Pride and prejudice, sense and subsistence: exchange and society in the Greek city

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The question of the economic relationship between city and countryside has been frequently addressed by ancient historians. There has, moreover, been virtually universal agreement about what is the key question to ask. Thus Moses Finley, in his chapter on 'Town and Country' in The Ancient Economy, repeatedly asks 'How did an ancient city pay for its necessities?', and Geoffrey de Ste Croix in his section on 'Polis and chora' in The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World picks out as the prime feature to be noted that:

A Greek (or Roman) city normally expected to feed itself from corn grown in its own chora (territorium) or at any rate grown nearby.¹

But asking this question, and this question alone, has two undesirable consequences: it leads to the treatment of relationship between town and country in terms of a balance sheet;² and it effectively presupposes that town and country can be cleanly divided, despite the fact that in the Greek polis, at least, the actors themselves make no

² So Finley (1973/1985) 139, the structure of whose analysis is not as far as all that from that of Gomme (1937) which he criticises.
such clean division. In this paper I want to approach the question of exchange between town and country from a very different angle, and I will argue that the economic relationship between town and country should be understood as much in terms of the need of wealthy landowners for cash as of the need of landless town residents for food.

The high priority put by Greek cities upon feeding their citizenry from the land is independent of the existence of the landless town resident and it has consequences which extend far beyond the question of the balance of trade, either within the city or between cities. The more securely a city could meet its own food needs from its own land the easier it was to maintain political independence. There seems therefore a direct correlation between the value put on growing at home the food needed for the city's subsistence, and the way that land was seen as the only proper investment, that land-ownership was, ideologically if not actually, tied to citizenship, and that all landowning was respectable, so that no 'class' divisions formed within the citizen body and no ideology of subordination developed.

Furthermore, the political implications of farming create a strong pressure for the landowner to dwell in the town, as the only place where citizen rights can be fully exercised, and to form the core of the citizen army by which both political independence and the fields are protected.

It is not simply that landowning was a socio-political act in the Greek city, but that the socio-political forces actually competed with the more purely economic forces. This is most graphically seen in the decision of active farmers to live in the town, away from the land that they own and work. But it is also the priority of the socio-political which makes for the complementarity of town and countryside which has been stressed as the peculiar feature of the Greek city (Humphreys 1978, 134). For where the town works as an enlarged village, which relates to the countryside as simply as a village to its fields, town and country are indivisible, and questions of feeding the town or of exchange between town and country simply do not arise.

This model of the city is consistent with two strongly contrasting means of land exploitation:

1. It is notable that de Ste Croix draws very heavily on the post-classical Greek world, with Jones (1940) providing his model city.

2. Thus, while English has various verbal ways of distinguishing small farmers from large landowners, Greek does not.

(i) systems of lordly surplus extraction by means of extra-economic compulsion (especially serfdom)

(ii) full peasant ownership of land.

The former is, broadly, the position at Sparta in the Classical period; the latter more or less the position in almost all other Greek cities. I have borrowed both categories from Professor Robert Brenner, who initiated a massive debate in Past and Present in the late 1970s and early 1980s with his claim that 'the original breakthrough in Europe to a system of more or less self-sustaining growth' was dependent upon the development of class relations through the breakdown of both the above situations - serfdom and peasant possession. Brenner's argument reinforces from a new direction the view that socio-political priorities in the Greek city competed with economic forces and impeded economic growth.

The model city is, however, something of a fictional construct. Cases of all landowners dwelling in the town were probably relatively rare, as perhaps were cities where land ownership was really the necessary and sufficient condition for citizenship. However, departures from the strict letter of the model may be of only trivial importance, for the real issue is whether cities acted as if the model situation were true. One example which might be argued to support the model is provided by the history of Mantinea. In 385 Sparta compelled the Mantineians to split up their town and go back to living in villages. Xenophon, recounting this, explicitly notes that those with property came to be pleased with the change because they were now living closer to their fields. Yet in fact the new situation did not create any new type of community functioning along lines and according to norms divergent from those of the model city, for as soon as the external pressure was removed the Mantineians reverted to a single city centre.

But if the model seems to hold good for some Greek cities, how far does it hold good for that exceptional city, Athens, about which we know most and on which most studies of the economic relationship between city and countryside in ancient Greece have been centred? Certainly not all Athenians dwelt in the political centre -

1 Xenophon, Hellenika 5.2.7, 6.5.3 with S. and H. Hodkinson (1981) 286-8.
scholars have probably consistently over-estimated the proportion doing so (Osborne 1985, 225 n.91) - but arguably the master-stroke of Kleisthenes was to divide the political centre, and by giving the villages of the countryside an integral and essential part in the political process to make it possible for all Athenians to live in a political centre. Athenians do seem to have continued to congregate together and not to have gone out and lived on their plots of land, and democracy probably could not have functioned had this not been so. Citizenship in Athens was not formally dependent on land-ownership: Lysias 34 makes it clear that some Athenians at least were aware of how enforcing such a link would alter the composition of the citizen body. But land ownership was dependent on citizenship. Moreover, some Athenians were quite as ready as other Greeks to make a big thing of the moral value of land-ownership: Xenophon (particularly in the Oikonomikos) provides the prime, but not the only, example. At the heart of the ideology of Athenian democracy was the contention that the Athenians were autochthonous, born from the very land, and this autochthony provided the fundamental support for the equality of all Athenians (and also for citizen exclusiveness).

Furthermore it is at the heart of Finley's claims that on the economic plane Athens was not in fact different in kind from other cities. Finley stresses that although the non-agricultural workforce was relatively large it did not produce anything that was significant in the economy of the city (except the silver, mined in the countryside) and the town remained a centre of consumption and not of production.

Seen from the point of view of the question of how ancient cities paid for their 'food, metals, slaves and other necessities' it is clear that the model city is one which is economically stagnant, for it has a very low demand for necessities which are not produced by the citizen himself. For Finley the Athenian exploitation of silver meant that even without meeting her own demands for food from her own territory Athens could meet her impressive import bill, and hence the Athenian countryside could stagnate just as much as other cities could. Once this viewpoint is adopted it becomes plausible to take literally the view implied by Dikaiopolis in Aristophanes' Akharnians 33-6 that traders were unknown outside the town (even in so large and prosperous a community as Akharnai), and to believe that the failure of archaeology or written records to give evidence of market places outside Athens, the Peiraius and the mining region is significant. The countryside, it might seem, could maintain itself without any significant need to buy and sell on the market.

But is this claim really true? One way of examining it is to look at specific cases. For Athens a small number of men are relatively well known because they became involved in law courts in cases in which matters of property were involved. One such man is Phainippos, a figure of whom we would know nothing were it not for a single court case from which the opponent's speech is preserved as the 42nd oration in the Demosthenic corpus. The claim made in court is that Phainippos is richer than the speaker and therefore ought to undertake liturgical commitments in his stead. As a result the speech contains considerable detailed information about both the estate of Phainippos and the estate of the speaker, and even though we can be confident that this information is distorted, probably systematically distorted, it proves to be of exceptional interest when considered closely.

Phainippos' son Phainippos had inherited the properties of two families, his own paternal family and also his wife's, for he had been adopted as son by his father-in-law. His opponent alleges that both properties were so large that they had previously borne liturgic liabilities (21-3). As described in the speech the property consisted of a single landed estate, at Kytherros, a deme almost certainly in the Mesogaia area and which the most recent discussion (Traill 1986, 47-51) places in the Erasinos valley, south of Brauron. We do not know what Phainippos' paternal deme was, but his father-in-law was of Kolonai, not Kytherros.¹

In an unprecedented, and notorious, measurement, Phainippos' opponent gives the circumference of the Kytherros estate as 'more than forty stades' (5), a measurement which, even if true, is consistent with the estate being of a wide range of areas (de Ste Croix 1966). More usefully the speaker described the nature of the agricultural exploitation and makes claims about the agricultural yield. Barley, vines and wood form the core of the estate's production: barley production is put at more than 1,000 medimnoi (which may imply that around 40 hectares were so cultivated), wine production at 800 metretai, and wood production is supposed to bring in 12 drachmas a day (7.20). The estate has two threshing floors (just possibly an indication that it combines two previously separate

¹ See generally Davies (1971) no.14734 and D22.
estates?), and a number of buildings used for storage of grain (7).

The only labour force mentioned by the speaker consists of six donkeys and two or more donkey-drivers who are referred to over the transport of wood, and the claim is made that these were employed year-round for this purpose. No other labour force, animal or human, is mentioned: given that the speaker wants to maximise, rather than minimise, the impression of the size and wealth of the estate there seem to be two possible reasons for this: either the six donkeys and their drivers were the only workforce and were employed on wood-cutting only in the season in which the speaker visited the estate, or else the permanent workforce otherwise employed by Phainippos was so small that it would have undermined the case being made. In favour of the former it might be noted that the speaker did visit the estate in Metageitnion (August), a month when, for example, the Eleusis accounts show that beasts of burden were free to be released from agricultural tasks in order to be used for the transport of marble; and close to the time at which Hesiod recommends that the farmer should devote his energies to woodcutting. Moreover it might be argued that the employment of such a force on woodcutting all the year round would imply a very large area devoted to woodland which it would be odd for the speaker not to make more of than he does.1 In favour of the second suggestion, it might be noted that there probably was quite large scale use of hired labour in Attic agriculture to meet the peak period of labour demand.2

Phainippos' opponent is concerned to show the scale of Phainippos' resources, and he may omit from his description much that went on on the estate but was of trivial economic importance. It is simply impossible to tell whether Phainippos aimed to grow all the sorts of food his household needed on the estate or not: we certainly cannot assume that barley and wine were the only foodstuffs the estate produced. What is clear is that there is no way that his household (consisting, let us say, of twenty members), would consume more than 10% of the claimed barley yield. The opponent puts into Phainippos' own mouth the admission that he had already sold part of the grain crop, and he further claims that Phainippos subsequently sold off more of the grain than was in store (6.8).

The speaker certainly exaggerates; and the barley price quoted (18 drachmas) is atypically high as a result of a particularly bad harvest in much of Attica. Nevertheless, even if we halve the figures given, Phainippos' estate must have yielded something approaching 5,000 drachmas of cash per annum. The opponent claims an income of 3,500 drachmas for wood (12 drachmas a day for the working year; if the wood was worked only in slack seasons the figure would be more like 1,000 drachmas), 18,000 drachmas for barley (1,000 medimnoi at 18 drachmas per medimnos; a price of 3-5 drachmas would be more realistic), and 9,600 drachmas for wine (800 metretai at 12 drachmas a metretes). This gives a total of about 31,000 drachmas (or about 15,000 on a reduced working year for wood and reduced price for barley).

What did Phainippos spend this cash on? The running costs of the estate cannot have been inconceivable: even if we allow that subsistence food needs were met by home production, there remain donkeys and slaves to replace, hired labour to be paid, non-food necessities to purchase (clothes, tools, buildings and building maintenance), and so on. But it takes a massive stretch of the imagination to make these items reach even the conservative estimate of cash income I have posited. Yet, unless we are to believe that Phainippos is an utter liar, there is evidence in the speech that this cash income had been unable to cover his cash outlay. The speaker claims that, although there were no horoi marking debts visible on the estate when he visited it, Phainippos had since alleged that he had a whole series of debts: 6,000 drachmas owed to Pamphilos and Pheidoteles of Rhamnous; 4,000 drachmas to Aiantides of Phlya; and 1,400 drachmas to Aristomenes of Anagyrous (26-8). Only the last of these debts does the speaker claim to be able to show to have been repaid. For our purposes it is immaterial whether the debts were in fact outstanding at the time of the speech; what is important is the evidence they provide that in the recent past Phainippos' cash outlay had exceeded his cash income.

The speaker of [Demosthenes] 42 does not disclose the circumstances in which Phainippos contracted, or claimed to have contracted, these debts, for he wants the dikasts to believe them

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1 The type of wood is not specified, but Meiggs (1982) 205-6 supposed it to have been firewood, in which case if this is more than casual exploitation Phainippos must have gone in for coppicing. There is plenty of evidence for coppicing in the Roman agronomists (see Meiggs 1982, 263, 266-9) but no explicit allusions in Greek authors.

invented or no longer relevant. The best guide which we can get to the sort of reason why Phainippos might have contracted these debts is provided by our information about the circumstances in which other fourth-century Athenians have borrowed money. The evidence, from the orators and from the horoi themselves, was collected and analysed by Finley some 35 years ago in Studies in Land and Credit. In summary, two common reasons for raising loans of a substantial size on the security of real estate are the raising of a dowry and the leasing of an orphan estate; loans to purchase plant or land, to pay for liturgical obligations, to pay for a family funeral, and to meet another man’s temporary crisis are also known. Had Phainippos borrowed money to lease an orphan estate, or purchase plant or land, his opponent could not have been silent about it, for anything which increased the productive capacity of Phainippos’ estate was grist to his mill in persuading the dikasts of Phainippos’ wealth. Similarly, Phainippos cannot have borrowed money to perform a liturgy, for the opponent’s very complaint is that Phainippos should be, but is not, performing a liturgy (22-3). Although no borrowing seems to be involved, Phainippos did claim that 1 talent of his property was not his to dispose of because it represented the dowry for the remarriage of his widowed mother.

It seems true that at least one of Phainippos’ fathers had died quite recently, but although funerals could be expensive (a sum of 1,000 drachmas is involved in Demosthenes 40.52), the entire body of Phainippos’ debt can hardly be put down to this. Again, although Apollodoros can claim to have bailed out his neighbour to the tune of 16 mnas (Demosthenes 53.12-13), and although the speaker certainly would not mention any philanthropic gestures on Phainippos’ part, it is unlikely in the extreme that altruism lies behind Phainippos’ debts. That we are left with no clear idea of what was behind Phainippos’ borrowing is itself important: it is a sign of how little we understand of the major demands for cash that a wealthy Athenian might face. Further to speculate on the origins of Phainippos’ need for cash in large quantities would be futile; but there is much to be gained from the scrutiny of the way in which Phainippos ran the estate in the light of his manifest need to generate cash.

Phainippos’ opponent describes his estate as an eskhatia. This almost certainly implies that it was brought into cultivation relatively late, and probably implies that the land was to some extent marginal (Lewis 1973, 210-12). The grain crop is sometimes referred to simply as sitos, but when specification is given it is always that the crop is barley. The Eleusis ‘First-fruits’ account, of very similar date to this speech, suggests that much more barley was grown in Attica than wheat (Garnsey 1985; 1988, 102). Barley was certainly eaten by men as well as by animals, but there is some sign of a preference for wheat (Gallo 1985; Garnsey 1988, 99 n.27). Phainippos’ decision to grow barley rather than wheat may reflect the marginality of his estate: barley is more tolerant of drought than is wheat. But the decision must also be seen in the light of the presence of vines on the estate. That Phainippos had a productive vineyard implies that at least part of the estate had an adequate water supply, and yet Phainippos does not use that well-watered land for wheat. Growing barley may well have given a consistent yield of a not very profitable crop on the less good land of the estate; growing vines gave a cash crop that was regularly in high demand, and which could be stored for relatively long periods to be disposed of when need arose or when market conditions were particularly favourable. The estate was bound to produce more, perhaps much more, than the subsistence needs of the household, and it seems that Phainippos directed his farming activities to low risk enterprises on the one hand, and high cash yielding enterprises on the other.

That Phainippos had one eye on the market seems to be further confirmed by his exploitation of the woodland. If the suggestion that exploitation of woodland was seasonal rather than permanent is correct, then it illustrates nicely the need of the farmer who employs permanent rather than just casual labour to fill the slack periods of the agricultural year productively. Full employment is much more of a priority for the owner of draught animals and slaves than for the peasant who has neither. But the decision to exploit wood is also interesting. The wood seems to be of no intrinsic use for the estate, it is being carted away and sold (perhaps in Athens, as John Davies suggests (1971, 553), or perhaps in the mining region?). Phainippos’ opponent expresses the yield in term of drachmas a day, and although it is in his interest to allege a cash income it would be perverse not to accept that woodcutting on the scale alleged must have generated some cash return. Hamish Forbes has recently stressed that the exploitation of woodland resources has traditionally been one of the

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1 Finley (1951/1985); for a thoroughgoing examination of credit at Athens see Millett (forthcoming).
main sources of cash for small farmers in Greece: Phainippos may have had a larger cash need than most of his neighbours, but this way of meeting the need may have been quite widely employed.

In sum, it seems reasonable to claim, on the basis of his opponent's allegations, that Phainippos had a very considerable need for cash and that he organised the exploitation of his estate in such a way as to bring in as steady a cash income as possible. He sells off his barley little by little from shortly after the harvest, apparently keener to get cash in hand than to gamble on the future movement of prices. His opponent alleges that he has broken the seals put on the grain stores and has continued to sell grain, and also that he has continued to sell wood (8-9); if this is true it looks as if Phainippos was not prepared to let a vexatious court case stand in the way of his established marketing practices.

It must be admitted that the information that we have about Phainippos is exceptional; but was he atypical in his needs and practices? A glance at the situation of his opponent only partially revealed, suggests that many Athenian rich may have been in similar circumstances and faced similar demands. The speaker in Demosthenes 42 claims that he himself was left 4,500 drachmas by his father, as was his brother, and that it is difficult to live off so little. He admits that he increased his fortune by activities in the mining region, claiming that he made this money by working and labouring with his own body (whatever that may mean). But he then 'shared a common misfortune with others labouring in the mines', and lost some money 'privately' by incurring great fines, and then finally had to pay a fine of 3 talents to the city - 'a talent per share' - because he had an interest in a mine which was confiscated (3, 20, 22, 29).

Scholars who have discussed this speech have frequently followed the lead of the speaker and suspected Phainippos of some sort of cover-up; but it was not in his opponent's interest, either, to reveal all about himself. The picture which he draws of turning a moderate estate into one of the largest in Athens (he was one of the 300 established by Demosthenes' Naval Law of 340) through his own labour in the mines is one designed to win sympathy, from dikasts and modern readers alike. That picture cannot have been obviously false, but since money invested in the mines was not easily visible we cannot be confident that the 4,500 drachmas which his father left to him was the totality of the legacy: it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that that was the value of the landed estate which he was left, and that there were already established mining interests on top of that. Certainly the speaker must have been able to pay off his mining fines in order to bring this case at all, and that means that he has been able to produce cash to settle a number of fines including one amounting to perhaps 3 talents.1

However sceptical we may be of the details, we are certainly faced here with a man who has met major demands for cash and has been left still in a position where he is not self-evidently incapable of bearing a trierarchy. The demands to which he admits are not at all of the same sort as those faced by Phainippos, but they are of a very similar scale. Both these rich men could represent themselves as having to meet very heavy demands for cash and expect that the dikasts, who might be unfamiliar with the situation of such very rich men, but who were likely to be suspicious, would believe them. Yet in the very nature of the case neither of them is counting public demand for cash in the form of liturgies or eisphorai into his obligations and expenditure.

What we know of eisphorai and liturgies suggests that the demands which these imposed upon the rich were at least as great as the private demands. Eisphorai were periodic levies on the rich, occasional in the fifth century, more systematic and regular in the fourth. Our information is not such that we can accurately assess the impact of these levies on individual households in either century, but the random selection of preserved figures gives some impression of the scale of the demand. The first eisphora of the Peloponnesian War is said to have been intended to raise 200 talents (Thucydides 3.19) - far more than the tribute paid by any ally. During the period from 411/10 to 403/2 one wealthy man (Lysias 21.3) paid out 3,000 and 4,000 dr. in two eisphorai. In the fourth century an assessment of the total capital value of property holdings in Attica was made and eisphora were then raised at 0.5%, 1% or 2% of capital in the belief

1 Forbes (unpublished). I am very grateful to Dr Forbes for letting me read this stimulating paper. See also Jolas and Zonabend (1973/1978). Phainippos seems to have no pastoral interests.
that such levies would yield 30, 60 and 120 talents respectively. It seems likely that at the same time that this assessment of property was made those liable to pay the levy were organised into symmories and that, then or shortly afterwards, the richest members of each symmory were responsible for advancing the whole sum due from the symmory and for recovering the sums due from the other members of the symmory. The number of those liable to pay the eisphora is much disputed and is closely bound up with the question of whether or not the same symmories were employed for raising eisphora and for the performance of liturgies. No modern scholar, however, seems to want to maintain that less than 1200 Athenian property holders were liable to pay the eisphora: i.e. just less than 5% of Athenians probably had to contribute to these levies. The impact that the eisphora made on the fortunes of these rich men obviously depended in part on the frequency with which the levies were made. The amounts demanded from an individual on each occasion were not large but they would still make a substantial hole in cash holdings: if we accept Phainippus' own account of his debts and assume that they will not have amounted to more than half the total value of the estate then for him eisphora will have meant payment in the order of 150 to 600 drachmas a time (cf. Davies 1971, 554).

In the case of liturgies our information for cost comes almost exclusively from litigious contexts, and are therefore subject to forensic inflation. However, a conservative estimate of the amount paid out on festival liturgies in Athens suggests that in a normal year around 100,000 drachmas may have been expended by about 100 citizens, and that in every fourth year, when the major Panathenaic celebration fell, this expenditure rose to something over 120,000 drachmas with about 20 more men to share it (Davies 1967; 1971, xxii-11). But this expenditure on festivals is almost negligible compared to the cost of maintaining the Athenian fleet. Even on a fairly conservative reckoning of 3,000 drachmas for a trierarchy (and some individuals and groups certainly spent more), the cost of maintaining 120 ships at sea (as recorded for 356) would have been some 60 talents (360,000 drachmas), and the cost of 170 ships at sea (as recorded in 322) 85 talents (510,000 drachmas).

For liturgies alone, therefore, the richest individual Athenians, probably numbering no more than 1,000 (Demosthenes 14.16-19), will have had to find up to 100 talents a year of spare cash. No individual could be called upon more frequently than one year in two to bear a festal liturgy, and no more frequently than one year in three to bear a trierarchy, but the sums which they had to find were only more lumpy, not in the end smaller, for that. Some rich men certainly mortgaged their land to raise the cash for a trierarchy: two cases of this are known in the fourth century, and it may not have been uncommon. Property was only mortgaged to other citizens, and thus even if the practice was widespread the amount of cash that had to be extorted from the wealthier section of the citizen body is unaffected. Moreover mortgaging was only in the end helpful for the individual if he either could pay off the sum mortgaged before next being called upon to bear a liturgy or was so reduced in means by the mortgage that he would not in future be liable, at least for the trierarchy.

In sum, large numbers of wealthy Athenians needed large amounts of cash, and needed them not just occasionally but regularly. Horoi illustrate some of the more publicly proclaimed reasons for raising cash in large sums; Phainippus' financial position suggests that there were also other private reasons which might be less publicly proclaimed; Phainippus' opponent's fines indicate the way in which the Athenian fondness for litigation could also take its financial toll; eisphora and liturgies illustrate, but probably do not exhaust, the massive public demand, for as well as these payments which were legally unavoidable it remained true in fourth-century Athens that wealth obliged the holder to contribute philanthropically to both local

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1 Demosthenes 14.27, cf. 27.7. The ancient testimonia on the fourth-century reform of Athenian finances are usefully collected and translated in Harding (1985) no.39.

2 See most recently Rhodes (1982, 1985) and MacDowell (1986). The debate badly needs to be put in a wider context.
community and polis as a whole. All of this suggests that a picture of Athens which shows exchange in the society purely in terms of the city's need to obtain food and other necessities misses an important dimension: the country also needed cash from the market.

How, then, was cash generated to meet these demands? The parties to the Phainippos case illustrate two traditional ways of raising cash: Phainippos himself relies on relatively unsophisticated agricultural practices; his opponent reaps most of his money from mining silver. But the demand for cash may have led to the development of agricultural and business practices less traditional than these. Various lease documents from the fourth century point to an apparently booming demand for public land to lease, and rich men eagerly snap up even small plots of such land (Osborne 1985, 54-9). Such men clearly do not require such plots in order to meet their own food needs. Pride and the high social value of landowning certainly play some part in such leases, but a desire for an additional source of income, exempt in some cases from liability to the eisphora (see Osborne 1987, 42-3) may well have influenced such men and encouraged such leasing. Private leasing of land also went on on a scale rather greater than has been appreciated in the past (Osborne 1988). Here the advantages to the lessor must be very largely economic, and while the lessee may have non-economic motives this is increasingly unlikely when leases are for short terms. Potential economic advantages for the lessee might include the possibility of making more efficient use of a labour force through economies of scale, possibilities of diversification, or simply the gamble on making a quick profit without having to face the consequences of agricultural malpractice.

The administration of city taxes also offered some opportunities for passing on the demand for cash to others, some of them outside the citizen body. Alarmingly, a high proportion of our knowledge of such taxes comes from chance mentions in inscriptions, and it is impossible to quantify even the number of taxes, let alone attempt to calculate what they raised or what was in it for the tax farmer. Typical of the sources of our knowledge is the document recording the selling off of the property of one Meixedemos of the deme of Myrrhinous after he had been unable to pay off a debt of more than half a talent to the public treasury. He had incurred this debt by going surety for a number of individuals who had contracted to raise various taxes but had never produced the cash. Either Meixedemos' friends were criminally exploiting him, or they did not find the activity of raising taxes as easy or as profitable as they had expected, but their activities show something of the theoretical possibilities for profiting from undertaking public services of this kind. That some of the taxes involved very large sums and could yield very considerable profit to those who farmed them is strongly suggested by the story told by Andokides about the bidding and counterbidding for the privilege of exacting the 2% tax on imports and exports, in which sums of 30 and 36 talents are involved (Andokides 1.133f.).

Leases and taxes, like mortgages, do not create wealth, they simply redistribute it, leases among the citizen body, taxes among a slightly wider circle. For the Athenian rich to meet their private and public demands for cash in large quantities something other than cash had to be turned into cash somewhere along the line. War itself brought in large amounts of booty (cf. Austin 1986) which could be converted into Athenian 'owls', but it hardly brought it in regularly enough for the rich in general to rely upon it. In the end we must contemplate the possibility that one or both of the following propositions are true:

1) that manufacture did in fact play a significant part in the creation of wealth at Athens;

2) that agriculture itself was, for substantial landowners at least, highly profitable, and if highly profitable then, given that Athenians did not go in for protectionism, also highly productive.

Both of these propositions go against firmly held modern convictions. Yet only by exalting the silver mines to a massively predominant place in the Athenian economy can both propositions be rendered unnecessary. That this is unjustified is indicated by the survival of Athens during the first third of the fourth century, when very little seems to have been done in the mines, and by the evidence for who grew wealthy from mining activities. Phainippos himself, whose mining connections consist at most in the mines providing a market for his wood, witnesses to the possibilities of creating wealth and producing cash at Athens without dabbling in silver.

Finley's arguments against ascribing a major economic importance to manufacture in any Greek polis, even Athens, remain strong. But
could agriculture have produced a cash income on the scale demanded? One crude way of assessing this is to convert the cash demand into barley production. Even if we assume a highish barley price of 5 drachmas a medimnos, 120,000 medimnoi have to be sold in order to raise the 100 talents needed, in some years at least, to meet public demand. 120,000 medimnoi (almost 5 million kg) would feed almost 25,000 people for a year. Given that, if Phainippos is at all typical, the rich will have been spending as much on private as on public outlay we should be thinking of, say, 10 million kg of barley (or equivalent) needing to be sold by rich Athenian farmers every year to supply the cash they required. Using the assumptions employed by Peter Garnsey (1985) and supposing that one quarter of Attica was in cereal production, this would mean that something over a quarter of the grain produced in Attica would have to be marketed. Pericles, in the anecdote related by Plutarch (Perikles 16), may be unusual in selling all the produce of his land immediately after the harvests, but if the cash demands of the Athenian rich were met largely from agriculture then it seems inevitable that they were committed very heavily indeed to market transactions.

Even if it was possible for agriculture to generate a sufficient supply of agricultural produce to raise the cash, is it possible to generate sufficient demand for such produce? There will have been some demand for agricultural produce in the countryside itself, both from those whose land was insufficiently productive to meet their needs and from those who concentrated on producing only one or two crops from their land. That heavy specialisation was at all widespread seems unlikely however: whenever the produce of an estate is described (as in the Attic stelai, or in Demosthenes 42) or prescribed (as in some lease documents) a variety of crops can be seen to be grown, and this is exactly what we would expect in a situation where most estates consisted of discrete plots of land enjoying different ecological conditions and suited to different use. The two primary markets for agricultural produce within Attica must have been the town, and, at least for the middle half of the fourth century, the mining region, where perhaps 10,000 or more slaves could be employed (see Conophago 1980, 341-54 for speculations about numbers). That the mines did create an extraordinary demand seems to be indicated by the exceptional settlement pattern of the Sounion region, and the density of purely classical, particularly fourth-century, agricultural activity in the Kharaka valley, west of Sounion, which has been revealed by the recent German survey.1 Barley might be regarded as food particularly suitable for slaves, and if Phainippos were sending his wood to the mines then that might be in virtue of connections established through marketing his barley there also (and one might further speculate that his selling in the mining region may have been what brought him to the notice of his opponent, himself heavily involved with mining). For all that, however, the bulk of the demand must have come from the town.

How, then, did the town pay? In some considerable degree the town may have paid because, directly or indirectly, it was in receipt of much of the money that the rich were producing in eisphorai and liturgical contributions. The beneficiaries of liturgical activity must have been widely spread, for there was probably no area of public life that residents of the town monopolised, but it seems undeniable, even if very hard to demonstrate, that town residents took more than their fair share of and in public activities. Private services and craft activities will have played a further part in enabling the town to pay, and will have contributed to a small degree by bringing in cash from outside the city.

All these considerations point to a very considerable volume and complexity of exchange within the city of Athens. It is difficult to believe that this can have been achieved without a high degree of monetization. The ability of the wealthy to meet public and private demand seems to have depended on a high degree of liquidity, not just in their personal economies but in the economy of the city as a whole, and a rapidity of exchange transactions which a partially monetized economy could hardly have achieved. But it also depended on a high level of general prosperity, for it was only a relatively prosperous citizen that could maintain the buoyant markets upon which the rich depended. In a tight circle the expenditures by which the rich justified and maintained their social, and indeed political, dominance required the public payment of magistrates, dikasts and those who attended the assembly which maintained democracy; while in turn those not liable for liturgies or eisphorai depended upon the rich being able to bear such burdens in order to free the funds to pay themselves for their democratic activities by which they kept the edge on their prosperity.

1 Osborne (1985) 29-36 plus Lohmann (1985) 71-96, whose findings have to be considered in the context of the history of the silver mines.
Athens in the fourth century clearly put her own wealthy citizens under the same sort and scale of pressure to find cash as her exaction of tribute in the fifth century put the wealthy in the allied states of the empire. There is, however, one major difference: in the fourth century in Athens public demand was demand for cash which, on the whole, stayed within the system and was not drained off outside Attica. In the empire the tribute demanded by Athens was removed to Athens itself, and very little probably found its way back to most allied cities, even indirectly. The relatively low level of tribute demanded of the allies, at least until the Peloponnesian war, has to be seen in that light (cf. Renfrew 1982).

The claim being made here, that the rich Athenian citizens were heavily involved in the market in order to meet the huge demands for cash which they faced, contrasts markedly with the picture painted by Finley (1973/1985, 108), who maintained that large landowners had 'a "peasant-like" passion for self-sufficiency' and that they did not have a 'qualitatively different approach to the problems and possibilities of farming' from that of the small farmer. Finley's statements amount to a denial that the very different situation of the large landowner, who employs labour, whether slave or free, rather than depending on his own and his family's work, led to a different conception of what estate management was about. Yet it was certainly not true of the wealthy Athenian, as has been claimed of the subsistence peasant, that 'savings are kept in the production-consumption unit. They are not thrown into circulation', nor that 'increasing the rate or the absolute volume of surplus means increasing self-exploitation'.

Why then did Finley come to believe so strongly in a 'peasant-like' mentality among the rich? There can be no simple explanation for what is a very complex picture, more subtle than my selective quotation has allowed, but four factors deserve to be picked out. The first of these is the influence of the classic article by Mickwitz, called 'Economic rationalism in Greco-Roman agriculture', published in 1937. On the basis largely of Egyptian papyri of estate accounts and Roman agronomists' attempts to calculate profitability Mickwitz argued that book-keeping skills and the conceptions vital to gaining a proper view of profitability, and hence enabling sensible choices to be made between strategies in agriculture, were never developed in antiquity. He suggested that because farmers followed methods of public accounting, which were aimed at eliminating fraud not at determining profitability, and did not develop proper commercial accounting, it was impossible for economic rationality to develop.

That adequate commercial book-keeping methods were not developed is indisputable, but to claim that in the absence of such book-keeping methods it was impossible for farmers (or indeed merchants) to behave in a way that was economically rational is to propose an unrealistically narrow definition of rational economic behaviour. As Mickwitz himself points out, commercial book-keeping methods were not developed in Western Europe at all until the agricultural revolution of the late eighteenth century. This brings us back into Brenner country (Aston and Philpin, 1985). Robert Brenner has argued that the breakthrough to sustained economic growth only occurred when the producers were forced, in order to maintain themselves, to buy and sell on the market. I have argued that in Classical Athens the wealthy Athenian landowner was forced into the market. Just as the limited scale of this alteration of the system of land exploitation did not lead to sustained economic growth, so also it can be argued that it did not lead to a situation where the application of commercial book-keeping practices would have made economic sense.

The number of Athenians who faced major public demands for cash was probably in the region of 1,000; a somewhat larger number will have been on the margins of those demands and will have shared the private needs for cash. But, although we are very ill informed about the distribution of wealth through the Athenian citizen body, it seems unlikely that more than say 10% of the citizens were subject to such pressures. The market into which they were forced in order to meet these demands was a purely local one, in an economy that was self-contained to a very high degree. In an economy on so small a scale, in an environment so subject to violent and unpredictable variations, economic modelling of supply and demand becomes a fool's game. The assumptions necessary in order to calculate profitability simply could not be made unless an extremely long-term view were taken, and even the richest could not afford to take such a view. Moreover economic stability was not threatened simply by environmentally determined fluctuations in food supply, but also by political factors: classical Greek society was, by modern standards

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extremely unstable both socially and politically, and the polis was threatened by instability in other poleis as well as by instability at home. Thus totally irregular factors, which were strictly non-economic, threatened even the very long term view.

In a famous passage, Xenophon presupposes that all markets are limited except for the market for silver (*Poroi* 4.4-6). Short-sighted as such a remark may seem to us, it is actually a perception of the nature and conditions of trade in the fourth-century Greek world. It was thus for perfectly good reasons that ancient Athenian landowners failed to act in a way which Mickwitz would describe as 'economically rational': natural and social factors combined to ensure that the economy could not sensibly or meaningfully be treated as independent.

The second factor shaping Finley's view of the wealthy Athenian as acting simply like a wealthy peasant is his own study of the *horoi*. In his classic analysis Finley showed that the loans on real security which the *horoi* marked were all loans taken to finance conspicuous consumption, not for productive investment; they were loans taken for social reasons rather than for purely economic ones. While the observation is undoubtedly correct, the explanation is perhaps more complex than Finley allowed, for the overtones of economic transactions were not simply social but also political.

This can be seen clearly not just in the case of Phainippos, who has served here as the model of the landowner responding to public and private cash demands, but also in those who pursued more innovative economic strategies. In the case of Phainippos it is not just that his market is limited to the city, the socio-political unit, and hence that his income is intimately connected with social and political events; it is also that his private and public obligations to produce cash in large quantities are themselves a product of the society and of its political organisation. In Athens, where the local community is itself a political community, and where the high social value of landowning is closely linked to political identity and to financial contributions (landed wealth is visible and hence 'good'), the economics of the exploitation of that land could not but be bound up with social and political factors.

Two fourth-century figures show that there were some who did respond to the pressures by fundamentally altering their economic base. One of these is Demosthenes' father, whose considerable wealth was not tied up in land at all, but a more interesting case is offered by Timarkhos. For while we do not know the origin of Demosthenes' father's wealth or the extent to which it was built up by non-agricultural activities, we do know, admittedly from a hostile source, that Timarkhos made a positive decision to sell off his land. Aiskhines devotes a considerable section of his speech against Timarkhos (Aiskhines 1.94-105) to the way in which Timarkhos has (mis)managed his property, complaining frequently that Timarkhos has sold off both land and investments in the mines and has hence rendered invisible property from which another man would have borne liturgies. Aiskhines' peroration at the conclusion of this section well reveals the social and political impropriety of what could be represented as economic irresponsibility:

Timarkhos has nothing left - no house, no multiple dwelling, no land, no slaves, no money out on loan, nothing of the sort of resources from which law-abiding men live. He has replaced his ancestral property with abuse, vexatious litigation, cockiness, a life of luxury, cowardliness, shamelessness, not knowing to blush at what is base. Those are the qualities that go to make him into the worst and most unprofitable of citizens.

The third factor which went to make up Finley's view was his observation of the moralising framework in which ancient authors put their comments on matters economic. Notably, only Aristotle matches Cicero and Xenophon for frequency of citations in *The Ancient Economy*. But again it is one thing to note the impossibility of disembedding the economic from values that are socially and politically conditioned, but it is quite another to conclude that the rich actually acted in ways indistinguishable from subsistence farmers.

That Finley could write in such a way was further conditioned by a fourth factor: his distrust for statistics. Such a distrust is in many ways proper, but although precision is almost never possible in quantifications, even with regard to Athens, let alone other parts of the Greek world, broad orders of magnitude are not always beyond recovery. Finley's own work in *Studies in Land and Credit* drew some of its great value from not eschewing the statistical, and my paper has attempted to establish a framework of understanding on the basis of some rough and ready, but conservative calculations.

That large Athenian landowners should not look to us at all like
modern farmers should cause no surprise; nor should it cause us to
regard them as peasants writ large. Men like Phainippos faced
demands for cash different not just in quantity but in kind from the
demands faced by the peasant. Even in the brief description which we
have of his running of his estate we can, I have argued, see traces of
him pursuing a cash-oriented farming strategy. That he could
calculate the profitability of his barley and wine and compare them in
terms of tables and figures is inconceivable (and I defy anyone to do it
for him!) but that does not mean that he farmed at random or without
any knowledge of the likely results. Phainippos’ farming policy
certainly was not centred on self-sufficiency, and the account which
we are given gives no warrant for ascribing to him a ‘satisficer’ rather
than a ‘maximiser’ mentality.

It is basic to Finley’s view of the Greek city that the economic
relationship between town and country turned on the demand of the
town for food. The town created a demand for food which the country
as a whole, or simply the immediate hinterland of the town, met. In
what I have said I have tried to move the emphasis by stressing that
the social and political obligations of the wealthy created a need for
cash which demanded that they enter the market. The goods which
they supplied to the market may have made possible and indeed encouraged the growth of the town as a population centre, but it was occasioned by the existence of the town as a political centre, something which is, conceptually at least, quite a different thing. The public spending of the polis, and particularly of the democratic polis, can be seen to have stimulated both town and country. Wealthy landowners became dependent on selling in town markets in order to preserve their wealth and their political status: if they did not enter the market on a large scale they could only meet their political obligations by jeopardising their wealth. To understand the economic relationship between town and country in classical Athens we must look at the production of the countryside as well as at the consumption of the town.

Two questions arise from all this: was fourth-century Athens and the behaviour of fourth-century Athenians different from fifth-
century? and was Athens unique? The sorts of evidence deployed here on fourth-century Athens are available neither for fifth-century Athens nor for other parts of Greece. Certainly the access to the resources of the empire, for individual Athenians as well as for the polis as a whole, must have made a considerable difference to the demands placed on wealthy Athenian citizens and upon their ability to meet those demands. Nevertheless the liturgy system was not an invention of the fourth century; trierarchies already existed in the fifth century (even though the responsibilities and, probably, the costs were rather different), and the social pressures towards private expenditure may well have been greater rather than less. Even though many Athenians gained revenue from land held outside Attica during the empire that will have made entry into the market more, rather than less, essential and to a greater rather than a smaller number of Athenian citizens.

With other Greek poleis the argument must proceed in different ways in different cases according to the nature of the evidence available. In conclusion here I want to point to one remarkable piece of evidence from the island of Tenos, dated to around 300 BC. A unique stele, now in the British Museum, lists transactions involving real estate registered with the astynomoi over a period of less than two years. The transactions are described as ‘sales’, but it is clear that some at least are credit transactions rather than proper sales. The inscription provides a wealth of prosopographical and topographical data, but my concern here is with two features only: the number of individuals involved in the transactions, and the amount of cash that
is moving about. The 47 transactions on the stele involve at least 45 different individuals making ‘purchases’, and although many of those who make purchases do also appear ‘selling’ or acting as guarantors it is clear that the rich amongst whom wealth circulated on Tenos were not simply a tiny clique. Some of the sums paid in the transactions are lost but the total recorded as passing from one pocket to another is in excess of 70,000 drachmas, and this in less than two years. The smallest amount exchanged is 100 drachmas, the largest 8,000 drachmas. It seems impossible to conclude other than that there was considerable liquidity in the economy of Hellenistic Tenos, a situation which is barely conceivable unless these wealthy landowners were involved in marketing agricultural produce in a big way. While we have no idea why the rich of Tenos were mortgaging

1 Xenophon, Constitution of Athens 3.4 alleges that there were 400 trierarch in the middle of the fifth century. Certainly it seems that a trierarch was appointed for every trireme in the ship-sheds (Thucydides 2.24.2). In the fourth century trierarchs were only appointed once it had been decided to send ships out: IG ii2 1629 180-271, Demosthenes 4.36. 2 IG xii.5.872; Dareste, Haussoullier and Reinach (1891) 64-106.
or selling property at such a rate in these years, their activity does suggest that the demands for cash found in the Athens of the fourth century were by no means unique to it.

The manifest need of the Athenian wealthy for cash, and the evidence that the wealthy on Tenos also had, and probably had to have, large amounts of cash at their disposal, serve to confirm the socio-political aspects of landowning, the prominence of which was emphasised at the beginning of this paper. But those social and political overtones did not require the adoption of an allegedly 'peasant' mentality, indeed they rather required heavy involvement in the market. That to all intents and purposes even Athens was not bound into any 'system of markets' (Finley 1973/1985, 22) does have implications for economic development, but that does not mean that the Athenian economy was dormant, or that economic activity within the city was at a low level. The scale of economic activity in fourth-century Athens was large, the amount and rate of exchange, both there and on Tenos, not to be sneezed at, and it was political demand, at least in the case of Athens, that played a major part in securing that was so. With reference to the Roman empire Keith Hopkins (1983) has written:

Increased monetization suggests increased trade: more transactions by producers selling food, goods, and metal to unspecified customers, with money as the medium of exchange. A Rabbi Isaac in the second century AD advised: 'A man should always divide his money: one third in land, one third in trade, and keep one third in hand' (Bava Mezia 42a). It was advice which not many could follow, but in the beginning of the ancient economy, such advice would have been meaningless.

If the beginning of the ancient economy is taken to include fourth-century Athens then the advice would have been far from meaningless: many Athenian wealthy, and even not so wealthy, men needed to divide their money in just that way; and the same is far from ruled out for other Greek poleis and other periods.

Acknowledgements
I am grateful to the participants at the Nottingham conference and to John Salmon, David Lewis and Stephen Hodkinson for comments on an earlier version of this paper.

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