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# Mobility and personal statuses in Ancient Greece: five short stories

Christel Müller

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L'expérience de la mobilité  
de l'Antiquité à nos jours,  
entre précarité et confiance

**Claudia Moatti**

est professeure d'histoire romaine à l'université Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis et Adjunct Professor of Classics à l'University of Southern California

**Emmanuelle Chevreau**

est professeure de droit à l'université Paris II Panthéon-Assas. Elle dirige l'Institut d'Histoire du droit – UMR 7184 ainsi que l'Institut de Droit romain

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# L'expérience de la mobilité de l'Antiquité à nos jours, entre précarité et confiance

*sous la direction de*  
*Claudia MOATTI et Emmanuelle CHEVREAU*

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Maison de l'Archéologie

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## Mobility and Personal Statuses in Ancient Greece: Five Short Stories

Christel Müller

One of the founding texts of Greek and Western literature, the *Odyssey*, is certainly the ultimate case of what we're dealing with here, the in-between situations in a context of mobility. It is a text of wandering, *nostalgia* and progressive transformation of identity and status. In contemporary psychiatry, this kind of migration situation has even been labelled as the "complex of Odysseus" by three French specialists in 2012<sup>1</sup>. This team has provided, going through the narrative episode after episode, a thorough analysis of the Homeric text looking at the mental and material precarity induced by the migration situation. They distinguish two phases in this long process: the first one is that of progressive deterioration of identity in all sorts of ways resulting especially from the encountering of both aggressiveness and seduction on the part of autochthones; the second one is that of self-transformation and building up of new meanings and prospects. Therefore, they see the *Odyssey* as a sort of handbook containing all possible test-cases for a better understanding of modern migrations.

It is not my goal to dive again in this well-known crimson sea, that of Odysseus, although it's a wonderful world for scholars in anthropology. I will rather focus here on historical texts and situations, taken both from literary and epigraphical sources. The difficulty lies, for Ancient Greece, in the enunciative status of the sources: who speaks and for whom? Do we have access to the migrants' voice? Literary sources are the most reliable to establish cognitive aspects of in-between situations, even if the *Odyssey* is never far away in such narratives which implies an unavoidable literary bias. But one shouldn't forget that the texts we deal with are in general filtered through an author's mind and writing (Herodotus, Xenophon, Demosthenes) or through the civic community's point of view in the decrees she enacts. This is the main bias, although my feeling is there is always a way to bypass the problem.

The idea is therefore to follow the questions identified by Claudia Moatti in her proposal about practices, perceptions, and representations of people on the move. Maybe the first question to ask here is the following: what is an "in-between situation"? When does it start? When does it stop? The answer seems clear at first sight: it's the situation of a migrant who has left his departure point (home for instance) and has not reached his arrival point yet. But can we be sure that the "in-between feeling" stops when one reaches a destination, even planned? Can't the "in-between feeling" start before the departure if someone projects

<sup>1</sup> I would like to warmly thank both the audience of the conference and my patient reader, Claudia Moatti, for their stimulating remarks. All mistakes are mine.  
Di *et al.* 2012, texts 1 and 2.



himself forward? And can't the "in-between" turn into a *modus vivendi* in itself and therefore stop being an "in-between"? Things certainly depend also on the degree of coercion exerted on migrants. One could rightly distinguish between three frames of constraint: "intentional and self-decided", "unintentional due to flight from disasters", "forced migrants like slaves"<sup>2</sup>. But, again, can we be sure that all cases fall neatly into the three categories?

My goal, in the following pages, will be to study the articulation between mobility (or, to quote Claudia Moatti, "migratory experience") and personal status, notably citizenship, along all those lines. How did migrants of any kind (soldiers, travellers, exiled people) deal with their own "on the move" trajectory and how did they feel about it? How did Greek societies perceive the people moving and wandering? How did cities (*poleis*) anticipate and handle, legally and practically as can be seen in civic documents, mobility situations of foreigners when in exile? I will go successively through five test-cases likely to illustrate these points.

#### IN-BETWEENNESS AND LOSS OF IDENTITY: HERODOTUS ON THE FOUNDATION OF CYRENE

I will start with a case taken from Herodotus's *Histories*<sup>3</sup>, that of citizens leaving the island of Thera (Santorini) in the last third of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC to settle down somewhere else. Such a migration is part of what is called the Archaic colonisation. This journey, that will end up in Libya and more precisely in the city of Cyrene (still to be), is probably the most complicated ever establishment of an *apoikia*, a colony<sup>4</sup>. The whole narrative tells us about the wandering of these people before they find a proper place where they finally settle in. There are two versions of the story (the Therean and the Cyrenean one<sup>5</sup>) sharing a lot of common points<sup>6</sup>: double consultation of the Delphic oracle who orders the foundation of a city in Libya, returns (*nostoi*) to Thera after an unsuccessful expedition, difficulties encountered in Thera for not having respected the injunctions of the Pythia, sending of two boats of 100 people (penteconters) under the direction of a certain Battos the future founder, wanderings on the Libyan coast. In the Therean version, men who must leave are chosen by lot under coercion, one brother out of two in the seven districts of the island<sup>7</sup>. In the Cyrenean version, the men coming back to Thera for the second time are lapidated by their fellow-citizens and, before they're able to land, are forced to leave their *metropolis* again<sup>8</sup>. There are three points of interest in this story for our theme.

2 I'm following here Dirk Hoerder's key-note speech, where he made such a tripartite distinction.

3 Hdt. 4.150-159.

4 For an excellent overview of this foundation and the Greek settlements in Libya, see Austin 2008.

5 Therean version: Hdt. 4. 150-153 then 157-159; Cyrenean version: Hdt. 4.154-156.

6 The Cyrenean version, very short, largely insists on the founder. See Malkin 2003, who brilliantly analyses the Libyan *logos*, an "intricate one" (p. 157).

7 Hdt. 4.153. On the reasons and process of departure, see Zurbach 2008, 95-98, who rightly insists on the agrarian problems and underlines here "a departure prompted by necessity, where the important thing is to get rid of a part of the population to be fed in a context of food difficulties" (p. 98). See also the pages devoted to Cyrene in Zurbach 2017, 655-658.

8 Hdt. 4.156.

Firstly, during this journey, the people who have left their homeland lose their identity and status. They aren't recognised as Thereans anymore and they're not Cyreneans yet, as they don't even know where to go exactly. Also, the people they meet on their way, basically the mediators, all have names: they're called Corobios the Cretan, Colaios the Samian etc<sup>9</sup>. The Thereans on the move have no personal names apart from the founder, the *ktistès*, called Battos. Yet, this name is considered by Herodotus to be not his real name, but the one he took when he got to Libya, as *battos* is supposed to mean "king" in Libyan language<sup>10</sup>. So, this name appears both as a generic and anticipated name, more than as a personal one for an identity still to be.

Secondly, the founding of a colony, the act of *apoikizein*, even with a happy (reconstructed) ending, can and maybe often does start as an act of exile, the border between the two being pretty blurred in fact. Colonisation before landing somewhere includes a long in-between situation, which is not a happy one as perceived and expressly mentioned by the colons to the oracle: the ambassadors repeatedly say that their situation doesn't get better, *ameinon*<sup>11</sup>. Here one cannot escape the biases that characterize what can be called the "colonial narrative". The anguish of the process of colonization is a powerful spring in Herodotus' mind in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Moreover, the teleological character of the narrative seems to be echoed in the Libyan episode of the *Argonautics* by Apollonius of Rhodes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC<sup>12</sup>, when the poet evokes this land that was only waiting to be colonized<sup>13</sup>.

But and thirdly, these people do learn from their mistakes, even if the process takes a good ten years including two spent on Platea, an islet next to the Libyan coast, and six more years in a place called Aziris, on the Libyan coast this time. The biggest problem is for them to identify where precisely they should go and settle down: the order received from the oracle is clear ("to found a city in Libya"), but not informative enough and they don't know how to treat it. In terms of space, the island next to the continent (here Platea) appears as a place of in-between, a transitory location which cannot be the end of the journey. This Therean odyssey definitely includes the two stages identified in the introduction: the loss of identity followed by a restoration of it through the settling down.

9 This is the case in both the Therean version of the story (Hdt. 4. 151-152) and the Cyrenean one.

10 Hdt. 4.155.

11 Hdt. 4.157.

12 The Libyan episode is to be found in *Argon.* Book 4, v. 1228-1600.

13 Thalmann 2011, who shows how many connections there are between the Herodotean text and Apollonius' poem: "the settlement of Greeks in the area late in the seventh century BCE (...) is anticipated within the narrative of the *Argonautika*" (p. 81), "As the Argo nurtures her sailors and the *polis* her citizens, so the island of Thera and, by extension, the land of Cyrene will nurture their Greek inhabitants" (p. 82) and "Recognizing the importance of the colonial narrative in helping to shape the *Argonautika*'s story helps us to appreciate all the more how centrally concerned the poem is with the production of space, because the essence of the colonial enterprise is to define colonized space by means of the colonizing culture's categories, with the use of narrative as well as in other ways" (p. 90).

### IN-BETWEENNESS AS A *MODUS VIVENDI*: XENOPHON'S ANABASIS AS A WANDERING CITY

The second case is that of the long journey called the *Anabasis* (the expedition up from the coast), related and partly led by the Athenian Xenophon at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. In 401, the Persian prince Cyrus the Younger hires nearly 13,000 Greek mercenaries (on top of Barbarian ones) to win over the power against his brother Artaxerxes II. These mercenaries are for some “self-decided” (they’re looking for money), but a lot of them are exiles. Cyrus dies at the battle of COUNAXA, not far from Babylon, and the Greeks are therefore compelled to go backwards to the Black Sea to Trapezus, “a journey of some 1,900 miles”<sup>14</sup>, that lasts about five long months. It’s a classic story with many obstacles and mediators. But what happens to these mercenaries in terms of status, identity and citizenship during this very long *entre-deux*?

The first point to raise is their relation with the idea of *nostos*, return. Such a return seems to be a leitmotiv of the text and through the *nostos* theme it appears to be a new odyssey, which is again the permanently renewed narrative for the Greeks: Xenophon compares the Persians to the *Lotophagoi*<sup>15</sup> and alludes to Odysseus himself, “arriving to Greece on his boat, lying on his back”<sup>16</sup>. After the arrest of their generals, the Greek mercenaries of Cyrus’ army are totally discouraged, just before Xenophon shows up on the scene as a saviour: “many did not come that night to their quarters, but lay down wherever they each chanced to be, unable to sleep for grief (*lupè*) and longing (*pothos*) for their native states and parents, their wives and children, whom they thought they should never see again”. But, as Philippe Gauthier has noticed a long time ago<sup>17</sup>, this *nostalgia* might not be a general feeling in the army, even if Greece seems a better place to be. This *nostos* to the *patris* might even be more of a literary motive and *topos* than anything else. Such people, as mercenaries, are looking for a pay and they were “not ready to give up their job”<sup>18</sup>, nor to settle anywhere: that’s why they refuse to found a new city on the Black Sea shore when Xenophon makes this suggestion<sup>19</sup>. They finally end up nearly where they started from (in Pergamum, not far from Sardis), to do again what they’ve just done, that is being enrolled for a new expedition. So, their proper mental, cognitive, horizon is rather this wandering itself: the in-between becomes the real *modus vivendi* and is progressively built as such. But how is it built?

Hippolyte Taine, in 1856, gave a very interesting and famous description of this group of migrants: “There is nothing more curious than this Greek army, a *république voyageuse* which deliberates and acts, fights and votes, a sort of wandering Athens in the middle of Asia”<sup>20</sup>. Even if it takes some time before the army turns into a kind of moving city<sup>21</sup>, it definitely looks like one after the battle of COUNAXA and mostly when the soldiers walk from Trapezus

14 Garland 2014, 177.

15 Xen., *Anab.*, 3.2.25.

16 Xen., *Anab.*, 5.1.2.

17 Gauthier 1986, 245.

18 Gauthier 1986, 245.

19 Xen., *Anab.*, 5.6.15 et 6.4.8.

20 Taine [1866<sup>2</sup>] 2012, 18.

21 As shown by Gauthier 1986, 248, who identifies three different phases in the journey.

to Byzantium. First of all, the army starts acting as a *polis*, “city”, but an international *polis* which is more like a “federation”, *koinon*, or a panhellenic organisation, or even a gigantic colonial expedition<sup>22</sup>. This begins when they free themselves from Persian command. These men come from various cities and regions and motivations are diverse, but, at least for the leaders, they’re still identified through their own name and ethnic, that is their city-name. Therefore the story isn’t at first sight about a loss of identity and status. Yet, after a while, the group creates for itself a new identity through new practices of citizenship on the move. While wandering through a large space-time, these men organise assemblies and debates; they receive and send ambassadors<sup>23</sup>; they do sacrifices all along and, just after reaching Trapezus, they even set up an *agôn gymnikos*, a gymnastic competition, and even a hippic one<sup>24</sup>. Then the city turns into a floating town with all its human components. An army always includes a “train”, the convoy that goes with it. But here the train is made not only of food supplies and tents for instance. It also consists of animals and people: the soldiers are followed by cattle, slaves, women and children, like a series of moving *oikoi*, “houses”<sup>25</sup>. Women are said to be *hetairai*, that is courtesans, prostitutes<sup>26</sup>. Some children take part in the games organised in the mountain, and these children are said to be mostly those of the captives, which means that some are the offspring of the soldiers themselves. But is this really a city? We will see it rather as a shifted city (or even a “counter-city”?), since the society is not the same as in a fixed city: there are men, but they are almost all soldiers, there are women, but they are prostitutes, there are children, but they were born of captives. Finally, this moving city never settles anywhere, even, as we’ve seen, when Xenophon offers it. Therefore, we can agree with John Ma that, in the *Anabasis*, “identities are on the move, but also being made on the move”<sup>27</sup>.

#### ON THE ROAD AGAIN: [DEMOSTHENES’] NEAIRA AND THE CONDITION OF UNCERTAINTY

Space and mobility can be even more creative of identity and status than with the Ten-Thousand. Let’s change scale and shift from collective adventures to individual cases. The speech by [Demosthenes] *Against Neaira* is a lawsuit filed shortly before 340 BC<sup>28</sup>: its outcome is not known, but the argument of the speech itself stands in a few words. It is a *graphe xenias*, a “trial in foreignness”, that is to say that Neaira, a foreigner (*xene*) and (former) prostitute in addition, is accused of having married Stephanos, who allegedly passed her off as his lawful wife, against the Attic law: the latter prohibited marriages between Athenians and foreigners

22 For the *Anabasis* as a moving *apoikia*, see Dalby 1992, who underlines the fact that the comparison of the Ten-Thousand with a “generalized Greek city-state” (p. 16) and mostly with a “colonizing expedition” is nothing new (“it must have been in Xenophon’s mind during the march”, p. 17). See also Hornblower 2004 for the decision-making by the soldiers.

23 Xen., *Anab.*, 5.5.7 and 5.6.14.

24 Xen., *Anab.*, 4.8.25-28.

25 Xen., *Anab.*, 4.5.4.

26 Xen., *Anab.*, 4.3.19.

27 Ma 2004, 342.

28 See Müller 2018, with all previous bibliography.

and stipulated that the guilty Athenian would have to pay a fine of 1,000 drachmas and that the foreign wife would be sold into slavery. Stephanos would have committed another fault as well, that of having recognized as his own legitimate daughter Phanô, Neaira's offspring born of an affair of her mother, and of having given her in marriage to two Athenians successively: for such an act, Stephanos could be subject to *atimia* (loss of citizenship) and confiscation of his property.

Neaira has started as a *pais*, a girl aged between 7 and 10, and was a little prostitute in Corinth. She is then a slave and has no other choice than to obey and follow her owner, Nikarète, including when the latter moves from one city to another to sell the services of her girls. Constraint and violence are highly notable during a *symposion* in Athens where Neaira has to have sex with servants, although she's already supposed to be a freedwoman at that period<sup>29</sup>. But, at the same time, she lives a life which is not accessible to Athenian wives: she's on the move, on the roads, doing her job "everywhere in Greece" as said by the prosecutor. And the more she moves during a complex personal itinerary, the better her situation. She buys back her freedom in two or three steps. Her master changes, turns into a protector, *prostates*. And she ends up in Athens living the life of a citizen and being considered as such, *because* she lives as a citizen. She has a daughter, Phanô, who marries an Athenian, contrary to any law, and who attends cultic ceremonies totally forbidden to her. Therefore, both mother and daughter conform to the citizenship model of behaviour and of course are accused for that, because Neaira is a foreigner and a former slave. In her case, creation of identity and status is coextensive with mobility.

The question to be asked is the following: is this mobility an in-between? The answer is not obvious. There is a departure point, Corinth, but her *nostos* is totally prohibited. There is no way she can come back home: two of her Corinthian lovers, Eukrates and Timanoridas, have given her some money to get free under the condition she would never come back to the city, because they're both about to get married. Neaira is polluting the space by her presence, she has to be erased from the map of her childhood. So, this sounds more like an exile. But in her case, exile is a redemption, thanks to the resilience of the character. Every new space is like a white page where she can start a new story and be a new person, till the point of arrival in Athens. The narrative tells us how she re-appropriates her own body, and how that happens thanks to mediators (the different people who help her) and objects, especially the ones she takes with her during her journeys: we're told that when she flies to Megara to escape from one of her companions, she takes with her two servants, her clothes and her jewels. That detail has got a social and economic significance, but also an anthropological one as she needs some transitional objects to go through this experience successfully. One thing is she always adjusts to the situations and that's what I call resilience. In-betweenness stops for her when she meets her alleged husband, Stephanos, because the gap between what she wanted to be and what she has become has reduced enormously. In other terms, she now fits. On the other hand, troubles start again with the trial, and one could say that in her case in-betweenness never really ends: although she lives as an Athenian and is regarded

29 [Dem.], *Neaira*, 33-34.

as one probably by most people, her status remains fragile and if she's proved wrong, she can go back to slavery, because of the crime she committed.

Neaira is therefore a great case to show how mobility affects status and identity. But it also illustrates the cognitive processes leading to this permanent adjustment to difficulties. She finally encapsulates everything an Athenian is suspicious about: her status (slave-foreigner) is despicable and she's accused of having cheated and lied about her identity.

#### “ESPRIT DE RETOUR”: ATHENS AND THE REFUGEES FROM ACARNANIA IN 338/337

I'm reaching now my last section about civic practices and measures of control in Greek *poleis* of the Classical and Hellenistic periods, as revealed through epigraphic documents.

The first case of a supervising behavior by a city is that of the *metoikos* personal status<sup>30</sup>. As L. Migeotte reminds us, “the general rule was to welcome *xenoi* without formalities: we have no trace of their identity being checked on arrival” in peacetime, because what prevailed was freedom of movement<sup>31</sup>. The two Classical testimonies we have for such a control thanks to marks of recognition concern a period of war. When a foreigner landed in Athens, for instance, he would be called a *xenos* and could meet his own city's *proxenos*, the Athenian citizen chosen by his own city to protect him and his fellow-citizens when in Athens<sup>32</sup>. After a month, if the *xenos* meant to stay, he was compelled to get a *prostates*, a patron, to enter the *metoikos* (resident alien) category<sup>33</sup>. One can guess that not everyone would declare himself, which means that some foreigners would remain unidentified and therefore (probably) considered as illegally staying. Unfortunately, we don't know, in this case, what would happen to them, although we can guess that they would probably be expelled when recognised. But being a *metoikos* was, in some respects, an advantageous status<sup>34</sup> and it was probably not that easy to hide especially in small and very small cities, although we don't always know what the status of foreign residents was in places other than Athens. Finally, even if the case is unfortunately not documented, probably not everyone could obtain the status of *metoikos*, as the city was entitled to expel any foreigner considered undesirable<sup>35</sup>.

30 The best synthesis on the subject is still Whitehead 1977. See also, Gauthier 1972, 107-149, Gauthier [1988] 2012, and, for a brief overview, Kamen 2013, 43-61 and, more recently, Blok 2017, 265-275.

31 Migeotte 2004, 617.

32 On *proxenia*, see Mack 2015.

33 See Whitehead 1977, 14: “The general principle is now clear. In the fourth century at least, no ‘*parepidemos*’ [someone sojourning as a stranger in a place] could stay in Athens without being drawn into the *metoikia*”. The controversy between those who believe that the change to *metoikos* status was automatic and those who believe that it was the result of a request on the part of the person concerned will not be resolved here: on this point see Maffi 2009, 315, who leans towards a voluntary approach and not an automatic acquisition.

34 See Whitehead 1977, 96-97, who also reminds us of all the duties a *metoikos* had to fulfil in the fiscal and military fields.

35 Migeotte 2004, 619.

The case I'm thinking of here is slightly different: it's about a group of people from Acarnania in Western Greece coming to Athens in 338/337 (Text 1). These people, probably here some soldiers, had helped the Athenians against Philip II, the Macedonian king, and ended up as exiles from their own region<sup>36</sup>. Being a *phugas* (exile) was certainly a status from the point of view of the exiling *polis*, because there were pragmatic consequences for the banished people in relation to the territory of the city itself. But there was no such personal status as “exile” or “refugee” in the welcoming *poleis*, even if their situation was recognized as such historically speaking<sup>37</sup>. The legal agreements concluded between cities belong to two distinct categories: they are either *asylia* agreements, which ensured that the nationals of the two cities could appeal against seizures<sup>38</sup>, or judicial agreements called *symbola*, which allowed disputes between the same people to be settled and gave them access to the courts<sup>39</sup>. However, these conventions did not directly concern the fate of possible exiles. Therefore, it's only their status as a foreigner that appears in the inscription: the question remains as to whether these Acarnanians can really be considered *metoikoi*, as they get a dispensation (*ateleia*, l. 26) from the tax paid precisely by *metoikoi*, the *metoikion*. According to D. Whitehead<sup>40</sup>, they gain the privilege to remain *xenoi*<sup>41</sup>. The two main characters of the decree, Phormio and Karphinas, probably brothers, also got the right to activate the Athenian citizenship once granted to their grand-father, a *politeia* which had remained silent till their time to say so. The rest of the group, anonymously, finally got a partial right of *enktesis*, the “right of acquisition of land and/or house”<sup>42</sup>. Here, they were allowed to buy houses only (and no land), under two conditions, as the decree stipulates: “up to the time they would go back home” and “as long as they would reside in Athens”. So, this in-between situation, created by war and run away of part of the belligerents, was viewed as temporary by the welcoming city. The privilege would obviously be removed after their going back home, which was not the case of the two characters named above obviously. This return was seen as the normal ending of things<sup>43</sup>, with no settling down forever of the exiles.

36 On exile and exiles, see now Gray 2015.

37 As underlined by Lonis 1993, 214: “Was there a political refugee *status*? Strictly speaking, no. But political refugee *situation* was recognized, either directly or indirectly” and 215: “The legal status of a refugee is that of a *resident alien*”. See also Gray 2015, 354: “many ‘emigrant’ exiles had no option but to live as metics in host cities or to be perpetually mobile”.

38 On *asylia* and seizure, see Bravo 1980 (with the review by Gauthier [1982] 2012), and also Garland 2014, 114-130, but *asylia* is not taken by the author as a privilege granted by a decree, as he doesn't take into account the epigraphic material.

39 On these *symbola*, see Gauthier 1972.

40 Whitehead 1977, 15.

41 We can see here the importance of thinking of statuses in terms of the privileges granted rather than as intangible categories: see Müller 2014.

42 On *enktesis*, see now Faguer 2021.

43 The case is the same for the Molossian king Arybbas in 342 (?), *IG II<sup>3</sup>*, 1, 411, l. 42-46: ἐπιμελείσθ[αι δ]ὲ καὶ τοὺς στρατηγού[ς, οἱ ἄ]ν στρατηγῶσι, ὅπως Ἀρ[ύββα]ς καὶ οἱ παῖδες αὐτοῦ [χομί]σωνται τὴν ἀρχὴν τὴν [πατρ]ῶϊαν, “and the generals in office shall ensure that Arybbas and his children recover their ancestral rule” (Tr. S. Lambert, <https://www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/IGII31/411>).

REINSTATEMENT AND RESILIENCE: THE SAMIANS *EN TÈ PHUGÈ* IN THE 4<sup>th</sup> C. BC

Another notorious case of exiled people, who had to live in an *entre-deux* for 43 years between 365 and 322 is that of the Samians, the citizens of Samos on the eponymous island<sup>44</sup>. They were expelled from their island by the Athenians who installed there a sort of colony called a cleruchy. The Samian diaspora was quite extended in geographical terms. They ended up living mostly in *Anaia*, the nearest place located in the *peiraia*, that is the continental part of the island territory<sup>45</sup>, but also in very diverse cities (there is always a city where to land up in Greece, because there are so many of them): the people and communities who had helped the exiled Samians were thanked later on through more than 30 decrees called the “exile decrees”<sup>46</sup>.

The interesting thing with this case is the name itself given to these people. Even if they don't appear as benefiting from any official and international “refugee status”, they're as closed to it as can be. They are labelled by the others and by themselves afterwards as “the Samians *en tè phugè*”, as the Greek say, “in exile”. The word *phugè* is a strong one and means the punishment inflicted on someone who disobeys a rule in a treaty for instance<sup>47</sup>. But it also refers to the specific situation which results from this banishment. Of course, they lost the possibility to exercise their citizenship in practice for 43 years, but they never lost their status as citizens of Samos in the eyes of the other Greeks apart from the Athenians<sup>48</sup>. They were welcomed in other *poleis* and got the name of *katoikountes*, “residents”, which must be the local equivalent of *metoikos*, “resident alien”<sup>49</sup>, even if that was only a temporary *metoikia* always conceived with an *esprit de retour*. That can be seen in the most telling of the “exile decrees”: it's a decree for two citizens from Iasos in Asia Minor, Gorgos and Minnion (text 2), who have been very efficient in helping the Samians, and excellent mediators. Gorgos especially, a high-ranking character at the court of Alexander, has interceded for them with him, so that they could go back home as soon as possible. He also wrote from Alexander's camp to the magistrates of his own city, Iasos, to ask some privileges for the returning Samians: they should be exempted from the import-export tax (*ateleia*) for the goods they had to carry away and should be given means of transportation (*poreia*) at the expense of the city. The mechanism here of both the in-between situation and the going back home is very accurately and pragmatically described. They could on top have been given the double privilege of *asylia* and *asphaleia*, that is security for their goods and their own person: *asylia*, which should not be translated as “asylum” although the modern word derives from the

44 On the Samians in exile, see Shipley 1987, 161-168, Habicht 1996 and Habicht 2006<sup>2</sup>, 50-53.

45 Debord 1999, 471-472.

46 *IG*, XII 6.1, n° 17-41.

47 See the use of the word in 378/377 BC, in the so-called Aristoteles' decree (prospectus of the second Athenian league): *IG*, II<sup>2</sup>, 43 (Rhodes & Osborne 2004, n° 22), l. 60: the penalty for any attempt to break the covenant by proposing or voting on a decree contrary to it is death or exile (*phuge*). See Gray 2015, 110-111 on the cases of *phuge* as a punishment.

48 Greek cities sympathized with the Samians and even in Athens there was some hostility towards this act: Aristotle, *Rhetorics*, 1384 b 29-36. See Habicht 1996, 398. See also the excellent pages on the Samians in exile and their retained identity by Gray 2015, 300-302, 342.

49 The term *katoikountes* is widely used in the Hellenistic period to designate this type of status, as one sees in Delos, for example: see Müller 2017.



Greek one, means exactly “no plundering” for a territory or “no seizing” for goods<sup>50</sup>, while *asphaleia* refers to personal safety.

The Samians were not the only ones to be reinstated in their own city<sup>51</sup>. Lots of people had been banished during the second part of the 4<sup>th</sup> century for whatever reason linked with the huge mobility process of the period. But Alexander, before dying in Babylon in 323, had recalled them in 324 through a famous *diagramma*, ordonnance, exactly as he had proclaimed that the Samians were allowed to go back home. When the letter of Alexander was read out loud during the Olympic games in July 324, 20,000 banished people attended this proclamation according to Diodorus<sup>52</sup>. At this time then, Aegean Greece appears as a region of the *oikoumenè* with people wandering from one place to another, trying to come back home with a lot of uncertainty. Another decree, from the city of Tegea, dated 324/323 or after 319 BC, gives the modalities of this return for this Peloponnesian city<sup>53</sup>. There had been obviously contestations about the *diagramma* and one of the biggest problems faced both by returning people and those who had stayed was that of houses and land-ownership. Just like Odysseus, exiled people, called here *phugades* (same stem as *phuge*), were never sure, when going back home, to recover their properties and therefore their social status even if they were reinstated as citizens.

50 On *asylia*, see Bravo 1980 and here n. 38.

51 They finally got back to their island thanks to Perdikkas in 322, as explained by Diod. 18.18.9: ὁ δὲ Περδίκκας ἀποκαταστήσας τοὺς Σαμίους τὴν τε πόλιν καὶ χώραν κατήγαγεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν πατρίδα, πεφευγότες ἔτη τρισὶ πλείω τῶν τεσσαράκοντα, “Perdikkas, having given the Samians back their city and their land, brought them back to their homeland, as they had been exiled for 43 years”. Cf. Garland 2014, 194-196.

52 Diodorus 17.109: ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος τῶν Ὀλυμπίων ὄντων ἐκήρυξεν ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ τοὺς φυγάδας πάντας εἰς τὰς πατρίδας κατιέναι πλὴν τῶν ἱεροσύλων καὶ φονέων, “While the Olympic Games were being celebrated, Alexander had it proclaimed in Olympia that all exiles should return to their cities, except those who had been charged with sacrilege or murder” (tr. C.B. Welles, Vol. VIII of the Loeb Classical Library edition, 1963); 18.8, 4-6: [4] (...) ὁ κήρυξ ἀνέγνω τὴν ἐπιστολὴν τήνδε: “Βασιλεὺς Ἀλέξανδρος τοῖς ἐκ τῶν Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων φυγάσι: τοῦ μὲν φεύγειν ὑμᾶς οὐχ ἡμεῖς αἴτιοι γεγονάμεν, τοῦ δὲ κατελθεῖν εἰς τὰς ἰδίας πατρίδας ἡμεῖς ἐσόμεθα πλὴν τῶν ἐναγῶν: γεγράφαμεν δὲ Ἀντιπάτρῳ περὶ τούτων, ὅπως τὰς μὴ βουλομένας [5] τῶν πόλεων καταγείναι ἀναγκάσῃ”- κηρυχθέντων δὲ τούτων μεγάλῳ κρότῳ ἐπεσήμηνε τὸ πλῆθος: ἀποδεξάμενοι γὰρ οἱ κατὰ τὴν πανήγυριν τὴν χάριν τοῦ βασιλέως διὰ τὴν χαρὰν ἡμείβοντο τὴν εὐεργεσίαν τοῖς ἐπαίνοις: ἦσαν δ' οἱ φυγάδες ἀπνηθηκότες ἅπαντες [6] ἐπὶ τὴν πανήγυριν, ὄντες πλείους τῶν δισμυρίων, “the herald received and read the following message: ‘King Alexander to the exiles from the Greek cities. We have not been the cause of your exile, but, save for those of you who are under a curse, we shall be the cause of your return to your own native cities. We have written to Antipater about this to the end that if any cities are not willing to restore you, he may constrain them’. When the herald had announced this, the crowd showed its approval with loud applause; for those at the festival welcomed the favour of the king with cries of joy, and repaid his good deed with praises. All the exiles had come together at the festival, being more than twenty thousand in number” (tr. R.M. Geer, Vol. IX of the Loeb Classical Library edition, 1947). On Alexander’s Exiles decree, see also Garland 2014, 190-194.

53 Rhodes & Osborne 2004, n° 101. See the commentary by Gray 2015, 90-94, with the following summary of the text: “The text addresses in turn the restoration of the exiles’ property; a question relating to civic festivals; the resolution of disputes about property; debts to ‘the Goddess’; and the status of exiles’ wives and daughters. It concludes with an oath of reconciliation”. (p. 90).

## FINAL REMARKS

To conclude, I would like to underline three points:

First, about the ways migrants can be categorized between “self-decided” and “compelled” to move away: the difference between the former and the latter is clearly perceptible, if we do a detour, through the treatment made to people who are simply “absentees”. These ones are absent for whatever reason (travel, embassy, residence in another deme or city, apart from banishment), and their home-city usually takes them into account as *apodemountes*, “those who are away”. Obviously, they are physically not in the city, but still present in memories, in the global conception of the civic body, and therefore in the actions taken by the *polis*. We have a very good example of it from the city of Cos around 180 BC. A decree from the tribes of the deme of Halasarna, a subdivision of the *polis*, makes a list of all the people who are able to participate in the cult of Apollo and Herakles (text 3). That list includes, second after the *endamoi*, “resident people”, the *apodamoi* (l. 26-27), who can be represented by an *epitropos*, a trustee, a person who will look after their interests<sup>54</sup>. These *apodamoi* obviously remain citizens and don’t lose their status, but if the *epitropos* cannot do his job and represent them, then they have three months to show up by themselves after their return. There are two points of interest in these dispositions. The first concerns the existence of an *epitropos* officially recognised by the deme, even if it is not mandatory, since provision is made for the case of citizens who are not represented (case n° 3). The second concerns the fact that absentees are not necessarily wrong and do not incur any negative consequences provided that they present themselves on their return: the consequence is therefore simply deferred, but is applicable in the event of non-presentation. In this case, it is more a right to be exercised than a duty to be fulfilled, and those who do not present themselves at the census are the first victims of their own behaviour. Beyond the time limit after their return, they are likely to lose their rights, at least with regard to their fellow citizens of demes. Unfortunately, we do not know more about the loss of rights in other institutional contexts<sup>55</sup>. Yet, categories can be blurred between absentees and exiles, as we’ve seen with mercenaries and prostitutes: some migrants might escape their slave-status and become free to move; some apparently self-decided mercenaries might in fact be exiles; some exiles might be reintegrated after they come back; so that one should perhaps talk about a *continuum* between intentionality and pure coercion.

Second, the definition of “in-betweenness” clearly depends on the category one belongs to: I suggest that in-betweenness should be defined, in cognitive terms, as a discrepancy, the feeling of those people who don’t belong home anymore, but don’t belong yet anywhere else, who see a huge gap between the identity they claim for themselves and the image reflected by people they meet on the way. In-betweenness is also made of precarity and uncertainty about the other end of the trajectory. Therefore, according to me, not everyone on the road can be said “in-between” even if he faces danger and is at risk, unless one prefers to say that there are several forms of in-betweenness!

54 The theme has already been partly treated by Alberto Maffi from a legal point of view: see Maffi 2009.

55 See Maffi 2009, 307-308.

Third and finally, about status and identity. Migratory experience is of course necessarily disruptive, whatever the angle we take it from: self-perception (cognition), collective representation or practicality. But it can also be creative and the key-word here is resilience: Xenophon's mercenaries, writes the author, want to go home, but none of them gets home in the end and they reembarc for more adventures. Demosthenes' Neaira starts very low, but slides into the gaps of Athenian life and law, and every step of her long trajectory makes the in-betweenness progressively fade away, as she ends up as a quasi-respectable *politiss*, a woman-citizen. Resilience is certainly a key-concept to study migration and one obviously opposed to *nostalgia* which is such a *leitmotiv* in both Greek literature and inscriptions.

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## Texts:

1. Case of the Acarnanian exiles, Athens, *IG, II<sup>3</sup>, 1, 316, l. 18-26* (338/337 BC).

εἶ[ναι] Φορ-  
 [μ]ίων[ι κ]α[ί] Καρφί[ναι] καὶ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις αὐτῶν κυρία-  
 20 [ν τή]ν [δωρεῖ]άν, ἣν ἔ[δω]κεν ὁ δῆμος Φορμίῳ τῷ πάππω-  
 ι [α]ὐ[τ]ῶν[. . .] [ἐλ]έ[σ]θ[α]ι δὲ αὐτοῦ[ς] φυλῆ[ν] καὶ δῆμον καὶ φρα-  
 [τρίαν, ἥς] ἂν βο[ύλων]ται εἶναι· ἐπαινέσαι δὲ καὶ τοὺς  
 [ἄλλ]ο[υ]ς Ἀ]καρ[νάνας τ]οὺς βο[. . .] [ἠθ]ήσαντας μετὰ Φορμίω-  
 24 [νος κ]α[ί] Κα]ρφί[να· καὶ] εἶναι αὐτοῖς, ἕως ἂν κ<α>τέλθωσι-  
 [ν, ἔ]γκτησι[ν], [ᾧ]ν ο[ί]κ[ι]ων βούλωνται, οἰκοῦσιν Ἀθήνη-  
 [σι, ἀτελέσι τὸ μετοί]κ[ι]ου κτλ.

Translation by S. Lambert (<https://www.atticinscriptions.com/inscription/IGII31/316#ref-4>)

“the grant which the People made to Phormio their grandfather shall be valid for Phormio and Karphinas and their descendants; and they shall choose the tribe and deme and phratry to which they wish to belong; and to praise also the other Akarnanians who gave support along with Phormio and Karphinas, and they shall have, **until they return home**, [right of ownership] of whatever houses they wish while they live at Athens, free of the metic tax etc”.

2. Case of the “Samians *en tē phugē*”, Samos, *IG, XII 6.1, 17* (shortly after 322 BC).

ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δή-  
 μῳ, Ἐπ[ί]χουρος Δράκοντος  
 εἶπεν· ἐπειδὴ Γόργος καὶ Μ-  
 4 ινίων Θεοδότου Ἴασεῖς κα-  
 λοὶ καὶ ἀγαθοὶ γεγένηται *vac.*  
 περὶ Σαμίους ἐν τῇ φυγῇ, κα[ί]  
 διατρίβων Γόργος παρὰ Ἀλεξάν-  
 8 δρωι πολλὴν εἴνοϊαν καὶ π[ρο]θυμί-  
 αν παρείχετο περὶ τὸν δῆμο[ν τ]ὸν Σα-  
 μίων, σπουδάζων ὅπως ὅτ[ι τ]άχος  
 Σάμιοι τῆμ. πατρίδα κομίσαιντο, καὶ ἄ-  
 12 ναγγείλαντος Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐν τῷ[ι]  
 στρατοπέδῳ, ὅτι Σάμον ἀποδιδοὶ *vac.*  
 Σαμίσις, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα ἀπὸ τῶν Ἐ-  
 λλήνων στεφανωσάντων, ἐστ-  
 16 εφάνωσε καὶ Γόργος καὶ ἐπέστει-

λε εἰς Ἴασον πρὸς τοὺς ἄρχοντα-  
 ς, ὅπως οἱ κατοικούντες Σαμίω  
 ἐν Ἰάσωι, ὅταν εἰς τὴν πατρίδα κατί-  
 20 ωσιν, ἀτελῆ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἐξάξον-  
 ται καὶ πορεία αὐτοῖς δοθήσεται, τὸ ἀ-  
 νάλωμα τῆς πόλεως τῆς Ἰασέων  
 παρεχούσης, καὶ νῦν ἐπαγγέλλον-  
 24 ται Γόργος καὶ Μινίων ποιήσιν ὃ τι  
 ἂν δύνωνται ἀγαθὸν τὸν δῆμον τὸ-  
 ν Σαμίω, δεδόχθαι τῷ δήμῳ· δε-  
 δόσθαι αὐτοῖς πολιτείαν ἐπ' Ἴσηι  
 28 καὶ ὁμοίῃ καὶ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐκγόνοις  
 καὶ ἐπικληρώσαι αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ φυλὴν κ-  
 αὶ χιλιαστὸν καὶ ἑκατοστὸν καὶ γέ-  
 νος καὶ ἀναγράψαι εἰς τὸ γένος, ὃ ἂ-  
 32 ν λάχωσιν, καθότι καὶ τοὺς ἄλλ<λ>ου-  
 ς Σαμίους, τῆς δὲ ἀναγραφῆς ἐπιμε-  
 ληθῆναι τοὺς πέντε τοὺς ἡίρη-  
 μένους, τὸ δὲ ψήφισμα τόδε ἀνα-  
 36 γράψαι εἰς στήλην λιθίνην καὶ στή-  
 σαι <ἐ>ν τῷ ἱερῷ τῆς Ἥρας, τὸν δὲ [τα]-  
 μίαν ὑψηρετῆσαι.

Translation (slightly modified) by Rhodes & Osborne 2004, n° 90 (p. 458-461)

“Resolved by the council and people. Epicurus  
 son of Dracon proposed:  
 Since Gorgus and Minnion sons of Theodotus,  
 4 of Iasus, have been fine and good  
 [*kaloi k'agathoi*] with regard to the Samians  
 in exile; and Gorgus in spending time  
 8 with Alexander displayed great good will  
 and enthusiasm with regard to the people  
 of Samos, striving that the Samians should  
 recover their fatherland as quickly as possible,  
 12 and when Alexander proclaimed  
 in the camp that he was restoring Samos  
 to the Samians, and the Greeks crowned  
 16 him because of this, Gorgus crowned him,  
 and wrote to the officials in Iasus that  
 the Samians residing (*katoikountes*) in Iasus, when they  
 returned to their fatherland, should export  
 20 their belongings with immunity from duty  
 and that transport should be provided for  
 them, the city of Iasus bearing the cost;

- 24 and now Gorgus and Minnion offer to do  
whatever good they can to the people of  
Samos; be it resolved by the people:  
to give them citizenship on equal and  
28 like terms, both to themselves and to their  
descendants; and to allot them to a tribe, a  
*chiliastys*, a *hekastostys* and a *genos*; and they  
shall be written up into whatever *genos* they  
32 are allotted to, just like the other Samians,  
and the five elected men shall take care of  
the writing-up.  
36 This decree shall be written up on a stone  
stele and placed in the sanctuary of Hera,  
and the treasurer shall minister”.

**3. Decree of the tribes of Halasarna (deme on Cos island), c. 180 BC, IG, XII 4, 1, 103:  
registration of people participating in the cult of Apollo and Herakles.**

- 20 ἀπογράφει-  
θαι τὸς μετέχοντας  
τοῦ ἱεροῦ, τὸς μὲν ἐνδά-  
μος ἀρξαμένος ἀπὸ τῆς  
24 τρίτης τοῦ Ἰακινθίου  
ἔστε καὶ τὰν τριακά-  
δα τοῦ Ἄλσειου, τὸς δὲ ἀ-  
ποδάμους ἀπογραφόν-  
28 τω τοὶ ἐπίτροποι, εἰ δὲ  
μὴ, ἀπογραφέσθων αὐ-  
τοὶ ἐπεὶ καὶ παραγένη-  
ται ἐν τριμήνῳ τὸ ὄνο-  
32 μα πατριαστί ποτὶ τὸς  
ναποίας κτλ.

Translation :

- 20 “that one  
record the participants  
in the cult, the *endamoi*  
starting from the  
third Hyacinthios  
25 till the thirtieth  
Alseios, the *apodamoi*  
their representatives should record; if not,  
they should record themselves

- 30 when they come here  
in the three months,  
with names and patronymics, before the  
*napoia*" etc.





