

Introduction

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This volume originated as a part of the PRIN 2020 research project “‘Sharing in the Community’: Citizenship and Society in the Greek World (VII-II Centuries BC)” funded by the Italian Ministry for Universities and Research (MUR) and conducted through the collaboration of five research units, including scholars from Università degli Studi di Milano, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, Scuola Normale Superiore, Università degli Studi di Cagliari and Università degli Studi di Parma. It stems in particular from the final conference, “‘Sharing in the *polis*’: citizenship and forms of civic participation in the Greek world”, which was held at the University of Milano in June 2025. The essays collected in the volume are revised versions of the papers presented at the conference, which have taken into account the suggestions and intense scholarly exchanges that emerged during the lively discussions at each of the conference sessions, and also include some additional contributions which are meant to widen and complement the scope of the topics considered, further enriching the final result.

The research project was designed several years ago when citizenship was already well-rooted as a key political and social theme in public discourse, in Italy, as well as in other countries in Europe and beyond. Since then it has become even more important and controversial: on what grounds should citizenship be shared? We constantly hear in the media about *ius soli*, *ius sanguinis* and, more recently, *ius scholae*, in other words whether the sharing of values that define a nation’s identity and are transmitted through its educational system is by itself a sufficient basis for being recognised as a full member, and citizen, of that nation.¹

1 Gagliardi 2025 (*ius soli* and *ius sanguinis*); Iannario 2025 (*ius scholae*).

We believed, and still believe, that the body of ideas, theories and reflections on the question of *politeia* developed by the ancient Greeks can contribute to framing the debate on such vital issues in contemporary society. To some extent, the different approaches that we encounter in respect to the world we live in have also shaped the discussion about the nature of *politeia* in the Greek world. “Sharing”, which is the key-word in our project, is quite an obvious term, as it is the translation of the almost ubiquitous verb *metechein* (and other cognate terms such as *meteinai* or *metadidonai*) expressing the idea of “participation” which constantly informed the discourse of citizenship in Plato and Aristotle, in the Attic orators as well as in laws and decrees. Being a *politēs* in a Greek city is a *metechein tēs poleōs* (hence the title of this volume), a *metechein tēs politeias*, or a *metechein tōn koinōn*, in a number of variants that have been recently astutely studied by our colleague Jakub Filonik.²

While taking stock of the concept of “sharing”, recent scholarship has, however, at the same time intensively debated about what was the primary domain of such sharing, whether, in the wake of Aristotle’s *Politics*, it was political rights, and the “citizen” was thus defined exclusively by the right to participate in the deliberative and judicial function within the *polis*,³ or whether the decisive factor was sharing in religious cults, as suggested by Josine Blok starting from the expression *metechein tōn hierōn kai tōn hosion*, expressing “participation in cult and in human practices pleasing to the gods or sanctioned by divine law”,⁴ or, to the contrary, whether mutual recognition among citizens was achieved first of all by means of the sharing of a common lifestyle, as argued for instance by A. Duploux, J. Meister and now Chr. Müller in her book on *La fabrique du citoyen*. Citizenship, as a consequence, turns out to be mainly “performative” rather than based on legal distinctions.⁵ Or, last but not least, whether, among the social practices and collective representations that qualified the *politēs*, having a share in the territory of the *polis* from a material point of view, and the privilege of landownership, also counted as primary factors.⁶ This surely applies to colonial foundations and, at the theoretical level, to Plato’s *Laws*, where the citizen is primarily identified by the fact of being a *geomoros*, of having participated in the original allotment of the land (737a). Such distinctions and definitions, as is well known, have wider implications since the notion of citizenship based on being part of a cultic community inevitably turns out to be more inclusive than an approach focusing solely on institutions and political rights. As a result, the issues of inclusion and exclusion have generated heated debates in recent literature.⁷

2 Filonik 2023 and 2025; see also Filonik’s chapter in this volume.

3 Fröhlich 2016; Faraguna 2025a; Müller 2026a, 32–67; see Poddighe in this volume.

4 Blok 2009b (quotation from p. 160), 2017, 2018 and 2025.

5 Duploux 2018a and b, 2019, 2023, 2025; Meister 2020; Müller 2026a.

6 Faraguna 2024; Malkin, Blok 2024, esp. 214–68; Erdas 2025a and forthcoming.

7 Fröhlich 2016; Blok 2017; Sébillotte Cuchet 2017; Farioli 2020; Müller 2026a, 167–201.

Within this framework, the aim of our research project has not been to provide a monolithic answer and pursue a single, all-embracing approach or methodology. On the contrary, the members of the research group all firmly believe that the only way to address the question of the Greek concept of citizenship is to emphasise its manifold aspects, without focusing on one rather than the other. Our objective has in fact been to reject an approach whereby the institutional and sociological perspectives are seen as irreconcilable⁸ and, at the same time, attempt to bring such different approaches into dialogue through an integrated use of literary and epigraphic sources. Two fundamental tenets of the project need in particular to be emphasised: the first is that the investigation has been conducted in a “vertical” perspective with reference to the diachronic development of the concept of citizenship over the centuries between the archaic period, with the emergence of a panoply of terms that expressed the idea of being part of the community, and the second century BCE, when Roman domination brought about significant changes in the configuration of Greek society. Greek citizenship is thus to be analysed as an ongoing process. The second is that we have also pursued a “horizontal” perspective through a comparative investigation of the morphology and dynamics related to the notion of *politeia* in the parallel realities of *poleis* and federal states (*ethnè*).

Such key elements underlying the research project are well reflected in the structure and contents of this volume, where the expression “civic participation” of the title deliberately refers to a broader frame of reference, where non-citizens can also be included. The first introductory section looks into some preliminary fundamental issues defining the conceptual, theoretical and terminological framework for an analysis of Greek *politeia*. Elisabetta Poddighe starts by focusing on Aristotle, the only author providing a systematic and well-articulated analysis of citizenship in ancient Greek literature, and tackles on a theoretical level the central problem whether the Stagirite held the view that citizenship came “in degrees” and could be shared in different forms. This question entails confronting the challenges posed by the definition of the citizen in *Politics* 3.1 in relation to the discussion in the subsequent chapters of the same book. Poddighe’s approach is based on the assumption that Books 1-3 of *Politics* provide a coherently argued body of thought and that the essence of the *politēs* lies in *archein kai archesthai*, a formula to be understood as describing “one who advises and is advised, who stands at both origin and end of political initiative”, in other words holds fixed-term offices and exercises collective functions having the right to deliberate and judge. Poddighe’s contention is that Aristotle’s theory does not accommodate the notion of graded citizenship. Being a *politēs* and sharing citizenship is thus a binary function. Those who are only

8 For an approach aiming to bridge the gap between institutions and society through the lens of the New Institutionalism cf. the editors’ Introduction (*Introduction: New Institutionalism and Greek History*, 1-12) and the essays collected in Barbato *et al.*; see also Esu 2024, esp. 30-37.

archomenoi, without reciprocal capacity to *archein* through sovereign functions, are not citizens at all. The discussion has broader historical implications as it encompasses examples such as the citizenship of the *thetēs* in Solonian Athens and the *banausoi* in the Theban oligarchy, both commonly regarded as examples of a “halved” citizenship. On a more general level, Mirko Canevaro’s paper is an attempt to approach debates on citizenship in ancient Greece through the lens of *timē* (meaning “honor” / “worth” / “right[s]”), proposing that this concept offers a unified framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of Greek citizenship, across its various historical manifestations throughout the history of the *polis*.⁹ Taking stock of the productive debate between those who emphasise citizenship’s performative core (in the archaic period and beyond), those who focus on institutionalised political participation, and those who stress religious membership or membership in a plurality of interlocking networks (with interlocking identifiers), it makes the case that taking seriously Greek, emic notions of citizenship as *timē* (encompassing a certain package of *timai* as rights) has the potential of bridging the divide between these various perspectives. This section is further enriched by Irad Malkin’s and Josine Blok’s diptych on the Greek idiomatic formula ἴσος καὶ ὅμοιος, “equal and like”, often recurring, especially in the form ἐπ’ ἴση καὶ ὁμοίᾳ, in contexts where the notions of equality, fairness and justice are emphasised. The interest for such collocation, which frequently appears in a civic framework where the members of the group are represented as equals and peers, arose as a part of their recent co-authored book on *Drawing Lots. From Egalitarianism to Democracy*.¹⁰ The two papers start from the same premises, focusing on the semantics of the pairing ἴσος καὶ ὅμοιος, where *isos* means “equal” in measure or quantity and *homoios* means “similar” in shape or quality, but then part their ways and take different courses. Irad Malkin is above all interested in underlining that the formula *isos kai homoios* expresses a horizontal vision of society where its members politically and legally stand in relation to one another on equal terms and traces the roots of such fundamental principle back to the archaic period and the experience of colonisation as the reflection of a typically Greek egalitarian, not hierarchical mindset. Josine Blok’s take on the topic, while operating within a closely related conceptual framework, goes in the opposite direction and explores the inequalities side of the matter. She especially concentrates on the body of late Classical and Hellenistic citizenship decrees from the *poleis* in Asia Minor, where, following the “great convergence” towards democratic regimes, *politeia* is awarded to benefactors ἐπ’ ἴση καὶ ὁμοίᾳ but where such privilege is embedded in an array of other *timai* and honorific titles which paradoxically made the new citizens not equal to the *politai* by birth. They are thus incorporated into the highest

9 See now Canevaro 2026a.

10 Malkin, Blok 2024.

bracket of a layered system in which differences in prestige, office, and privilege were maintained within a shared civic order. Jakub Filonik in turn looks into the pivotal classical Greek concept of “sharing in the *polis*” and demonstrates that the discourse of political participation and rights, expressed as sharing in the polity, was widely used at least since the late fifth century BCE, and arguably came into focus during and after the major crisis that the Athenian democracy faced around the *stasis* of the year 404/3 BCE. The paper analyses how both democrats and oligarchs employed this terminology to describe their varying proposals on the extent of franchise before, during, and after the political tension and the resulting civil war in Athens and argues that the concept of taking part in the *politeia* was linked to debates about the best constitution and the extent of active participation in the *polis*, and not to participation in religious rites. Finally, Matt Simonton, reconnecting to oligarchic political discourse, explores the justificatory claims which legitimised the oligarchic approach to the power of the city’s magistrates (*archontes*). Since their powers were broader than those of democratic magistrates and their decisions could not be appealed to a popular court, their application of the laws was supposed to be more consistent and predictable than that of democracies; these same features also worked to ensure military discipline in the face of external threats. This was the basic bargain oligarchs presented to the *demos* in exchange for the loss of political participation. However, these goods, secured through specific institutions, were difficult to maintain given oligarchs’ temptations towards dominating the poor.

A second section is dedicated to Athenian citizenship, forms of civic participation, and the question of what specifically defined the *politēs* as a member of the *polis* community in the Classical period. Matteo Barbato uses the myth of autochthony as a prism for exploring the cultural debate over citizenship in democratic Athens. As part of her efforts to reconceptualise Athenian citizenship in terms of sharing in the city’s cults by virtue of legitimate descent, Josine Blok argued that the complete notion of autochthony was developed in conjunction with Pericles’ Citizenship Law in order to transfer to the whole *demos* the claim of pure descent and the access to priesthoods which had been the prerogative of the *genē*. Through an analysis of the *epitaphioi logoi* and some cases of “contestation” of such an ideology in Plato’s dialogues (*Republic*, *Critias*, *Timaeus*), Barbato demonstrates that the ideology of autochthony was deployed within a heated debate on citizenship which revolved primarily around descent and *political* participation. Plato, in particular, traces the constitutional order (*tēn tēs politeias taxin*) of his imaginary Athens back to its earthborn beginnings, thus conferring authority on the political system theorised in the *Republic* and advocating an agrarian, non-naval Athens alternative to the democracy of his own day (*Ti.* 23a; *Criti.* 109d, 113c-d). Stefano Ferrucci, taking stock of the recent revision of the traditional idea assuming the exclusively masculine nature of citizenship in the Greek city, focuses on women as mothers and members of

the civic community (and thus *politides*). The correlation between motherhood and citizenship is of pivotal relevance in numerous contexts, both legally and otherwise, with its foundational origins lying within the domestic sphere of the *oikos*. Ferrucci also discusses the widely shared conviction that the function of mothers was mainly to transmit to their children citizen rights that they did not enjoy themselves, starting from the evidence, both from Athens and Gortyn, where the attributions of property ownership pertaining to women, designed as *ματρῶν/μητρῶα*, are attested. Likewise, Giacinto Falco, investigates the symbolic self-representation strategies of Athenian citizens in the classical period, with particular attention to the visual and material codes that signalled civic belonging and social distinction. The paper argues that shared norms of public decorum—concerning clothing, posture, and presentability—responded not merely to aesthetic or ethical imperatives, but to a deeper ideological necessity: the need to conceal any direct association with manual labour and to reinforce the image of the *politēs* as a citizen free from material need and endowed with the leisure required for political participation. The analysis focuses on emblematic items such as the *chlaina*, *himation*, Laconian sandals, and the walking stick, and surmises that a range of objects and symbolic attributes—initially, and arguably, exclusive to the aristocratic elite—were progressively appropriated by broader segments of the citizen body, as a result of the relative prosperity ensured by the availability of food resources, servile labour, and, in the fifth century, imperial revenues. Such appropriation contributed to the generalisation of a unitary and idealised model of the citizen as moderately affluent and respectable—within which, for example, the opposition between urban and rural life acquired not only cultural but also socio-economic connotations. By examining different forms of civic participation, Cristina Carusi shifts the focus to the civic roles of non-citizens in Athens, expanding the analysis to include metics and foreigners. Her study investigates the ways in which non-citizens were incorporated into the Athenian civic community and the dynamics that enabled such forms of integration. As Carusi aptly shows, this integration was often limited and, as a result, had only a modest impact on the institutional structures of the *polis*, particularly with regard to the boundaries separating citizens from non-citizens.

The third section of the volume is devoted to landed property and its institutional frameworks, with the aim of emphasising the connection between citizen status and landholding, and more specifically to reassessing whether access to land and the privilege of landownership should be regarded as constitutive elements in defining the *politēs*—an issue that has received comparatively little attention in recent scholarship on Greek citizenship.¹¹ Donatella Erdas draws attention to this relationship particularly in cases where a *polis* decided to partially or entirely expropriate the land of its citizens in order to redistribute it.

11 See above and Faraguna 2024.

Through a series of case studies (Cyrene, Leontinoi, Samos), she aims to show that *poleis* resorted to *gēs anadasmus* after confiscating the land of expelled citizens only when the citizen body had undergone significant changes, whereas the confiscation of a limited part of private property was usually followed by more nuanced solutions, such as selling the expropriated land to other citizens; reconstructing these dynamics becomes more challenging in post-fifth-century sources, where *gēs anadasmus* is reframed through fourth-century rhetorical and philosophical debates, reflecting a shift in how land redistribution was understood as a political option. Following the same line of inquiry, the contribution by Davide Amendola explores the notion of *politographia* and its central role in understanding Greek citizenship in contexts where the civic body of a *polis* was subject to frequent change. Although the earliest occurrences of the verb *politographein* are relatively late, the concept itself had already taken shape much earlier, and its origins can be traced back to the work of Philistus of Syracuse. The focus therefore lies on Sicilian *poleis*, and in particular on Syracuse and Himera, from Gelon to the age of Dionysius I of Syracuse. Amendola analyses in depth the processes of restructuring citizen bodies imposed by the Sicilian *tyrannoi*, and their institutional implications for the organization of the civic body, its landed property, and its subgroups. The relationship between property and civic status in Oropos is the subject of the paper by Michele Faraguna. This necessarily brings Athenian citizenship into the discussion, since Oropos had come under secure Athenian control in 335 BCE. A remarkable set of inscriptions illuminating land tenure in the period between 335 and 322 BCE shows that private property in Oropian territory, although integrated into the system of the ten Athenian tribes, remained outside the deme system. Further weight is added to the argument concerning the nature of citizenship and its connection with property by Faraguna's discussion of an Oropian decree awarding a crown to the god Amphiaraos (*I.Oropos* 297), in which the dedication of the crown is made for the "safety of the Athenian *dēmos* and the children and women and everyone (or possibly 'all the things', 'all the properties') in the country", encompassing the manifold aspects subsumed under the notion of citizenship as "sharing in the *polis*". Building on similar premises, Christel Müller explores the relationship between landownership and citizenship in the Hellenistic period, starting from the question of how and in what ways landownership and the status of *politēs* were linked. In doing so, through a number of case studies, she first of all highlights the dynamic and multifaceted economic and political importance of land as a source of *prosodoi* through taxation, sales and leases. Different modes in the use of land by the *politai* show that landownership was a right, but not an obligation. Conversely, although land was traditionally linked to citizen status, the right of *enktesis* extended property ownership to a wider range of social groups. Beyond citizens, other groups could also own land, such as the *paroikoi* of Asia Minor, the Spartan *perioikoi*, or marginal groups in Sparta

including the *hypomeiones* and women. This broader access to property was partly connected to *oliganthropia*, as in the case of Thessaly. Focusing then on the Cyrenaean *diagramma* issued under Ptolemy and on Athens in 322 and 317 BCE, both oligarchic contexts in which participation in the *archai* was restricted by property qualifications, Müller concludes that in the Hellenistic period social inequalities and class tensions often led to *staseis*, which were frequently rooted in unequal land distribution.

The final part of the volume focuses on civic rights in political contexts beyond the single *polis* and in federal states, from the Hellenistic period to the Roman Empire. When the concept of citizenship extended beyond the boundaries of a single *polis*, as in cases of a sympolity, the very definition of what it meant to be a citizen required careful reconsideration. Beginning with the origins of the term *sympoliteia* and the corresponding verbs, Victor Walser's contribution explores the understanding and expectations of citizenship within *sympoliteiai* through a detailed analysis of treaties and agreements—primarily from Asia Minor—that formalised the merger of two communities into a single civic body. His study highlights the fundamental elements that citizens themselves regarded as central to their civic identity and responsibilities within such complex political structures. Citizenship in Greek federal states is the focus of two further contributions, which address the themes of political representation and territorial boundaries. The role of the federal council was closely tied to citizens' political participation and to broader notions of representation, and therefore merits careful analysis. Laura Loddo investigates this issue by reassessing Larsen's theory concerning the evolutionary development of representative government in Greek federal states. By exploring a range of examples concerning the nature of representation in federal states, she demonstrates that the re-emergence of representative councils after 146 BCE was not simply a consequence of the Roman conquest, but part of a broader institutional trend in which representation increasingly became the preferred solution within the Greek federal *koina*: even where primary assemblies continued to function, the decisions of the federal councils were binding for all the members of the *koinon*. Within this broader framework of federal states, and in approaching the question of citizenship beyond the *polis*, special attention must also be paid to the concept of borders. Elena Franchi's contribution addresses this topic by analysing both the "internal" boundaries between member cities and the "external", or extra-federal, frontiers. She pays particular attention to cases in which federal citizenship was granted to communities located at considerable distance from the *koinon*, as in the agreements concluded by the Aetolians with Chios, Herakleia, Naupaktos, and Keos. Citizenship rights in the *polis* of Cyrene under Ptolemaic rule, and in particular the *diagramma* issued by Ptolemy I, are the subject of Emilio Rosamilia's chapter. He begins from the observation that our knowledge of the Cyrenaean constitution—established by Ptolemy I at the

request of the citizens—derives entirely from the *diagramma* itself, a fact that makes it difficult to fully assess how innovative Ptolemy's intervention actually was. After discussing the meaning of *politeuma* as the body of active citizens, Rosamilia shows how this *politeuma* effectively restricted access to public office, a measure through which Ptolemy sought to secure the loyalty of the Cyrenaean citizen body. In the concluding chapter, Federico Russo turns to the Roman world, where the right of citizenship was extended far more broadly than in the Greek world, which classified groups such as metics, foreigners, and slaves as “non-citizens” or “not fully citizens”. In Rome, by contrast, freedmen and *incolae* were also regarded as *cives*. However, the exercise of active voting rights in their case was often subject to significant limitations. Beginning with early measures that restricted their voting rights to a single urban tribe between 221 and 169 BCE, and drawing on inscriptions and legal sources, Russo highlights both the passive and active electoral capacities legally conferred upon *liberti* and *incolae* under Roman law. He concludes that the *ius suffragii* was never granted in a fully generalised form beyond *cives Romani ingenui*. For groups perceived as lying outside the shared legal framework, yet not entirely excluded from it, the limited exercise of voting rights functioned as an effective means of integrating them into public life, while at the same time preventing them from exerting real political influence.

As a complement to the volume, we have included a substantial appendix dedicated to the lexicon of citizenship. This choice was motivated by the observation that, already from the Archaic period, alongside the process of community formation in an institutional sense, a specialised terminology gradually developed to represent statuses and related phenomena of inclusion and exclusion, distinguishing those who were part of the civic body from those who, although sometimes enjoying legal protection from magistrates and *ad hoc* judicial procedures, were considered “foreigners” or outsiders¹². The use of a technical vocabulary of citizenship, encompassing terms and concepts related to *politeia*, is evident in the sources, both literary and epigraphic. The study of this technical lexicon, initiated at the outset of our research project on citizenship, has been integrated into a dedicated online resource (<https://politeia.unimi.it/en/databases/lexicon-of-citizenship/>). The entries were prepared by several contributors to this volume, as well as by early-career scholars involved in the project, whose names appear at the end of each entry. The lexical items are arranged alphabetically; for ease of consultation, each entry is accompanied by a brief bibliography, presented separately from the general bibliography at the end of the volume. The lexical appendix serves a dual purpose: it not only documents the emergence and development of a Greek vocabulary of citizenship, but also provides the foundation for much of the research presented in this volume.

12 Faraguna 2025b.

As we come to the end of our citizenship project, we would like to sincerely thank all the members of the PRIN 2020 research team who have generously contributed to it through their work, commitment and scholarship: Davide Amendola, Giacomo Aresi, Cinzia Bearzot, Ilaria Bultrighini, Cristina Carusi, Giacinto Falco, Giovanni Ingarao, Luca Iori, Rita Laura Loddo, Anna Magnetto, Elisabetta Poddighe, Paolo Andrea Tuci. We would also like to express our gratitude to Serena Barbuto for her painstaking editorial work on the manuscript and for making the swift publication of the volume possible. To her we also owe the preparation of the General index. Finally our sincere thanks go to the two anonymous referees for their helpful comments and suggestions and to the editorial team at Milano University Press for accepting the volume for publication and for their advice, care and competence in the production process.

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