CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

STRANGERS INCORPORATED:
OUTSIDERS IN XENOPHON’S *POROI*

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This paper examines Xenophon’s treatment of three important outsider groups in the *Ways and Means* (*Poroi*): slaves, foreigners, and metics. The topic merits attention for the light it sheds not only on his political economy but also his ethical philosophy, which often pushes the boundaries of traditional Greek morality and values. On the one hand, much of the *Poroi* is conventional in its scope: the goals of providing each citizen with sufficient alimony (*trophē*) and of augmenting *polis* revenues were taken for granted by most Athenians. Yet, what is completely innovative about Xenophon’s political economy are the means by which he attempts to achieve these ends: he recommends the exploitation of financial resources derived not from empire but rather from peaceful economic activities, which he judges to be the ‘most just’ solution to the problem of feeding the people (1.1). To maximize this peace dividend, I suggest, Xenophon aims to integrate into Athenian society slaves (*douloi*), resident aliens (*metics*), and foreigners (*xenoi*) much further than anything previously attempted or conceived. His progressive attitude, simply put, is that non-citizen outsiders who promote the welfare of all Athenians should partake in many of the same honours and privileges that citizens enjoy. In particular, I demonstrate that he attempts to augment the size of intervening status categories, which, had his

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* I would like to thank my colleagues David Sick and Kenny Morrell, the anonymous referees of this volume, and the editors, Fiona Hobden and Christopher Tuplin, for their thoughtful comments and suggestions. Special thanks are owed to John Friend, who helped improve this essay in many ways and also suggested the title.


proposals been fully implemented, would have contributed significantly to the erosion of the status divide separating citizen from non-citizen outsider.

OUTSIDERS IN ATHENS

It is often said that societies are judged by the way they treat marginalized groups within their communities, such as prisoners, foreigners, the poor, the very young and old, the disabled—in fact, any group that lacks *de jure* or *de facto* the same rights and privileges accorded to the powerful. When this principle has been applied to classical Athens, the verdict has generally been unfavourable, in spite of the Athenians’ professed belief in the democratic values of liberty, equality, and openness. While a few scholars still cling to the notion of an open, liberal Athens, the *communis opinio* is that the Athenians treated marginalized groups rather poorly because they denied them the most valued legal, political, and economic rights and privileges accorded to citizens. Slaves, metics, and foreigners, especially those who came to Athens for trade and other economic pursuits, comprised the subaltern ‘other’, outsiders whose values and way of life served to define full membership of the citizen insider group: the slave’s servitude was anathema to the citizen’s most cherished values of freedom and autonomy; the individualism of the foreigner, which was born of and fostered in the market, challenged his sense of communalism and friendship (*philia*); and the metic, who in his social and economic life was most like the citizen, by virtue of his exclusion from participating in politics was the anti-citizen. In short, these three groups comprised the ‘*demi-monde*’ of Athens: a distinct world segregated from the exclusive, if not xenophobic and chauvinistic, political club of adult male citizens.

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5 For the slave/free dichotomy, see Todd 1993: 172 and Raaflaub 2004; for discussions of how the values of traders and those comprising the ‘world of the emporion’ conflicted with those of citizens, see Vélassaropoulos 1977, Mossé 1983, Rahe 1992: 81–82, Morris 1994, and Von Reden 1985a; that the metic was the ‘anti-citizen’ is the view of Whitehead 1977: 70, who challenges Wilamowitz’s notion of the metic as a ‘quasi-citizen’.

6 McKechnie 1989: 152–154, 179. The Athenians’ xenophobia and chauvinism is well documented in Hall 1991: 160–200 and Isaac 2006: 109–133, who also treats the controversial topic of racism. Much of the evidence comes from funeral orations and tragedies, especially those that touch upon the theme of autochthony, the idea that the Athenians were born directly from Attic soil and thus not descended from outsiders; see, e.g., Eur. *Med.* 222–223 and *Ion* 585–647, 1059 with Saxonhouse 1986: 256 who argues that the *Ion* is a critique of