

Politics, Wealth and Food in Democratic Athens. Rethinking Aristocratic Patronage and Democratic Empowerment in the Urban World

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, the relationship between food and politics has been a frequent topic of debate among scholars related to famine and food studies. Classical studies have frequently addressed this issue as a part of the food supply mechanisms of the ancient cities. Nevertheless, the social access to food and its political background and consequences is a somewhat neglected area of analysis. This paper argues that the mechanisms of food distribution among the Athenian *demos* in the fifth century BC. have a significant relationship with the widening of his political entitlements. Collective attitudes and policies concerning the distribution of food and wealth are complex socio-political processes whose analysis must go beyond the individualist framework that frequently bias ancient sources.

Keywords: Food. Athenian democracy. Aristocratic patronage. Democratic empire. *Kolakia*. Cimon. Pericles.

Política, riqueza y comida en la Atenas democrática. Reinterpretando el patronazgo aristocrático y el empoderamiento democrático en el mundo urbano

RESUMEN

En las últimas décadas la relación entre el alimento y la política se ha convertido en un elemento de debate entre los investigadores dedicados a los estudios sobre hambre y comida. En el ámbito de los estudios clásicos este tema se ha abordado desde el problema de los mecanismos de abastecimiento de las ciudades antiguas. Sin embargo, el trasfondo y las consecuencias políticas del acceso social al alimento es un aspecto que se ha dejado de alguna manera fuera del análisis histórico. Este artículo argumenta que los mecanismos de distribución del alimento entre el *demos* del siglo V a.C. tienen una relación muy significativa con el proceso de ampliación de sus habilitaciones políticas. Las políticas y actitudes colectivas referidas a la distribución de la comida y la riqueza son procesos de gran complejidad socio-política cuyo análisis ha de ir más allá de las claves personalistas con las que nos lo presentan con frecuencia las fuentes antiguas.

Palabras clave: Alimento. Democracia ateniense. Patronazgo aristocrático. Imperio democrático. *Kolakia*. Cimón. Pericles.

Contents: 1. Famine, food and politics: contemporary and ancient regards. 2. Aristocratic patronage and social access to food in early democratic Athens. The case of Cimon. 3. Redistributions of cash and food in imperialistic Athens. 4. The limits of the imperialist policies: *Kolakia* and other forms of food dependency. 5. Conclusions.

1. Famine, food and politics: contemporary and ancient regards

Famine is one of the most feared phenomena in any human society. Nevertheless, from a historical point of view, it has been a widely neglected subject until the second half of the Twentieth century. For most contemporary Western societies, famine is just an acquired concept, based on cultural narratives of not-so-distant pasts and audio-visual images transmitted on television and other media.¹ Despite the uncommonness of socialized famine in these contexts, hunger remains being one of the deadliest challenges on a global level. The *Food and Agriculture Organization* of the United Nations (FAO) states that in 2015 about 795 million people in the world still lacked sufficient food for conducting an active and healthy life.² Since the second half of the twentieth century, several scholars and international associations have tried to develop a coherent theoretical and methodological background for the study of famine. These “famine studies” have set a shared ground for the analysis of this problem from a multidisciplinary point of view that includes the works of nutritionists, sociologists, economists or historians, among others.³

As happens with other economic processes, the perspectives concerning famine and hunger dynamics in past societies are shaped by the theories regarding these topics in the contemporary world.⁴ In the years previous to the Second World War, there was a limited interest in the issue of famine and malnutrition. As a consequence, the first academic works dealing with the question of food in the ancient Greek world were more focused on the subject of food production and commerce than in the phenomena of famine and his relationship with the political structures of the ancient *poleis*.⁵ Following the Malthusian perspectives on the subject, the cause of famine was regarded as the decrease of food resources due to natural causes and overpopulation. Only a correction of the population growth or an increase in the food production could alleviate the risk of hunger. The emerging demographic studies of the ancient Greek world introduced this perspective, where the concepts of famine and food shortage become central elements in the analysis of the structure of ancient populations.⁶

In the second half of the decade of 1940, famine and malnutrition acquired a greater role in the medical studies, as they became one of the most apparent problems of the European postwar. Famine and food insecurity also became traumatic issues in the post-colonial countries that emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War.⁷ As a result, during the decade of the 1980s appeared a broad range of studies that dealt with the question of famine stressing its connections with the subject of the political

¹ MOELLER 1999, 97-155; EDKINS 2000; FRANKS 2013.

² FAO Hunger Map 2015 (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4674e.pdf>). Consulted the 24 November 2015.

³ Concerning the academic literature on this topic up to the early decade of 1980: GRIGG 1981.

⁴ Contemporary essays on famine as a historical subject: MILLMAN – KATES 1990; MURTON 2000; VERNON 2007; SALRACH 2012. Regarding the theories of famine: DEVREUX 1993; GRACIA-ARNÁIZ 2012. On the subject of famine history: Ó GRÁDA 2007.

⁵ PERROT 1877; GERNET 1909; JARDÉ 1925, 128-136; HASEBROEK 1933, 146-150.

⁶ BELOCH 1886, 29-33; GOMME 1933, 16-17, 28-33.

⁷ GRACIA-ARNÁIZ 2012, 546-547; MAIRE – DELPEUCH 2012, 809-811.

economy.⁸ These perspectives underlined the way the hegemonic economic and political systems have a central role in the appearance and development of the dynamics of famine. Contrasting with previous approaches, food deprivation and famine were analyzed from a historical perspective, as these problems were reinterpreted in the evolution of international macro economic politics.⁹ These studies soon appealed to some scholars that were interested in the socio-political dynamics of food in classical Greece, such as Luigi Gallo, who provided a Marxist perspective on the topic, or Peter Garnsey, who introduced some of the theoretical concepts developed by Amartya Sen to the problem of food supply.¹⁰ He argued that although Sen's "entitlement approach" towards the question of famine could not be illustrated nor tested with detailed case studies from the ancient world, it made possible a more intelligent use of the information the sources provide, and it permitted the application of the broader terms of analysis.¹¹

Later studies on the question of famine and food supply in the Greek world have left aside the question of the entitlement approach and have focused rather on the mechanisms established by political authorities concerning the risks of famine and food shortage.¹² These works have improved our knowledge of the legal mechanisms concerning food supply in the ancient Greek world. Nevertheless, it is necessary to delve into the socio-political aspects of these phenomena in the Greek communities to understand them in their historical complexity.¹³

This paper argues that the complex political and sociological transformations during the fifth century BC had a significant impact on the mechanisms of social distribution of food at Athens. At the same time, the articulation of new channels of food acquisition had deep repercussions in the structure of the Athenian political entitlements. The wider social access to food had a correlation with the empowerment of the Athenian *demos*, as it allowed greater degrees of political independence. Nevertheless, we cannot read this complex process following a dualist analysis based on aristocratic versus democratic political attitudes. Some of the aristocratic-biased policies had the maybe unwitting effect of introducing an increasing degree of political consciousness in the Athenian *demos*, whereas the democratic measures concerning "food sovereignty" could not fully eliminate the traditional patronage networks that operated in the Athenian society. In any case, these food networks had a high reliance on the imperialistic dominance Athens had over other parts of the Aegean world.

⁸ BOSERUP 1981; SEN 1981; SAVOY 1986.

⁹ GRACIA-ARNÁIZ 2012, 550.

¹⁰ GALLO 1984; GARNSEY – WHITTAKER 1983; GARNSEY 1988.

¹¹ GARNSEY 1988, 33. Regarding the core of Sen's theory regarding famine: DEVREUX 1993, 66-85; CONTRERAS HERNÁNDEZ – GRACIA-ARNÁIZ 2005, 360-371; CEJUDO CÓRDOBA 2007. Later applications of the entitlement approach to Classical Antiquity: JONGMAN 2006; OSBORNE 2009.

¹² MORENO 2007; OLIVER 2007; ALSTON – VAN NIFJ 2008. Somewhat related: MAGNETTO – ERDAS – CARUSI 2010. A general review: NOTARIO 2011, 69-73; BROEKAERT – ZAUIDERHOEK 2012.

¹³ MORENO 2007, 211-308.

2. Aristocratic patronage and social access to food in early democratic Athens. The case of Cimon

Anthropologists, sociologists, and historians have frequently studied patronage as a common feature of the ancient Mediterranean social systems.¹⁴ If we regard patronage relationships in connection with the social access to food, they entail the integration of famine-risking individuals and households in vertical interpersonal networks to avoid the dangers derived from the “catalysis of famine” agents.¹⁵ Food dynamics have a significant interrelationship with the affirmation of political authority and power, and they materialize the intangible flows that constitute the basis of the socio-political hierarchies in many past and present cultures.¹⁶ As in other Iron Age societies, the acquisition of a superior status in “dark age” Greece is recognized through the participation in patronage networks that convey the superiority of the social elites in the subject of wealth exhibition and distribution.¹⁷ The development of the *polis* in the eighth and seventh centuries BC. conveys substantial transformations in the nature, expression, and performance of the traditional patronage systems.¹⁸ The evergetic language gradually absorbs traditional displays of patronage.¹⁹ In the classical period, there are few accounts of customary patronage relations, and some scholars denied or limited the existence of this phenomenon to very specific social contexts.²⁰ However, recent studies have made significant efforts in the clarification and exposition of the patronage networks that existed in Classical Athens. Although the ideological principles of the democratic system shaped the way patronage social relationships were expressed, it seems that individual and collective patronage networks were a significant socio-political feature of the Athenian political system.²¹

From a historical point of view, Cleisthenes’ reforms were traditionally regarded as the founding stone of the later democracy.²² On the one hand, the demes and tribes reforms continued the Peisistratids’ political attitudes concerning the limitation of the effectivity of the aristocratic patronage networks in the Attic horizon.²³ Nevertheless,

¹⁴ Studies on the subject: GILMORE 1982, 192-194.

¹⁵ GALLANT 1991, 159-166; EDWARDS 2004, 102-118.

¹⁶ HAYDEN 2001.

¹⁷ Bones remains in Iron Age rulers’ dwellings have been associated with rituals dining hosted by the social elites: MAZARAKIS AINIAN 1997, 293-298.

¹⁸ On the emergence of the Greek *polis*: DE POLIGNAC 1984; OSBORNE 1996, 70-136. The specific case of Athens: VALDÉS 2012, 103-174.

¹⁹ Evergetism and patronage in the Greek culture: VEYNE 1990, 70-156; GAUTHIER 1985; GYGAX 2006. The differences between patronage as a social system and a mode of social relations: JOHNSON – DANDEKER 1989.

²⁰ MILLET 1989.

²¹ ARNAOUTOGLOU 1994; MOSSÉ 1994 and 1994/1995; ZELNICK-ABRAMOVITZ 2000; FORNIS – PLÁCIDO 2011. An interesting approach to the question of the problems of patronage and social exclusion: DILLON 1995.

²² Hdt., 5.66; 5.69; Arist., *Ath.* 20.1 - 22.1. Regarding this issue in contemporary scholarship: LÉVÊQUE – VIDAL-NAQUET 1964; LÉVÊQUE – SPATHIS 1995; PAYEN 2011.

²³ The author of the *Athenaion politeia* claims that Peisistratus’ patronage aimed to prevent the interest of the poor people in politics (Arist., *Ath.* 16.1-3; cf. Arist., *Pol.* 4.1292b.25-29; 6.1318b.9-16). This interpretation is flawed by the aristocratic bias of the author: if anything, the patronage policy was more engaged in acquiring a personal authority over the peasant social groups than in preventing their otherwise

even assuming that it was one of its primary goals, the emerging democracy could not paralyze nor dissolve these patronage structures.²⁴ Indeed, Cleisthenes articulated an isonomic system where the aristocratic groups had a leading role due to the persistence of traditional patterns in the organization of socio-political authority and power.²⁵ The maintenance of the patronage-based frameworks in the early democratic Athens and the widening of the structure of political entitlements had a particular impact on the constitution of the mechanisms regarding social access to food.

Cimon, the son of Miltiades, presents the better-known example of the use of the patronage networks in early democratic Athens.²⁶ It is not by chance that distributions of food were among the most obvious strategies in the construction of his image as an aristocratic patron that could, nevertheless, convey his socio-political authority in the post-Cleisthenic Athens.²⁷ Plutarch argues that, being rich enough after his military campaigns in the Hellespont region, he took away the fences from his fields, and anyone, citizens and foreigners alike, could take the fruits of the land and receive free dinners in his house.²⁸ Other sources, such as Cornelius Nepos, confirm the extent of Cimon's evergetic actions, although the Aristotelian author of the *Athenian Constitution* states that they were specifically directed towards his Laciadae demesmen.²⁹ It is interesting to point out that the distributions of food have their origins in the rural domains that granted his aristocratic background. It is very likely that in the rural contexts the patronage network could have a significant persistence even after Ephialtes' political reforms, as Nicholas Jones argues in his study concerning rural Athens under the Democracy.³⁰ Cimon's wealth after the Hellespont campaigns allowed him to reinforce his prestige in the rural context through the display of an unusual generosity that did not require an immediate compensation on behalf of those that required it. In a sense, he had the capacity of breaking up the traditional world as presented in Hesiod's *Works and Days*: reciprocity, even when it had an unequal nature, was the basis of the peasant society.³¹ Cimon's new position as provider of food and other basic needs to other Athenians had a direct impact in the balance of socio-political authority, not only in the countryside, but also in the political center, the city of Athens. The political potential of Cimon's evergetism is almost self-evident, although the integration of the aristocratic patronage system supported by Cimon in the democratic *polis* gave rise to some interesting contradictions regarding ancient political practice and thought. These inconsistencies were reinterpreted in the ancient sources as questionable aspects of Cimon's public actions, both, from a democratic

illegal political participation in the aristocratic *polis*. In doing so, the Peisistratids imposed their authority over the one held by the aristocratic families: BUCKLEY 1996, 111-122.

²⁴ MILLET 1989, 25-37; OSTWALD 2000; OSBORNE 2009, 103-106, 108-114; VALDÉS 2012, 211-298.

²⁵ FONARA – SALMONS II 1991, 51-58; RHODES 2000. For the case study of the Alkmeonidae as a prototypic aristocratic family in the democratic context: AGORATSIOS 2006.

²⁶ DAVIES 1984, 97; MUSTI 1984; MILLET 1989, 23-25; DOMÍNGUEZ *et al.* 1999, 294-302. Regarding Cimon's family: DAVIES 1971, 293-312.

²⁷ SCHMITT PANTEL 1992, 179-186.

²⁸ Plu., *Cim.* 10.1.

²⁹ Nep., *Cim.* 4.1; cf. Arist., *Ath.* 27.3-4; Cic., *Off.* 2.64.

³⁰ JONES 2004, 68-77.

³¹ Hes. *Op.* 342-354. GALLANT 1991, 143-158.

and an aristocratic point of view. Thus, Gorgias claimed that Cimon spent his money in ways that could honor him (ὡς τιμῶτο), meaning that he could control the Athenian community through it.³² On the other hand, Theopompus raised the question of the parallelisms between Cimon and the Peisistratids' tyranny, as his kindnesses conveyed his position as the first of the citizens (πρῶτος ἦν τῶν πολιτῶν).³³ Plutarch is more explicit regarding the apparent contradictions between Cimon's aristocratic political convictions and his influence over the Athenian community, achieved through "flattering the crowd and demagogy" (κολακειάν ὄχλου καὶ δημαγωγίαν), in the words of his critics.³⁴

The inconsistencies detected by the ancient sources regarding Cimon's aristocratic background and his apparently democratic public behaviors respond to a complex context where the aristocratic patronage system, shaped after the traditional distribution of food from the top to the lower social groups, meet a new political background characterized by the increasing political entitlements. As Plutarch states in his account of Cimon's evergetism, the food he offered to the poor citizens enabled them to achieve a full dedication to public affairs (μόνοις τοῖς δημοσίοις σχολάζων).³⁵ Until then, the increasing political entitlements were in practice limited to the social groups that could enjoy a minimum fare.³⁶ In some sense, then, the figure of Cimon, which sometimes is referred as being near tyrannical due to his extensive evergetism, is opposed to the one of Peisistratus. In the aristocratic accounts of his regime, the Athenian tyrant established a patronage policy to keep the peasants out of the political affairs.³⁷

Cimon's patronage system could have derived in a disruption of the traditional balance of socio-political power, as it made possible the extension of the theoretical political entitlements to some citizen groups that were *de facto* excluded from them. The integration of the "poor people" (πένητες) in the patronage networks made possible their political action, although their need of food would effectively limit their political independence. We should not forget that Plutarch's works have a strong interest in identifying evergetism and patronage as core elements of the socio-cultural integration of the Graeco-Roman world, a feature specially underlined in the parallel lives of Cimon and Lucullus.³⁸ Cimon's evergetism is put under an ambiguous although ultimately favorable light, as it implies an attempt at controlling what Plutarch considers to be the usually impulsive Athenian *demos*.³⁹ From an inner point of view, Cimon's sharing of food had a significant impact on his public image, as he remained

³² Gorg., *DK* 82B20.

³³ *FGrH* 115 F 89. Cf. F 135. CONNOR 1963; FERRETO 1984.

³⁴ Plu., *Cim.* 10.7; cf. *FGrH* 150 F 90. Regarding Plutarch's regards on Cimon and aristocratic behavior: SCHMITT PANTEL 2006; ZACCARINI 2011.

³⁵ Plu., *Cim.* 10.2.

³⁶ Later aristocratic-biased authors would idealize this kind of system based in the political entitlement of those who enjoyed a simple but sufficient life: Ar., *Ec.* 303; *Lys.* 681-684; Arist., *EN.* 1100b.32; cf. Th., 1.105.4; 1.108.2-3; 4.95.2.

³⁷ See previous note n. 23.

³⁸ BECK 2007.

³⁹ Plu., *Cim.* 15.1-2; *Comp.Cim.Luc.* 1.4-7; cf. 2.5.

in the Athenian collective memory as an example of sumptuous feasting.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the political authority these patronage activities could have given to him depended on his ability for presenting himself as the hegemonic patron for the whole of the Athenian community. As long as other political leaders could not overshadow his patronage networks, his leadership would remain intact. When Pericles tried to contest his political influence, he realized that he could never outweigh Cimon's "demagogic arts" (καταδημαγωγούμενος) by his means, and thus, he resorted to the public money as an alternative source of wealth.⁴¹ So, Cimon seems to share some interesting features with the tyrant's use of wealth. As Lisa Kallet argues, the tyrants needed to surpass his political rivals' expression of *megaloprepeia*, establishing themselves as the only available economic patron for the whole political community.⁴² It is significant that the Aristotelian author of the *Athenaion Politeia* used an interesting expression for the description of Cimon's properties: "tyrannic-like" (τυραννικὴν οὐσίαν).⁴³

Cimon provides the better example of the political uses of distributions of food through traditional aristocratic patronage networks in democratic Athens. During Cimon's political hegemony, he appeared as the main economic patron of the city. His distributions were a significant source of food for the poorest citizens, and that made them political agents dependent on Cimon's interests. It may be interesting to contrast Cimon's political power with the one held by other politicians that tried to articulate some political authority through distributions of food and other forms of investment of private wealth in the public sphere. The example of Nicias comes to mind.⁴⁴ He was one of the richest Athenians of his time, although his economic prominence was due to the exploitation of the mining districts rather than to traditional forms of wealth.⁴⁵ His wealth gave him a clear aristocratic background, but lacking the kind of agricultural properties that Cimon and other aristocrats had, his involvement in traditional food distributions was apparently scarce.⁴⁶ Instead, he invested his wealth in the patronage of civic activities in such a way that Plutarch states that he appealed to *charis* more than anyone had ever done before.⁴⁷ It is not clear how these activities could have involved distributions of food within the Athenian community, although that does not mean that Nicias was oblivious to the way food patronage could be used in the acquisition of social prestige and political authority. The relationship between wealth display, food evergetic distributions and the achievement of socio-political distinction is evident in the luxurious sacrifices Nicias commanded in occasion of the Delian festivity and the consecration of the revenues of a plot of land for the

⁴⁰ Cratin., F 1 K.-A. Cratinus seems to have written this comedy around 430 BC, roughly twenty years after Cimon's death. Regarding feasting and public memory in later contexts: SCHMITT PANTEL 1982.

⁴¹ Plu., *Per.* 9.2; Arist., *Ath.* 27.3.

⁴² KALLET 2003, 124-126.

⁴³ Arist., *Ath.* 27.3.

⁴⁴ SCHMITT PANTEL 1992, 189-192.

⁴⁵ Plu., *Nic.* 4.2; *Comp.Nic.Crass.* 34.1; DAVIES 1971, 403-407.

⁴⁶ Nicias aristocratic behavior is stated in Plu., *Nic.* 9.2; 15.2; cf. 5.1-2. It is interesting to point out the ambiguous depiction of Nicias in the ancient sources: PICCIRILLI 1990a; *Id.* 1990b; TITCHENER 1991.

⁴⁷ Plu., *Nic.* 3.1-2; 5.5. DAVIES 1984, 97.

celebration of communal banquets at Delos.⁴⁸ The stele he left there as a sentry of his benefaction (ὡσπερ φύλακα τῆς δωρεᾶς) clearly stated the Delians entitlement for using the land revenues for purchasing food under the condition of invoking many blessings upon him. The articulation of this evergetic relationship between the Delians and Nicias underlines the latter capacity for the structuration of patronage systems defined through the *charis* concept by Plutarch.⁴⁹ Despite his wealth, his public actions never gave him the degree of political predominance Cimon had in the years previous to the reforms of Ephialtes.⁵⁰ We could assume that his rather uncharismatic personality was a crucial factor in the limits of his political authority, although, from a historical perspective, it is more important to analyze how the socio-political dynamics of the second half of the fifth century BC restrained the efficacy of the aristocratic patronage networks.

3. Redistributions of cash and food in imperialistic Athens

Despite the importance of the aristocratic networks, classical Athens did not conform a patronage-based system. The Ephialtic reforms challenged the pre-eminence of a significant part of the traditional socio-political patterns, and the transformations in the aristocratic-trended *polis* had a direct impact on the Athenian structure of political entitlements.⁵¹ As we will see, it also had a significant influence on the social distribution of food.

We have already seen that some ancient sources, such as Plutarch, Theopompus or the Aristotelian author of the *Athenaion Politeia*, stated Pericles' incapability to deal with Cimon's patronage networks.⁵² Damon or Damonides of Oa appears as the instigator of the redistribution of the public wealth through the institution of the jury *misthos* and other public activities, such as festive celebrations, as a mean of undermining Cimon's virtual monopoly of wealth and food distributions.⁵³ Despite the biographic bias of ancient narratives, the background and consequences of the introduction of the *misthos* are beyond the scope of the immediate political confrontation between Periclean and Cimonian circles of influence. Karl Polanyi pointed out in 1977 that the contrast between the way these two politicians used private or public wealth in the construction of their political authority entails a divergence between two redistributive economic models: the aristocratic *oikos* and the democratic *polis*.⁵⁴ Besides other implications, the formal recognition of institutional channels for the distribution of the public wealth, empowered by the fruits of the empire, in Meiggs'

⁴⁸ Plu., *Nic.* 3.5-8.

⁴⁹ PRANDI 1978. *Charis* as a fundamental element in the evergetic and patronage system of later Athens: AZOULAY 2004.

⁵⁰ Plu., *Cim.* 15.1-2. Cf. Plu., *Nic.* 2.2-6

⁵¹ RHODES 1981, 314-317; WALLACE 1989, 83-87; FORNARA – SALMONS II 1991, 61-75.

⁵² Plu., *Per.* 9.2-3; *Cim.* 10.1-3; Arist., *Ath.* 27.3-4; *FGrH* 115 F 89. SCHMITT PANTEL 1992, 193-196; PODLECKI 1998, 35-45.

⁵³ RHODES 1981, 341-342; PODLECKI 1998, 17-23.

⁵⁴ POLANYI 2009, 280-290.

words, entailed the reinforcement of the socio-political background that allowed a wider access to food without undermining the political independence of the *demos*.⁵⁵ Notwithstanding the political effects of the establishment of the *misthos* for the evolution of food and political independence of the *demos*, to assign the creation of a public food system to the democratic system is a misleading conclusion.

The relationship between “citizenship” (socially recognized membership in community-level institutions), political entitlements and the participation in food sharing activities in Iron Age and Archaic Greece seems to be clear.⁵⁶ The participation in commensality rituals marked the identity of those who had a share in the political community.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the social, economic and demographic evolution of the Greek world in the seventh and sixth centuries BC eased the dis-embedment of these elements in most of the Greek cities. The *poleis* in which daily commensality activities remained as a mark of political entitlements and citizenship in the classical period were considered a historical curiosity with a strong aristocratic background by classical writers, such as Plato or Xenophon.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, regarding Athens, the foundation of a system of redistribution of wealth that could impact on the social access to food evades the dichotomy between aristocratic and democratic political principles. Indeed, the first attempts at the organization of a public food system at Athens independent of the traditional patronage networks are attributed to Aristides, whose political attitudes were generally regarded as aristocratic rather than democratic.⁵⁹ The Aristotelian author of the *Athēnaion Politeia* states that Aristides found in the exploitation of the imperial revenues a way of feeding the Athenian citizens, who could leave the fields and move their residence to the city of Athens.⁶⁰ It is interesting to point out that the writer of the *Athēnaion Politeia*, or rather, his source, blurs the lines between the different periods of the Athenian fifth century history, and he attributes to Aristides the development of later aspects of the Athenian democracy.⁶¹

Besides the possible confusion between the so-called Aristidean and Periclean politics, there is a consensus regarding the development of newer socio-political attitudes towards public wealth in the middle years of the fifth century BC. The extensive building program undertaken on Athens and elsewhere around Attica had a direct impact on the mechanisms of public distribution of money, which benefited the citizens

⁵⁵ A contemporary reflection regarding cash distribution and social access to food: SEN 1990.

⁵⁶ The classical definition of the Greek citizen is provided in Aristotle’s *Politics* (Arist., *Pol.* 3.1274b-1275a). In general: RHODES 2009. Concerning the origins of the Athenian citizenship: MANVILLE 1990.

⁵⁷ SCHMITT PANTEL 1992, 483-491; PLÁCIDO 2011. For the particular case of Athens: VALDÉS 2012, 107-111.

⁵⁸ Pl., *Lg.* 1.625c; X., *Lac.* 5.1-9. LOMBARDO 1989; SCHMITT PANTEL 1992, 60-76; RABINOWITZ 2009.

⁵⁹ Plu., *Arist.* 2.1; *Them.* 3.2. Cf. Plu., *Arist.* 22.1. The political –and personal– conflict he had with Themistocles may have lead Plutarch to regard him as belonging to a rather unclear “aristocratic” faction opposed to the “democratic” one of Themistocles: RHODES 1981, 280-281.

⁶⁰ Arist., *Ath.* 24.1; cf. Plu., *Arist.* 24.1-3. It is interesting to contrast this idea with the Athenians’ migration to the city at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war: Th., 2.14-16. Cf. Arist., *Pol.* 6.1318b6-1319a39.

⁶¹ Arist. *Ath.* 24.3. RHODES 1981, 300-309.

and foreigners access to food through the increasing market of food.⁶² The imperialist policies are noted to be the ultimate reason for the availability of wealth at Athens, although their existence does not entail its social distribution in the terms that we could define as “democratic”. The benefits of the empire were unequally enjoyed by Cimon and his associates, up to the point where some hostile traditions could call him “the worst thief” (κλεπτίστατος) and subject to public corruption (δωροδοκίας).⁶³ His military successes in areas such as the north of the Aegean region offered him a source of great wealth that could be used to fund his evergetic actions. He even found the way of increasing his social status through other symbolic actions, such as the return of the alleged bones of Theseus to Athens.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the continuous involvement of the *demos* in the imperialist process during Cimon’s political leadership lead to the development of wider opportunities for participation in the mechanisms of distribution of public wealth. Plutarch materializes this process precisely in food terms: the payment of the allies’ salary (τῶν συμμάχων μισθοῖς) allowed them to maintain a military training and to be fed (τρέφομένους) at their expenses.⁶⁵

On the other hand, the building activities that took place in the decades before the beginning of the Peloponnesian war are usually regarded as a manifestation of the Periclean politics.⁶⁶ Nonetheless, as Lisa Kallet claims, it is easy to forget that these buildings, if anything, correspond to a democratic program rather than to a Periclean one.⁶⁷ They are full democratic products, and they not only state the political hegemony of the independent *demos*: their construction also eases the flow of public wealth obtained by the imperial revenues among wider social groups who are identified in a rough way with the Athenian citizens.⁶⁸ Plutarch provides us with an anecdote that shows the limits of the authority Pericles had over the building program: when he offered to pay by himself the buildings that were being constructed in exchange for having the inscriptions of dedication in his name, the assembly made him use the public funding system instead.⁶⁹ We can contrast this situation with the uneven mixture of public funding and evergetic disposition showed during Cimon’s political leadership. Plutarch argues that after the sale of the captured spoils of Cimon’s expedition, the *demos* became more powerful (ὁ δῆμος ἐπρόσθη), and he was able to initiate the building of the south wall of the Acropolis.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, a significant part of the construction program undertook during Cimon’s political leadership formed a part of

⁶² The buildings on the Acropolis, including the *Propylaea*, were frequently addressed as a symbol of the Athenian identity: D., 22.13; 76-77; Plu., *Mor.* 349d. It is not clear the cost of these buildings, although the impressive amount provided by Diodorus Siculus (12.40.2) seems to be an exaggeration.

⁶³ *FrGH* 115 F 90; cf. Plu., *Cim.* 10.8.

⁶⁴ Plu., *Cim.* 10.1. Cimon’s military actions: D.S., 11.60-61; Plu., *Cim.* 7.1-3; 8.1. Regarding the recovery of Theseus’ bones: Plu., *Cim.* 8.5-6; *Thest.* 36.1-4.

⁶⁵ Plu., *Cim.* 11.2-3.

⁶⁶ Isoc., 15.254; Lycurg., F 14 Blass; Cic., *Off.* 2.60; Plu., *Per.* 12-13. CAMP 2004, 72-117.

⁶⁷ KALLET 2003, 128. Besides the works at the Long Walls (Pl., *Gorg.* 455e; Cratin., Fr. 326 K.-A.), only the construction of the *Odeon* may be directly related to some Periclean program: Plu., *Per.* 13.5-6 (quoting again Cratin. Fr., 73 K.-A.).

⁶⁸ Plu., *Per.* 12.5-7.

⁶⁹ Plu., *Per.* 14.

⁷⁰ Plu., *Cim.* 13.6; CAMP 2004, 67-68.

the mechanisms of social representation of his personal authority and power through evergetic and patronage practices. Thus, in the first stages of the construction of the Long Walls, Cimon paid for himself the high quantity of rubble and heavy stones that secured the basis of the walls in the swampy and marshy terrains the Athenians had to build over.⁷¹ The imbrication between economic patronage, the construction of public buildings and Cimon's mechanisms of social representation is seen in the decoration program of the *stoa Peisnakteios*, later known as *Poikile*.⁷²

The situation is, then, more complex than the classical sources, biased by the conflict between the personalities of Cimon and Pericles, allow us to believe. The program of public buildings granted a new pattern of distribution of wealth within the Athenian society, which had a direct impact, both, in the political and food independence of the *demos*. Nevertheless, this activity was not the only mechanism of redistribution of wealth. Pericles' introduction of the public payments, allotments of public lands and other festival grants stressed the political nature of the process. This new form of distribution of wealth was strictly limited to the Athenian citizens, and it eased some re-embedding of food and political entitlements that coincidentally underlined the exclusive nature of the Athenian citizenship.⁷³ The grain distribution that took place in the year 447/6 BC due to the gift the Egyptian dynast Psammetichus gave to the city allow us to analyze the broader implications of the process.⁷⁴ The donation of 30.000 or 40.000 bushels of grain had a significant impact on the Athenian socio-political structure, as it conveyed a deep reflection on the nature, privileges, and limitations of the democratic citizenship.⁷⁵ The "law of bastardy" proposed by Pericles in 451/0 BC was put into effect on this occasion, as a large number of individuals tried to encroach the citizenship and claim the *demos*' grain.⁷⁶ Plutarch stated that no less than five thousand individuals lost their alleged citizenship when they tried to access to the public distributions of food and were sold as slaves while Philochorus wrote that the total number of citizens that received a share of grain was 14,240.⁷⁷ The high number of "fake citizens" can be an exaggeration, but it allows us to think that, as the Venetian scholium of Aristophanes points out, at 446/5 BC there was a marked food shortage due to a bad harvest year or as a consequence of what Professor P. J. Rhodes defined as "the mid-century crisis".⁷⁸ In any case, it is a reminder of the exclusive nature of the food policies in democratic Athens. Only those entitled to participate in the public affairs have a preferential access to food. This priority will have a significant impact on the construction of the Athenian food sovereignty system.

⁷¹ Plu., *Cim.* 13.7. Concerning this subject: CONWELL 2008, 39-54.

⁷² Regarding the *stoa* from an archaeological point of view: MERITT 1970. On the iconography: FRANCIS – VICKERS 1985.

⁷³ Plu., *Per.* 9.1-2.

⁷⁴ GARNSEY 1988, 124-127.

⁷⁵ *FGrH* 328 F 90 (30.000 bushels); Plu., *Per.* 37.3 (40.000 bushels).

⁷⁶ Arist., *Ath.* 26.3; Ar., *V.* 717-718. PATTERSON 1988.

⁷⁷ Plu., *Per.* 37.4; *FGrH* 328 F 90.

⁷⁸ Sch.Ar., *V.* 718. RHODES 1992, 54-61.

Unlike the participation in the patronage system, the democratic citizenship is theoretically independent of the individual's integration into the vertical networks that could limit its political independence. Instead, the democratic citizenship is constructed through the integration in horizontal and theoretically egalitarian institutions that emphasize the ideal equality of all the citizens. Food and political entitlements share a common feedback that enhances the *demos*' political agency through the increase in his purchasing power and the participation in occasional distributions of food. The increase in the purchasing power of the poorest citizens of Athens is regarded as one of the direct consequences of the implementation of the jury *misthos*, a feature that enhances the *demos* access to the food market.⁷⁹ Philocleon represents in a direct way the existent relationship between the reception of the jury pay, the increasing purchasing power of the poor Athenians and the empowerment of the individual citizens.⁸⁰ In the urban contexts, the commodification of food is conceptually linked to the democratic city, whereas in the rural world the traditional economic patterns of barter and self-consumption seem to persist in a clearer way.⁸¹ From a symbolic point of view, the habit of keeping coins in the mouth is somewhat connected to the idea of money being the primary instrument for achieving food in the democratic city, linking in another way the ideas of food, cash and political entitlements.⁸²

The articulation of cash distributions is, nevertheless, an insufficient condition for the consolidation of wider mechanisms of food acquisition that could have a significant impact on the *demos*' political and food independence. The establishment of such mechanisms relies upon the imperialist network that Athens imposes on her subjects. As the dominant center, the dominated periphery supplies her with the food through which the political power and independence of the *demos* are materialized. As some critics would point out, naïve analyses of famine frequently occult the importance of violence and dominion systems in the social mechanisms of appropriation and distribution of food.⁸³ Wherever there is a food entitlement system, there is usually a deprivation mechanism that justifies and provides a moral support for the unequal access to food and other primary goods. In the case of the Athenian democratic empire, the deprivation structures are embedded in the center-periphery dualism. Athens designs a complex network somewhat modeled after other structures of political hegemony that entails the dependency of the Aegean world towards her.⁸⁴ The historian Thucydides noticed that the incoherence between the Athenian political principles, which relied on the ideal of the Greek freedom, and the imperial policies

⁷⁹ A contemporary analysis of the impact cash distributions have in the social access to food: SEN 1990, 379-381.

⁸⁰ Ar., *V.* 605-611. Cf. Ar., *Ec.* 458-461. PURVES 1997. Regarding the context and subtext of Aristophanes' *The Wasps*: KONSTAN 1985; OLSON 1996; MIRHADY 2009.

⁸¹ Ar., *Ach.* 33-36; GALLO 1989. Nevertheless, the question of the relationship between the rural Attica and the market-oriented economy is far from being solved: JAMESON 1977/8; OSBORNE 1991. A general review on the subject: GALLEGO 2003, 25-26; MÖLLER 2008, 371-373.

⁸² Ar., *V.* 609; 791; *Av.* 503; *Ec.* 818; *Pl.* 379; *F 3 K.-A.*; *F 49 K.-A.* Regarding money in ancient comedy: WILKINS 2000, 9-11, 170-171.

⁸³ DE WAAL 1991, 473; DEVREUX 2001, 257-258.

⁸⁴ FINLEY 1978; CONSTANTAKOPOLOU 2007, 61-89; CORVISIER 2008, 321-338; RAAFLAUB 2009.

that imposed a dependent status on the Athenian allies, was clearly perceived by the critics of the democratic empire.⁸⁵

The imposition of cleruchies in the dominated territories that supplied Athens with grain and other products was the most direct attempt of creating an imperial network that eased the Athenian *demos*' access to food at the expense of the propertied groups and families within the allied communities.⁸⁶ There are many obscure details regarding the organization of the cleruchic scheme, such as the precise nature of the property system, but it is almost sure that the cleruchic territories were a key element in the organization of the Athenian food supply. Euboea was maybe the most important of these productive lands, as it ensured the Athenian food security and allowed the effectiveness of the cash distribution providing a cheap and accessible source of food.⁸⁷ Beyond the direct political dominion that allowed Athens to fix the taxation policies under her interests, the *polis* was able to organize favorable commercial networks and other appropriation mechanisms that underlined her centrality against the political and economic periphery.⁸⁸

The engagement between the Athenian imperialistic policies and the democratic food sovereignty is also clear in the public sacrifices that strength the political and religious Athenian identity.⁸⁹ After the reaffirmation of the imperialistic nature of the Athenian *arkhe* in the middle of the fifth century BC, the system of public sacrifices became a vehicle for the representation of the political subordination of the allies of Athens and a materialization of the predominant role the *demos* had in the economic structure of the empire.⁹⁰ The allies' obligation of sending sacrificial cattle to Athens in major feasts as a way of performing their political dependence is attested since 448/447 BC, although later dates have also been proposed.⁹¹ This feature becomes more evident during the first decade of the Peloponnesian War, when Athens feels the necessity of reaffirming her political authority over her subjects.⁹² Beyond other ideological and religious considerations, the obligation of supplying cattle for the public sacrifices had a direct impact on the relationship between food, political entitlements and the deprivation structure. On the one hand, it entails the direct imposition of the Athenian imperialistic discourses and practices over the dominated periphery. The supplied oxen had some signs that indicated their place of origin, as a way

⁸⁵ Th., 1.122.3; 1.124.3; 2.63.1-2; 3.37.3. Regarding the literary topic of Athens as a tyrannic city: DE ROMILLY 1947, 56-88; CONNOR 1977; PLÁCIDO 2013. Contrast with the idea of the tyrannic *demos*: KALLET 2003.

⁸⁶ SALOMON 1997, 191-213.

⁸⁷ GARNSEY 1988, 120-133; SALOMON 1997, 209-213; MORENO 2007, 96-126. Mechanisms of public sales of grain: MIGEOTTE 1998; BRESSON 2000, 151-210.

⁸⁸ GARNSEY 1988, 134; BISSA 2009, 155-167.

⁸⁹ MEIGGS 1971, 291-305; PARKER 1996, 122-151; EVANS 2010, 87-91.

⁹⁰ HODKINSON 1992. One of the major problems regarding the question of the Athenian public sacrifices is the source of the cattle that was sacrificed. It seems clear that Athens did not depend only on the imported animals, but the quantity and quality of the cattle raised in the Attica is still object of debate. In any case, the purchase of cattle and the contributions of the allies are clear strategies for compensating the alleged mediocre Attic livestock: MCINERNEY 2010, 173-184.

⁹¹ IG I³ 34.41-42. For a later dating (425 BC): MATTINGLY 1996, 8-30.

⁹² IG I³ 71.56-58; IG I³ 45.11-12.

of emphasizing the wide nature of the Athenian power in the religious procession.⁹³ On the other hand, the limited amount of available meat reinforces the exclusive character of the citizens' privileges. Following the later studies on this subject, in the best case scenario a complete hecatomb could have fed up to 40.000 individuals, a figure that may be coincident with the number of Athenian citizens, but that is indeed slight if we consider the number of actual dwellers in Attica.⁹⁴ Only those with a full integration in the democratic citizenship are entitled to these distributions of meat, and, at the same time, the participation in the Athenian community is marked by the attendance at these festivities.⁹⁵

4. The limits of the imperialist policies: *Kolakia* and other forms of food dependency

The democratic food system has, thus, a high reliance on the Athenian imperialist mechanisms. It is through them that the *demos* can not only enjoy the distributions of cash provided by the imperial revenues but also to have a privileged access to a cheap and reliable food market and regular distributions of meat. The crisis of the Athenian hegemony during the Peloponnesian War entailed deep transformations in the food supply system and the way the Athenian *demos* perceived the relationship between food and political entitlements.

Thucydides defined the Athenian effectiveness in the impending war in financial and food availability terms, and the possibilities of an Athenian victory depended on the integrity of the mechanisms of food and wealth supply.⁹⁶ The Spartan king Archdamus argued that, as long as the Athenians could control their empire to keep feeding themselves, the Peloponnesian victory would be almost impossible.⁹⁷ The Periclean strategy of imposing an evacuation of the Attica relied precisely on the exploitation of the imperial networks for the food supply not only of the urban *demos* but a significant part of the rural population as well. Nevertheless, the population pressure in the city and parallel crisis of legitimacy of the Athenian hegemony had a disruptive effect on the social distribution of food. Thucydides and Aristophanes allude from different points of view to this problematic context and the emergence of a social preoccupation concerning famine and food deprivation.⁹⁸ The appearance of the *kolax* figure in Athens can help us to understand the way the social distribution of food acquires new patterns in the context of the Peloponnesian war.

The *kolakes*, professional flatterers, are usually regarded as a feature of the aristocratic Greek courts, as the distinction raised by Athenaeus between the *kolax* and the

⁹³ Schol.Ar., Nu. 386.

⁹⁴ The "best case scenario" is modeled after JAMESON 1988. It supposes big animals (circa 200 kg) and a high proportion of edible meat (circa 50% of the total weight). VILLARI 1989 provides supplementary data for these high figures. Other studies argue for lesser figures: LEGUILLOUX 2003. In general: NAIDEN 2012, 57-64.

⁹⁵ NOTARIO 2014, 71-74.

⁹⁶ KALLET-MARX 1994.

⁹⁷ Th., 1.81.2, Cf. Th., 2.13.2-3; 2.38. Hermipp. F 63 K.-A.

⁹⁸ Ar., Pax 630-640; Th., 2.53.1-3; 2.54.

parasitos reminds us.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, originally, there isn't any apparent difference between the *kolax*, regarded in the fourth-century sources as a disruptive force in the *polis* due to his relationship with prominent political figures, and the *parasitos*, which is view as an annoying but essentially harmless buffoon.¹⁰⁰ We can find the first attestation of the *kolax* as a comic character in Epicharmus' *Hope* (also known as *Wealth*), a feature that we can relate to the aristocratic atmosphere of Syracuse during the Deinomenid tyranny.¹⁰¹ In Athens, nonetheless, the *kolax* as a comic character emerges in the decade of the 420s BC., coinciding with the severe economic breakdown provoked by the Archidamian war.¹⁰²

Besides the political overtones the *kolakes* and his activities have in some Aristophanic passages, it seems that *kolakia* remains in other contexts as an activity mostly related to food and banqueting.¹⁰³ Eupolis' *Kolakes* (The Spongers), dated at the end of the Archidamian war (in the Dionysia of 421 BC) present us with the most interesting documentation regarding the development of *kolakia* in Athens. In this comedy, Eupolis seemed to have heavily criticized the aristocratic way of life of the Athenian socio-political elites in a context characterized by the extreme imbalances entailed by the Archidamian war and the systematic plundering of the Attic land.¹⁰⁴ Kallias, the son of Hipponikos, materializes the decadent attitudes of the young and wealthy Athenians that forget the austere life of their parents and squander their heirlooms.¹⁰⁵ While Hipponikos is remembered as a tightwad man who could not care less about fancy foods, Kallias is presented as a profligate kid that wastes enormous quantities of money in his extravagant tastes.¹⁰⁶ Other classical sources share this perception, presenting Kallias' family sudden loss of wealth as a direct consequence of his luxurious way of life¹⁰⁷. Besides his general extravagancies, there is a particular feature that ancient sources ascribed to Kallias: the maintenance of a patronage network whose members were depicted by Plato as well-paid sophists.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, it is unlikely that all the individuals that had a patronage relationship with Kallias were known because of his intellectual prestige. Eupolis' comedy had a chorus of *kolakes* that were not particularly scholarly, although they were indeed

⁹⁹ Ath., 6.234c-262a; Phryn., F 109. WHITMARSH 2000.

¹⁰⁰ ARNOTT 1968; BROWN 1992. Regarding the original nature of the *parasitoi* in the archaic religion: Sol. F 87 [=Plu., Sol. 24.5]; 88 [=Ath. 6.234e-f]; 89 [=Ath. 4.137e] of the new edition of LEÃO – RHODES 2015. BRUIT ZAIMAN 1995.

¹⁰¹ Epich., F 34-35; 37 K.-A. Regarding the relationship between Epicharmus and the Deinomenids, Test. 15-16 K.-A. In general: RODRÍGUEZ-NORIEGA 1996, 33-38. A previous reference to the *kolax* can be found in a fragment of the poet Asios of Samos (F 14 West).

¹⁰² FISHER 2000; *Id.* 2008.

¹⁰³ *Kolakia* is frequently associated by Aristophanes to the relationship between the Athenian politicians and the *demos*: Ar., *Eq.* 48; *V.* 42-51; 419; 683. In some occasions, *kolakia* is also related to voracious monsters: *Pax* 756-757.

¹⁰⁴ STOREY 2003, 179-197; DOMÍNGUEZ *et alii* 1999, 360-367.

¹⁰⁵ On Kallias' family: DAVIES 1971, 254-270. Other examples of young profligates in contemporary comedy: Ar., *Nu.* 14-35; *Av.* 1337-1371. With a comic age twist: Ar., *V.* 1299-1363.

¹⁰⁶ Eup. F 156 K.-A. Cf. F 160; 162; 165 K.-A.; And., 1.130. STOREY 2003, 180-184.

¹⁰⁷ Ath., 4.169a; Lys., 19.48; And., 1.131; Ar., *Ec.* 810-811; Arist., *Rh.* 1450a. DAVIDSON 1997, 184-186.

¹⁰⁸ Pl., *Prt.* 314b-315a. Cf. Pl., *Ap.* 20a; X., *Smp.* 1.5; 4.62.

smart (ὡς ἐσμὲν ἅπαντα κομψοὶ ἄνδρες).¹⁰⁹ The fragment numbered 172 by Kassel and Austin (Ath. 236e) is the longest surviving passage of this play, and it concerns the chorus' way of life. The interest of the *kolakes* is focused on the access to food, and not even the most extreme uses of violence can persuade them of forgetting it.¹¹⁰ Eupolis developed thus some of the basic features that would define later comic parasites in the figure of his *kolakes*: their witting mind, their obsession with food, their apparent low socioeconomic status and their dependent role in relation with their patron-host.¹¹¹ In Eupolis' play, the sponger seemed to receive a relatively good reaction, at least if we contrast them with the later comic *parasitōi*, although their comic overtones blur their social identity. Nevertheless, their obsession with food is not like the one presented by the *gourmets* of the middle and new comedy. It is rather a famine-induced anxiety that leads them to search for the most fundamental foodstuffs in other men's tables. They do not expect to eat anything more than *maza*, the most basic form of "bread", although they can trick rich but obtuse men like Kallias and make them invest large amounts of money in exclusive foods and drinks, of which they will receive a part.¹¹²

There are other references concerning Kallias' and other aristocrats' informal patronage networks that may be examined under the same scope as *kolakia*. One of the most interesting sources regarding this problem is Xenophon's *Banquet*, where he describes in great detail the celebration of a particularly lavish dining party in Kallias' house. Philip, the professional jester or buffoon, is one of the individuals that could be easily assimilated to the *kolakes* as presented in Eupolis' comedy. He is a wandering figure that roams the Athenian streets, searching for places where a party is being held to offer his services as a "laugh-maker" (γελωτοποιός) in exchange for food.¹¹³ Philip's jokes, silly dances and funny commentaries involving well-known politicians are more a surviving strategy than a feature of his personality.¹¹⁴ When the debate in the dinner party turns to the topic of the knowledge each one of the guests pride on, he argues that his be his jesting skill.¹¹⁵ As long as he provides laugh and fun to the parties to which he unexpectedly invites himself, he will be allowed to eat. If he fails, the risk of hunger overcomes him and leaves him terrified. When at the beginning of the dinner he twice fails to make anyone laugh with his arts, he started weeping:

¹⁰⁹ Eup. F 272.2-3 K.-A. STOREY 2003, 190-191.

¹¹⁰ Eup. F 172.14-16 K.A. Cf. 175 K.-A.

¹¹¹ Eup. F 172.3-12 K.-A. Food dependency is expressed through linguistic expressions that underline the almost feminine nature of the *kolax*: Eup. Fr. 178 K.-A. Cf. Ar., *Ec.* 458-469. AVEZZÙ 1989.

¹¹² Eup. F 172.11-12 K.-A. Cf. 160, 165 and 174 K.-A., where Kallias' house is full of fine goods. Maybe the character of Protagoras could be closer to the later charlatan and *gourmet*: F 157 and 158 K.-A. STOREY 2003, 184-188.

¹¹³ X., *Smp.* 1.11-16. HUSS 1999, 104-117.

¹¹⁴ X., *Smp.* 2.14; 2.20-21; 4.55.

¹¹⁵ X., *Smp.* 3.11; 4.50.

For since laughter has perished from the world, my business is ruined. For in times past, the reason why I got invitations to dinner was that I might stir up laughter among the guests and make them merry; but now, what will induce any one to invite me?¹¹⁶

Kolakia, like later *parasitia*, is a strategy for accessing to food through the proper integration in a patronage network. With the economic breakdown that followed the Athenian defeat in the Peloponnesian War and the Athenian civil war, these strategies will become more noticeable. Two texts provide us with interesting perspectives regarding “*kolakia*-like” attitudes in these scarcity times as a strategy for accessing to food. Aristophanes’ *Wealth* reflects the harsh socio-economic conditions of the Athenians after the fall of their empire and the civil war that deeply indebted the city.¹¹⁷ Hunger and food deprivation are among the most dramatic ways of representing the poverty of some of the characters of the play, and some of them must resort to surviving strategies that are very close to parasitism, *kolakia* or even prostitution. Such is the case of the poor but handsome boy that had to maintain a “love” relationship with an old and rich woman to provide food and clothes for him and his sisters.¹¹⁸

Another text that states an affinity between *kolakia* and food dependency is Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*. The relationship between the rich landowner Criton and the poor Archedemus is regarded under such light by some critics.¹¹⁹ Advised by his demesman Socrates, Criton searches to keep the services of Archedemus, an excellent speaker, to protect him and his wealth from the action of the sycophants, in the same way as one could keep dogs to fend the wolves from the sheep.¹²⁰ Each time Criton stored grain, oil, wine or other farm products, he sent a part to Archedemus, and every time he sacrificed, he also invited him to have a share of the meat.¹²¹ We have interesting glimpses of how other individuals perceived this relationship. Criton’s friends, who allegedly belong to his socio-economic group, accept this kind of patronage, as Archedemus’ protection is extensive to them and it does not challenge the social hierarchies that place the patron in the dominant part of the relationship. Other individuals, nevertheless, have harsher regards on the subject, as they accused Archedemus of flattering Criton (Κρίτωνος... κολακεύει), assimilating him to the figure of the *kolax*. His defense is indeed significant from a socio-political point of view. There was nothing disgraceful in accepting the patronage of the *kaloí kai agathoi* “by accepting and returning their favours” (ἀντεuerγετοῦντα), and it would be worst to be an enemy of the rich men and siding with the poor ones (πονηροῖς συνεργοῦντα).¹²² Thus, Xenophon argues that food dependency, as a form of *kolakia*

¹¹⁶ X., *Smp.* 1.15. Translation of William Heinemann.

¹¹⁷ DOUGLAS OLSON 1990; MACDOWELL 1995, 324-349. Economic problems in the Athenian postwar: NOTARIO 2014, 84-92.

¹¹⁸ Ar., *Pl.* 959-1096. For the interplay with the prostitution: SOMMERSTEIN 2001, 199-208.

¹¹⁹ X., *Mem.* 2.9. Concerning Criton: DAVIES 1971, 336-337.

¹²⁰ X., *Mem.* 2.9.2-3.

¹²¹ X., *Mem.* 2.9.4.

¹²² X., *Mem.* 2.9.8.

or parasitism, may be regarded as a tool for socio-political harmony in the post-imperialist Athenian democracy.¹²³

5. Conclusions

This paper argued that the mechanisms of food distribution in the fifth century Athens had a deep connection with the political dynamics of the democracy. Traditional patronage attitudes and networks did not disappear with the development of the democratic system, but although they could have a remarkable persistence in the rural world, they suffered deep transformations in the urban context. Cimon and Nicias offer us two examples of the way patronage habits, channeled through food distributions, could guarantee the socio-political influence the aristocratic social groups had over the Athenian community. The development of the Athenian imperialistic attitudes allowed a widening of the social access to food and the construction of a food sovereignty system based in the integration in the Athenian citizenship. Distributions of cash and food were the basis of these politics. They were, nevertheless, heavily dependent on the imperialistic nature of the Athenian *arkhe*. The political and economic crisis developed during the Peloponnesian War eased the development of patronage relationships in the democratic center, which we can identify under the idea of *kolakia*.

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¹²³ AZOULAY 2004, 92-98.

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