but such reasoning has troubled modern scholars,<sup>49</sup> as that 'large number' would not actually have been reduced by Perikles' law, as it seems not to have been retroactive. It is, however, worth noting that an increase in citizen numbers from 25,000–30,000 in 480 to 40,000–50,000 in 450 represents a population growing overall at 1.6–1.7 per cent per year; had such a rate continued for another twenty years, the number of Athenian citizens in 431 would have been some 55,000–70,000. Although the Athenians cannot have thought of their population in these statistical terms, they must have realised that the number of citizens would continue to grow ever larger unless they put an end to the practice of immigrants gaining citizenship. As Patterson recognised, Perikles' law 'had the effect of eliminating the possibility of any significant further growth by excluding non-natural increase'.<sup>50</sup> The rationale recorded for Perikles' citizenship law by the *Athenaion Politeia* may therefore be correct, though with a stage in the thought process omitted: 'on account of the large number of citizens, the Athenians decided that to limit further growth they would end the practice of immigrants gaining citizenship, and so they approved Perikles' citizenship law'.

Why, though, should the Athenians have become concerned by the late 450s about their polis having a large number of citizens? In the Greek mind, it seems as though a large population was associated with prosperity and greatness (Arist. *Pol.* 1326a8–25),<sup>51</sup> and so for the Athenians to seek to arrest the growth of their citizen population appears odd. Furthermore, as already noted, the very creation of a metic status indicates that the Athenians hoped that immigrants would continue to come to Attica; they wanted to prevent immigrants from being able to gain Athenian citizenship, not from living and working in Athens. The benefits of living in Athens were many: the city offered opportunities for employment and for protection – indeed, it was probably such opportunities that had contributed to drawing such a large wave of immigrants to Athens in the years after 480 in the first place. But although participation in the democratic institutions was available only to citizens, many of the other benefits

<sup>49</sup> See e.g. Patterson (1981) 101–2, Rhodes (1981) 334 and Whitehead (1977) 149.

<sup>50</sup> Patterson (1981) 102.

<sup>51</sup> Gallo (1980).

remained available to citizens and free non-citizens alike: access to them was not affected by Perikles' citizenship law. We must therefore recognise that it was access not to benefits but to the very status of 'being Athenian' that the Athenians wished to restrict in 451/0.<sup>52</sup>

Throughout the first half of the fifth century, the self-esteem of the Athenians must have been growing. By 451/0, the Athenians had enjoyed considerable military success against the Persians; the economy of their city was flourishing; their status within the Greek world had reached a peak, with Athens standing at the head of both an alliance of Greek states fighting against Persia (the 'Delian League') and a land empire in central Greece.<sup>53</sup> These developments cannot have been lost on the Athenians, who, I suggest, came to see themselves as 'something special', and began to regard citizenship as an honour, a privilege, and something to be jealously guarded.<sup>54</sup> In such a climate, a proposal to deny non-Athenians the chance of becoming Athenian may well have begun to appeal strongly to the proud citizen body of Athens – even to a citizen body which included some men who had become Athenian only relatively recently.<sup>55</sup> Athenian self-confidence contrived to make Athenian citizenship a gift that Athenians no longer wanted to give to anyone who wanted it.<sup>56</sup>

These changes within the Athenian population are also suggested by the study of Athenian 'autochthony' offered by Vincent Rosivach.<sup>57</sup> Arguing against the opinion that the Athenians had from an early date considered themselves to have been 'born from the earth' of Attica, Rosivach argues that the word *autokhthon* was coined only 'in the period between the Persian Wars and the middle of the fifth century',<sup>58</sup> and meant 'always having the same land', that is, 'indigenous'.<sup>59</sup> He rightly indicates that the

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Kapparis (2005) 72–3.

<sup>53</sup> These and other developments are studied in detail in my doctoral thesis, Watson (2009).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Patterson (1981) 103.

<sup>55</sup> R. Osborne (1997) must be right, however, to suggest that there were a variety of reasons why individual Athenians voted for Perikles' law, and that that variety helped to ensure the law was passed.

<sup>56</sup> Perikles' citizenship law did not completely rule out the possibility for non-Athenians to gain Athenian citizenship by legitimate means: a grant of citizenship (either to individuals or to groups) remained within the gift of the Athenian Assembly. Indeed, two men, Menon of Pharsalos and Polygnotos of Thasos, had received citizenship in this way prior to 450. This process of 'naturalisation', for which see M.J. Osborne (1981–3), in which the Athenian polis conferred citizenship, often as an honour, is clearly distinct from the process under discussion in this paper, in which demes and phratries enrolled foreigners as citizens in the same way as they enrolled the children of existing citizens. The vast majority of the cases of such 'naturalisation' (as collected by M.J. Osborne) post-date 450, as we would surely expect once such a grant from the Assembly had become the only legitimate way a man could gain Athenian citizenship.

<sup>57</sup> Rosivach (1987). Athenian autochthony has also been studied in detail by Loraux (1994) and (2000).

<sup>58</sup> Rosivach (1987) 305.

<sup>59</sup> Rosivach (1987) 300–1.

claim of autochthony implied both the equality of all Athenian citizens and their superiority over all non-citizens, and comments that 'the legend of Athenian autochthony is thus an expression, in mythological terms, of the same attitudes reflected in Athens' restrictive citizenship laws, beginning with Perikles' law of 451/0'.<sup>60</sup> I would go further than Rosivach, however, and suggest that it was the Athenians' changing views of themselves that actually brought about both the myth of autochthony and the definition of metic status around the middle of the fifth century. Those Athenian citizens whose families really had 'always' lived in Attica and those who had migrated to Athens only recently became united by a wish to keep their 'special status' as Athenian citizens for themselves and for their descendants alone; for both categories of citizen, it perhaps became expedient to claim for themselves the status of Attica's indigenous, natural inhabitants. The definition of metic status, Perikles' citizenship law which accompanied it and the emergence of the myth of Athenian autochthony should be seen as connected developments arising from the self-confidence of the existing citizens of a flourishing city, who – although, unknown to the Athenians, the reversals of the later fifth century lay only just ahead – had never had it so good.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have put forward the case that metic status at Athens was only created, as a condition distinct from citizenship for immigrants, in 451/0;<sup>61</sup> although that date for the origin of metic status forces us to reconsider the widely-held view that classical Athenian (male) society was always divided into the categories of citizen, metic and slave, it is the date which seems to me to provide the most appropriate demographic and historical context for this important event. The growth of the Athenian citizen population in the first half of the fifth century has not been a phenomenon that has been regularly connected with the origin of metic status, but I hope to have shown that these two issues were closely related to each other, and must not, therefore, be studied in isolation. If the conclusions I draw here cannot be accepted, then I hope that it will at least be recognised that another solution to this problem is needed.

<sup>60</sup> Rosivach (1987) 303, quotation from n. 34.

<sup>61</sup> It should be remembered that not all those with metic status were immigrants, as freed slaves were also assigned to metic status: see Sealey (1994) 64–7, who notes that it is uncertain whether metic status was created first for immigrants or for ex-slaves. If the argument offered here is correct, metic status should have been defined first as a condition for immigrants, with ex-slaves subsequently assigned to it too.

## THE ORIGIN OF METIC STATUS AT ATHENS

If, however, my conclusion can be accepted, it is necessary to realise that our understanding of the Athenian people, as much as our understanding of the origin of metic status, must be altered by it. For in establishing that metic status in 451/0, the Athenians showed that, even if they were unprepared to grant citizenship to future immigrants, they still expected – and even hoped – that those immigrants would come to Attica. In 451/0, therefore, the Athenian citizen body completed a transition, which it took fewer than thirty years to complete, from being a group that was at the very least content to accept new members, to being one which wanted simultaneously to exclude outsiders and yet to have them close at hand so as to be of benefit.<sup>62</sup> And if it seems topical, from our perspective in a world in which the rights and opportunities on offer to immigrants remain very much on the agenda, that the Athenians had also to respond to immigration on a large scale, then the particular response the Athenians had to their ‘metics’ should also, I suggest, seem somewhat troubling.

JAMES WATSON  
THE PERSE SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE

<sup>62</sup>Cf. Kapparis (2005) 112–13.

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