

My paper offers some new insights from the building accounts of the Erechtheion on the socio-economic situation, ideology and mentality of Athenian citizen builders.

In recent decades, the ideological and socio-economic profile of ordinary Athenians has mostly been studied through analysis of Attic forensic orations. The social composition of Athenian juries has been deduced from the values speakers used in trying to persuade jurors. This creates an obvious danger of circularity, since ideological analysis of a speech presupposes some knowledge of the composition of the audience. Besides, this assumes a mechanical relationship between objective status and recognition of interests. Epigraphical material can provide independent information both about Athenian ideology and about the 'hard facts' of Athenian life.

Attic building accounts, our richest source of information on the economic life of Classical Athens, have been studied for at least a century. However, the scholars studying Athenian democracy have usually concentrated on two particular aspects of the building documents: the builders' wages, which were compared to per diems for political participation, and the remuneration of State officials at various stages of Athenian history.

I shall argue that the social composition of the building workforce, and the methods of its recruitment, are relevant for our understanding of the structure of Athenian society and of the dominant ideology. In the accounts of the Erechtheion – the only ones where the civic status of most workers is recorded – no Athenian citizen was hired on a daily basis: daily pay was reserved for metics and slaves. Architects and their assistants received a fixed salary. Other citizen workmen were paid by piecework or in a lump sum. I suggest that the citizen builders were unwilling to be hired by the day for ideological reasons. A daily wage did not encourage hard work, so the worker had to be closely supervised, like a slave. Being paid by piecework, or receiving a previously stipulated sum, our builder could be perceived, by himself and by others, as selling the products of his labor, not the labor itself. In other words, he was seen as an independent artisan, not as a hired worker. Moreover, the citizen builders had some means of their own. Even those who did not have independent means preferred military or political pay – the latter of which was never guaranteed – to the builders' per diem, even though builders received twice as much. In these respects, there was no significant difference between farmers and craftsmen among Athenian citizens, so we do not need to account for certain motifs in the forensic speeches by supposing, as does Todd, that juries were chiefly made up of peasants: the attitudes that Todd associates with farmers were characteristic of urban workers as well.

My conclusion is that in contrast to the *demos* in France and Russia during the age of the great revolutions there, the Athenians were not proud of being *sans-culottes* or proletarians. In this respect, their mentality was closer to the Anglo-Saxon – especially the American – mentality. I will adduce examples where this hypothesis can help to resolve some puzzling problems arising from literary sources.