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# Manumission and Slave-Allowances in Classical Athens

**ABSTRACT:** Whereas the Roman slave's *peculium* has been well explored by scholars, comparatively ignored is a similar institution in classical Athens. In this article, I first demonstrate the existence of an Athenian slave-allowance. I then argue that this allowance, like the Roman *peculium*, permitted masters to employ their slaves as independent contractors and offered slaves the possibility of saving money towards their freedom. I suggest, further, that the relative silence on this topic by modern scholars reflects an ideologically driven silence on the part of our ancient sources.

**Keywords:** *peculium* – allowance – *apophora* – slavery – manumission

Much has been written on the Roman *peculium*, the fund of money, goods, or property that belonged *de jure* to the paterfamilias, but was *de facto* the possession of individuals under his *potestas*, including both freeborn sons and slaves.<sup>1</sup> In this article, I argue that something roughly similar to the Roman slave's *peculium* – what we might call a slave-allowance<sup>2</sup> – existed in classical Athens.<sup>3</sup> After demonstrating our evidence

- 1 See, e.g., U. Roth, "Food, Status, and the *peculium* of Agricultural Slaves," *JRA* 18 (2005) 278–92 and "Peculium, Freedom, Citizenship: Golden Triangle or Vicious Circle? An Act in Two Parts," in U. Roth (ed.), *By the Sweat of Your Brow: Roman Slavery in its Socio-Economic Setting* (London 2010) 91–120; H. Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* (Cambridge 2011) 159–80, with bibliography. The *peculium* could entail "cash, food, livestock, land, clothing, moveables, other slaves, even grazing rights" (K. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* [Oxford 1984] 108), as well as "a rental building, a shop, a workshop, a warehouse" (J. Andreau and R. Descat, *The Slave in Greece and Rome*, trans. M. Leopold [Madison 2011 (2006)] 82–83).
- 2 I use the (less-than-perfect) term "allowance" rather than, e.g., "wages" or "salary," because although we do sometimes hear of slaves bringing in "wages" (*misthos* and related words), this is generally something different: namely, money that goes directly to the slave's master rather than to the slave. (An exception can be found in the case of some public slaves, discussed below.) My concern here is with the portion of the earnings the slave was allowed to keep for him- or herself.
- 3 To be sure, the two institutions are not identical: most significantly, the Roman paterfamilias is parallel to but not in all respects equivalent to the Greek *kurios*, and in Athens, unlike in Rome, there was not a parallel "allowance" granted to freeborn sons. Nonetheless, I believe it is fruitful to compare the Roman slave's *peculium* and (what I am calling) the Athenian slave-allowance, since they are more similar than they are different. Their similarities have mostly been unacknowledged by scholars, though E. Perotti, "Esclaves ΧΩΡΙΣ ΟΙΚΟΥΝΤΕΣ," trans. M. Pesce, in *Actes du Colloque 1972 sur l'esclavage* (Paris 1974) 47–56, at 50, uses the term *pécule* to describe the Greek slave's allowance, and M. Silver, "Autonomous Slaves in Greco-Roman Legal and Economic History," *LR Legal Roots* 3 (2014) 233–267, at 261, argues that the *peculium* is a point of overlap between Roman and Athenian autonomous slaves. Cf. Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* 174, who asserts that there is not a "comparable concept" to the *peculium* in Greece.

for its existence, I then explore the motivations behind the Athenian slave-allowance, arguing that, like the slave's *peculium* in Rome, it granted masters the opportunity to employ their slaves as independent contractors and offered slaves the possibility of saving money towards their freedom. Finally, I suggest that the relative silence on this topic by modern scholars reflects an ideologically driven silence on the part of our ancient sources.

## I. The Athenian Slave-Allowance

No word for slave-allowance exists in Greek, or at least none that appears in our surviving sources. (There is a word *pekoulion*, a gloss on the Latin *peculium*, but it shows up only quite late.<sup>4</sup>) The absence of a word, however, should not necessarily be taken as the absence of an institution, especially given that Greek literary sources are often relatively silent about phenomena that were ideologically troubling (a point to which I will return). In fact, the existence of something like a slave's *peculium* in Athens is strongly implied by two related phenomena: first, we hear that some slaves handed over a portion of their earnings to their masters, which implies that they were allowed to keep the remaining portion themselves; and, second, "wealthy slaves" are occasionally mentioned in our sources, and given that slaves in Greece could not technically own anything (including money),<sup>5</sup> a slave-allowance akin to the *peculium* is a good way of explaining this apparent paradox. I will take each of these phenomena in turn.

### The *apophora*

The *apophora*, as defined by ancient grammarians,<sup>6</sup> was a payment made by slaves to their masters.<sup>7</sup> The prefix of *apophora* indicates that the payer had his own means

4 See *LSJ* s. v. *pekoulion*.

5 On slaves' rights (and lack thereof) in classical Athens, see D. Kamen, *Status in Classical Athens* (Princeton 2013) 8–31, with bibliography.

6 See, e. g., Ptol. *Diff. verb.* 395.27–29; Phil. *Bybl. Div. verb.* 27; Ammon. 66; Greg. *Cor. Dial.* 127.

7 Outside the context of slavery, the term can also be used to refer to taxes or tribute paid by subject peoples (see *LSJ* s. v. *apophora*). On the slave's *apophora*, see I. Biezuńska-Malowist, "Les esclavages payant l'apophora dans L'Egypte gréco-romaine," *JJP* 15 (1965) 65–72 (focusing on the term in Greco-Egyptian papyri); E. Perotti, "Contribution à l'étude d'une autre catégorie d'esclaves attiques: les ἀνδράποδα μισθοφοροῦντα," in *Actes du Colloque 1973 sur l'esclavage* (Paris 1974) 181–94; W. Schmitz, "Apophora," in H. Cancik et al. (eds.), *Brill's New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World* (Leiden 2002) 885–86; E. G. Kazakévich, "Were the χωρὶς οἰκοῦντες Slaves?," ed. D. Kamen, *GRBS* 48 (2008 [1960]) 343–80; P. Acton, *Poiesis: Manufacturing in Classical Athens* (Oxford 2014) 167–69, 242–44, 253–68 (but see cautions issued by S. I. Rostroff, "Review of Peter Acton, *Poiesis: Manufacturing in Classical Athens*," *BMCRCR* 2015.04.23). See also I. Biezuńska-Malowist, *L'esclavage dans l'Egypte gréco-romaine*, II (Wrocław 1977) 106–7; D. M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (London 1978) 81–82; E. E. Cohen, *Athenian Economy and Society* (Princeton 1992) 93–94 and *The Athenian Nation* (Princeton 2000) 135; N. R. E. Fisher, "'Independent' Slaves in Classical Athens and the Ideology of Slavery," in C. Katsari and E. Dal Lago (eds.), *From Captivity to Freedom: Themes in Ancient and Modern Slavery* (Leicester 2008) 121–46, at 124; E. E. Cohen, "Sexual

“from which” (*apo*) to pay this money,<sup>8</sup> and in this way, the *apophora* is distinct from the rent-money (*misthos*) that was paid to masters by third parties (either individuals or the state) who leased these masters’ slaves for their labor.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, whereas slaves drawing in *misthos* for their master usually worked in mines or on large construction projects, slaves paying their master an *apophora* were relatively autonomous slaves working in various sectors of the economy, often as skilled workers or managers.<sup>10</sup>

A look at the handful of Greek sources mentioning the *apophora* gives a clearer sense for how this institution operated. Our most informative source on the subject is Aeschines’ suit *Against Timarchos*. At one point in the speech, Aeschines says that Timarchos had been left a huge inheritance by his father, including “nine or ten slaves [working] apart, who were skilled workers of leather, each of whom paid him an *apophora* of two obols a day, and the manager of the workshop [who paid an *apophora*] of three obols” (Aesch. 1.97). Although we are not told what types of leather products these slaves produced or how they divided their labor,<sup>11</sup> this passage does yield our only concrete information about how much money a slave might hand over as an *apo*-

Abuse and Sexual Rights: Slaves’ Erotic Experience at Athens and Rome,” in T. K. Hubbard (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities* (Malden, Mass. 2014) 184–98, at 191–92; M. Canevaro and D. Lewis, “*Khoris oikountes* and the Obligations of Freedmen in Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Athens,” *Incidenza dell’ antico* 12 (2014) 91–121, at 92. Cf. J. R. Love, *Antiquity and Capitalism: Max Weber and the Sociological Foundation of Roman Civilization* (London 1991) 98–107, who (misleadingly) uses the term *apophora* to refer to the sum of money Roman slaves pay their masters. Although the word *apophora* is also sometimes used of the tax paid by Helots to their masters (e.g. Plut. *Mor.* 239E), it has been suggested that the term arose in this context as a sort of fiction, a way of making the relationship between Helot and master appear more like an exchange of services than a relationship of exploitation: see J. Ducat, “The Obligations of Helots” (trans. S. Coombes), in M. Whitby (ed.), *Sparta* (Edinburgh 2002) 196–211, at 199–203. Athens, by contrast, had a true system of *apophora*, suggesting that, unlike at Sparta, there existed at Athens the possibility of mutually beneficial relationships between (at least some) masters and slaves (see further below).

8 Kazakévich, “Were the *χωρίς οικοῦντες* Slaves?” 354–55.

9 On the distinction between *misthos*-yielding and *apophora*-paying slaves: Perotti, “Contribution” and Kazakévich, “Were the *χωρίς οικοῦντες* Slaves?” For scholars’ conflation of these two types, see the bibliography listed in Kazakévich, “Were the *χωρίς οικοῦντες* Slaves?” 349–50 n.15. Cf. Biezuńska-Malowist, “Les esclaves payant l’*apophora*” 69 (and again *L’esclavage* 107), who argues that, at least in the Greco-Egyptian papyri, the distinction between *apophora* and *misthos* does not have to do with independently working slaves versus leased-out slaves, but with profits given by the slave to his master versus payments handed over by a person employing a slave to the slave himself or to his master; Schmitz, “Apophora,” who suggests that *apophora* “possibly” refers also to the rental fee; and Fisher, “Independent’ Slaves” 127, who says that terms like *andrapoda mistrophounta* can be applied both to slaves hired out and to slaves paying an *apophora*.

10 On independently working slaves in Athens, see Perotti, “Esclaves *ΧΩΡΙΣ ΟΙΚΟΥΝΤΕΣ*”; Cohen, *Athenian Economy* 61–110 and *Athenian Nation* 130–54; Fisher, “Independent’ Slaves”; Kamen, *Status* 19–31; Silver, “Autonomous Slaves.” Scholars often refer to these slaves as *chōris oikountes*, but that this term refers instead to freed slaves, see D. Kamen, “Reconsidering the Status of *khōris oikountes*,” *Dike* 14 (2011) 43–53; see also Canevaro and Lewis, “*Khoris oikountes*,” who argue that it refers specifically to freed slaves who no longer have any obligations to their former masters.

11 Acton, *Poiesis* 168–69 doubts that Timarchos’ slaves each specialized in a different type of leatherwork or shoe, or by process step. If this shop made shoes to order, Acton thinks it possible that the slaves might have divided orders amongst themselves (to deliver products more quickly to customers), but he concludes that it is more likely that the slaves made a range of leather products for which a steady demand existed.

*phora*: in this case, two obols for the leatherworkers, and three for their manager, who was also a slave.<sup>12</sup>

Determining how much money these slaves got to keep for themselves after handing over the *apophora* requires some speculation, based on what we know about Athenian wages in general.<sup>13</sup> Skilled workmen in classical Athens, whether slave or free, were paid an average of one to two drachmas a day. Sometimes this was a daily wage, sometimes it was paid piecemeal: for example, bricklayers and carpenters generally earned a daily wage, whereas other types of workers (like artisans) were paid piecemeal.<sup>14</sup> Two late-fourth-century BCE inscriptions reveal the range of prices leatherworkers might charge to repair a pair of shoes: in one, a cobbler is said to earn one drachma and five obols; in another, a few years later, a cobbler earns four drachmas per pair.<sup>15</sup> We might conservatively hypothesize, then, that each of Timarchos' leatherworkers brought in on average one drachma per day, in keeping with the average wages of other skilled workers. Since we know they had to hand over two obols to their master, this would have left a remainder of four obols. But how much of this remainder were they permitted to keep? We don't know, for example, whether they had to give some portion to the workshop's manager, from which he paid his own daily *apophora*, or whether the manager paid for his *apophora* out of the business' profits.<sup>16</sup> It is also unclear whether they had to use their remaining obols to purchase their food, clothing, raw materials, and other supplies,<sup>17</sup> or whether these (or some of these) were provided for them either by their master or by their manager.<sup>18</sup>

If these slaves did have some money left over, they could presumably use it at their discretion. Saving it up, they might be able to finance their manumission.<sup>19</sup> However,

12 Acton, *Poiesis* 8, 22, 168, 253 asserts that the slave-manager (here as elsewhere) was the one who handed over the money to the master, paying the *apophora* on behalf of each slave (and on his own behalf). This is certainly possible, but no ancient source states this outright.

13 MacDowell, *Law* 81–82 states that the slaves kept the rest of the proceeds for themselves, but does not speculate on how much this would be.

14 For the wages earned by all occupations in classical Athens, see Loomis 1998.

15 For the cobbler making one drachma, five obols per shoe, see *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1673 + *SEG* XXXIV 122.49–50 (333/2 BCE?); for the cobbler making 4 drachmas per shoe: *IG II*<sup>2</sup> 1672.190–191 (329/8 BCE). Both inscriptions (accounts of the Eleusinian *epistatai*) are cited in W. T. Loomis, *Wages, Welfare Costs and Inflation in Classical Athens* (Ann Arbor 1998) 119 (with n. 46), who points out that the increase in price from the first inscription to the second is due to extreme inflation during these years.

16 For the latter suggestion, see Acton, *Poiesis* (*passim*), who argues that the manager got to keep the remainder of the profits for himself.

17 Acton, *Poiesis* 168 estimates that leather would have accounted for a third of the final price of the item produced. See also Loomis, *Wages* 120 n.48, who asserts that for manual workers in Greece in general, "it is impossible to separate labor costs from material and transport costs, and therefore to isolate what the worker took for himself." For a slave-leatherworker's supplies, see *Attic Stele VI*, lines 31–46, in which a cobbler named Aristarchos is sold off along with two types of shoe, squared timber, two couches, and a table.

18 Acton, *Poiesis* believes that the manager had to pay for maintenance of the other slaves (260), as well as for raw materials (262), since the amount of money the master received from *apophora* would not have been enough to cover these things. This is plausible, but once again, there is no evidence to support this claim.

19 See also Acton, *Poiesis* 284, though he stresses, probably correctly, that it was primarily managers, rather than the workers themselves, who could afford to save up for their freedom (286–87).

assuming that slaves wanting their freedom had to deliver something close to their original purchase price, it would have taken a while to accumulate this money. The average slave in the Attic Stelai cost 174 drachmas,<sup>20</sup> but there was a large range of slave prices in Athens: some cost as little as 50 drachmas (presumably old and weak slaves) and some as much as 30 mnas (like the *hetaira* Neaira).<sup>21</sup> Given that Demosthenes' father's sword-making slaves were worth five to six mnas each, and none less than three mnas (Dem. 27.9), we might imagine that Timarchos' leatherworkers, since they too were skilled workers, cost in the three-to-five mna range. Since each of them paid two obols per day to their master – and (possibly) gave an obol or two to their manager, and (again possibly) spent another couple of obols on supplies or food<sup>22</sup> – they might have been able to set aside at most an obol per day. At this rate, and if they worked every day,<sup>23</sup> it probably would have taken five to eight years to recoup their purchase cost.<sup>24</sup> If so, this relatively quick timeframe might suggest that there were more freed slaves in Athens than we generally assume.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from this relatively informative example of Timarchos' leatherworking slaves, most mentions of the *apophora* are quite brief. Thus, in Andocides' speech *On the Mysteries*, we learn that a man named Diokleides claimed that he witnessed the Mutilation of the Herms when he was fetching the *apophora* from a slave of his at Laurion (Andoc. 1.38) – presumably an overseer or a manager, not one of the thousands of slaves who were rented out as miners. Theophrastos describes a type of man who is so stingy that, when he collects the *apophora* from his slave, he demands that the slave also hand over the fee required to exchange this payment-in-copper for silver (Thphr. *Char.* 30.15). In Menander's *Epitrepontes*, a charcoal-maker slave named Syros (or perhaps Syriskos) says to his "wife"<sup>26</sup>: "We'll stay the night here [at our master's

20 W. K. Pritchett, "The Attic Stelai: Part II," *Hesperia* 25 (1956) 178–328, at 276.

21 On slave prices in classical Athens, see Pritchett, "The Attic Stelai" 276–78; R. Tordoff, "Introduction: Slaves and Slavery in Ancient Greek Comedy," in B. Akrigg and R. Tordoff (eds.), *Slaves and Slavery in Ancient Greek Comic Drama* (Cambridge 2013) 1–62, at 30–31; in the Hellenistic period, see K. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge 1978) 133–71.

22 A. H. M. Jones, *Athenian Democracy* (Oxford 1957) 5, 80 takes jury pay (which increased from one to three obols over time) as the basic subsistence level in Athens; T. B. L. Webster, *Athenian Culture and Society* (London 1973) 46 similarly assumes that slaves (like Timarchos') required two obols' worth of food per day. Acton, *Poiesis* 260 estimates that the subsistence cost for an entire slave family in the fourth century BCE would have been 350–400 drachmas per year.

23 Acton, *Poiesis* 257 posits a "very conservative" estimate of 250 days' work per year for these slaves, but thinks 360 days is also possible, given that laborers on some Athenian building projects worked 360 days per year.

24 Cf. Webster, *Athenian Culture* 46–47: based on the average slave price of 174 drachmas, and positing a savings of at most three obols a day (an average of one obol per day for *apophora*, two for food), he asserts that it would have taken a slave two years to save enough money to buy his freedom. Cf. Acton, *Poiesis* 286, who thinks that Webster understates slaves' cost of living.

25 See also B. Akrigg, "Metics in Athens," in C. Taylor and K. Vlassopoulos (eds.), *Communities and Networks in the Ancient World* (Oxford 2015) 155–73, who contends (contrary to much previous scholarship) that freed slaves formed a large part of the metic population; cf. Kamen, *Status* 43–54 on the different kinds of metics (freeborn and freed-slave) in Athens.

26 Slaves in Greece were not allowed to marry their partners, but they were occasionally granted cohabitation rights as a reward for good service (see, e.g., Xen. *Oik.* 9.5; [Arist.] *Oik.* 1344b17–18).



house] and in the morning we'll go back to work, when we have paid the *apophora*" (Men. *Eptr.* 378–80). Finally, a fragment of another comedy by Menander contains the line "a jug-carrier bearing the *apophora*" (Men. *PCG* vi.2 fr. 326). While a lowly jug-carrier is an unlikely candidate for an *apophora*-bearing slave, Menander presumably chose this occupation for the humorous sound-play of the Greek: *amphoreaphoros tis apophoran pherôn*.

In none of these cases are we told the size of the *apophora* handed over – whether it was a fixed rate (as with Timarchos' leatherworkers) or whether it was proportional to their earnings – nor are we told how often it was collected.<sup>27</sup> Given that in many cases slaves worked relatively far from their masters – Laurion in the case of the slave working in the mines, and far enough in the case of the charcoal-maker slave that he needs to spend the night at his master's home when he delivers the *apophora* – it seems unlikely that the *apophora* was, in general, handed over on a daily basis. In some cases, apparently, the master had to go collect it; in others, the slave (along with the *apophora*) came to him.

More information about the *apophora* system may be gleaned from contexts where the profits of a slave-managed business are said to redound to a master, without the word *apophora* being used.<sup>28</sup> For example, we learn from Demosthenes' speech *Against Aphobos I* that his father (Demosthenes Sr.) had two factories, one a sword-making factory with 32 or 33 slaves, from which he made 30 mnas profit (*prosodon*) per year, the other a sofa-making factory with 20 slaves, which brought in (*prosepheron*) a profit of 12 mnas per year (Dem. 27.9). Although Demosthenes never utters the word *apophora*, Peter Acton argues, quite reasonably, that both of these factories operated on the *apophora* model, with the slaves handing over fixed sums to their master.<sup>29</sup> Acton likewise sees the *apophora* model at play in a number of other manufacturing contexts where the word isn't used, including a couple of perfume factories.<sup>30</sup>

None of the examples I have discussed thus far tells us anything *explicit* about what happened to slaves' earnings that were not part of the *apophora*, but I think it is fair to assume – as we did with Timarchos' leatherworkers – that any money they did not hand over, they got to keep for themselves (even if it technically belonged to their masters). This monetary remainder, what I am calling a slave-allowance, probably varied quite a bit in size, depending on the type of labor the slaves performed, the amount

27 MacDowell, *Law* 81 suggests that the *apophora* "might be a proportion of the profits of the trade or just a fixed amount, payable once a month or even less often."

28 One possible example is epigraphic: a black-glazed plate from the Kerameikos, dated to ca. 350 BCE, is inscribed with lists of names, numbers (maybe days of the month), and sums of money (SEG 35.134). A. Johnston, "A Fourth Century Graffito from the Kerameikos," *MDAI(A)* 100 (1985) 293–307 argues that the names refer to slaves, and that the monetary amounts represent either *misthos* or *apophora*.

29 Acton, *Poiesis* 253–68.

30 Thus, Acton, *Poiesis* 242 assumes that when Aeschines the Socratic (Athen. 611c–f) proposes refinancing a loan against the security of his new perfume business, he anticipates using *apophora* from slaves working in this business to cover his interest costs. Similarly, Acton, *Poiesis* 243–44 posits that the slaves running Athenogenes' perfume business (Hyp. 3) would have paid their master an *apophora*.

of money their business brought in, the amount of their expenses, and the relative generosity of their masters.

### “Wealthy Slaves”

That at least some slaves accumulated an “allowance” is further suggested by occasional references in Greek literature to wealthy slaves. The Old Oligarch, for instance, accuses the Athenians of letting their slaves get rich:

If anyone is also amazed at this, that they let their slaves live luxuriously there [at Athens] and some of them live magnificently, it would be clear that they do even this for a reason. For wherever there is a naval power, it is necessary for financial reasons [for masters] to be slaves to the slaves in order to take (+*lambanôn men prattêi*+) *apophora* [from them], and to let them go free. And where there are rich (*plousioi*) slaves, in that place it is no longer beneficial for my slave to fear you. ([Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.11)

As always, we should not take at face value the words of the Old Oligarch, since his entire treatise is a criticism of the radical democracy found at Athens. But his words should not be completely discounted either, since they likely reflect the views of (at the very least) some of the more conservative members of Athenian society. And in fact, while he may be exaggerating to some extent, we do hear elsewhere of “rich slaves” in Athens.

Slave wealth is mentioned, for example, in Xenophon’s *Oikonomikos*, a text that provides (among other things) a vivid representation of the master’s ideal relationship with his slaves. In this dialogue, the landowner Ischomachos says: “whatever [slaves] I discover are led to be honest (*dikaious*) not only because they gain more by their honesty (*dikaiousunên*), but also because they wish to be praised by me, I treat them as already free not only by making them rich (*ploutizôn*) but also by honoring them as gentlemen (*kalous te kagathous*)” (Xen. *Oik.* 14.9). Here, Ischomachos is presumably speaking of honest slave-overseers, rather than slaves laboring in the fields.<sup>31</sup> For these managers, wealth (*ploutos*) is the reward for (well-motivated) honesty (*dikaiousunê*), coupled with, if not literal freedom, the next-best thing: treatment as if one is free.

The best known of the “rich slaves” in classical Athens are the slave-bankers Pasion and Phormion, both of whom amassed huge fortunes in the fourth century by running their masters’ banks, and both of whom later earned their freedom.<sup>32</sup> Some of this money appears to have been accumulated while they were still slaves, implying that they must have gotten to keep at least a portion of their revenues. Unfortunately, we don’t know how much they had to hand over to their masters, nor do we know wheth-

31 See also S. Pomeroy (ed. and trans.), *Xenophon, Oeconomicus: A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford 1994) ad loc.

32 On Pasion and Phormion, see Cohen, *Athenian Economy* 61–110 and *Athenian Nation* 130–54; J. Trevett, *Apollodoros the Son of Pasion* (Oxford 1992).

er the *apophora* was a flat rate – as with Timarchos’ leatherworkers – or a percentage. Either way, both men accumulated great riches. At some point, presumably after he was freed, Pasion is said to have had 20 talents in real property and to have loaned out an additional 50 talents at interest (Dem. 36.5). He was also able to donate 1000 shields to the state, and served five times as trierarch, funding expensive war-ships for the state (Dem. 45.85). The speaker of *For Phormion* (Dem. 36) asserts that Pasion obtained his riches (*euporia*) “because, giving proof to his masters, the bankers Antisthenes and Archestratos, that he was a useful (*chrēstos*) and honest (*dikaios*) man, he was trusted by them” (Dem. 36.43). As in Xenophon’s *Oikonomikos*, we see that wealth was considered (at least by some) to be an appropriate reward for slaves who were both honest (*dikaios*) and useful (*chrēstos*) to their masters.<sup>33</sup>

Phormion, who was Pasion’s slave, also acquired great wealth through his work, first as a slave and then as a free man. Phormion ultimately married Pasion’s widow in accordance with Pasion’s will – an arrangement Pasion’s son Apollodoros was not terribly happy with (mostly because he felt he was being deprived of his rightful inheritance). Apollodoros, in a speech prosecuting one of Phormion’s witnesses from the earlier trial *For Phormion*, repeatedly harps on Phormion’s wealth, complaining of the “wealth (*plouton*) of Phormion” (Dem. 45.54), Phormion’s “being rich (*ploutounta*)” (45.73), and Phormion’s being in put control of “so large an amount of money (*to-sountôn chrēmatôn*)” (45.80). Apollodoros also points out, with great indignation, that if Phormion had been bought by anyone else, rather than a banker, he would not have been put in control of large sums of money (*chrēmatôn ... pollôn*) and so would never have become so wealthy (*eudaimôn ... eudaimonas*) (45.72). Reversing the terms we saw earlier, Apollodoros alleges that Phormion got this money *not* by being honest (*dikaios*) – a legitimate way of becoming a wealthy slave – but by stealing the money he was put in charge of (45.80).

It should be noted that although our sources frequently mention Pasion and Phormion’s wealth, they are silent about the precise details of their manumission.<sup>34</sup> We do not know, for example, whether they put up the money for their freedom themselves, or whether they were freed *gratis* by their appreciative masters. It is also worth pointing out that both men eventually acquired citizenship (in addition to freedom), a feat that was very difficult to accomplish in classical Athens – and one which was undeniably facilitated by their great wealth and their capacity to make donations to the state. Wealthy slaves like Pasion and Phormion, then, attest to the fact that at least some slaves, after handing over an *apophora*, could and did accumulate money (the slave-allowance), which they could use for their own purposes.

33 See also Dem. 36.44: “How amazing it is in the eyes of those working in commerce and banking when the same man both has a reputation for being hardworking and is useful (*chrēstos*)!” On the adjective *chrēstos*, which is frequently used of “good slaves” on slave funerary monuments, see further K. L. Wrenhaven, *Reconstructing the Slave: the Image of the Slave in Ancient Greece* (London 2012) 98–100.

34 All we are told is that Pasion “was released (*apellagē*)” by his masters in the same way as Phormion was by Pasion (Dem. 36.48). We also hear that a banker named Socrates was released (*apallageis*) by his masters just as Pasion was (Dem. 36.28).



## II. Motivations Behind the Slave-Allowance

We might then ask: why did masters in Athens collect only a portion, the *apophora*, rather than all of the earnings of their independently operating slaves? Put another way, why did masters let their slaves keep the other portion, the slave-allowance? After all, since these slaves were their property, masters had the right to demand every last obol from them.

To shed light on this question, it helps to look, by way of comparison, at the various motivations for the slave's *peculium* in Rome.<sup>35</sup> Although the *peculium* entailed a small financial loss for Roman slave-owners, it was beneficial for them in the long run, since it kept their slaves hardworking and relatively content (that is, less likely to run away or rebel).<sup>36</sup> Fostering this kind of attitude in one's slaves was of course always important, but it was especially crucial when slaves worked on behalf of, but out of the watchful eye of, their master.<sup>37</sup> The *peculium* was also beneficial for the slave in a variety of ways. For agricultural slaves, the *peculium* could provide additional food rations and therefore a way for slaves to maintain a family (albeit a family that was not legally recognized as such).<sup>38</sup> And in some circumstances, especially in the city, slaves could save up their *peculium* and eventually use it to purchase their freedom.<sup>39</sup> Regardless of whether the *peculium* was designed primarily as a way of fostering good work on the part of slaves or as a mechanism for self-purchase, it is clear that Roman slave-owners considered the institution of the *peculium* to be in their economic interests, and that slaves as well as masters profited from this arrangement.

Our evidence suggests that the slave-allowance at Athens similarly benefited both master and slave. First of all, by putting his slaves to work outside the home,<sup>40</sup> the Athenian master got to derive a portion of the revenues, while letting the slaves worry about

35 On the varied (sometimes overlapping) motivations underlying the *peculium*, see most recently A. Fleckner, "The *Peculium*: A Legal Device for Donations to *personae alieno iuri subiectae*," in F. Carlà and M. Gori (eds.), *Gift Giving and the "Embedded" Economy in the Ancient World* (Heidelberg 2014) 213–39.

36 Hardworking: A. M. Duff, *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire* (New York 1958 [1928]) 16; Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* 118, 126; Andreau and Descat, *The Slave in Greece and Rome* 84. Contented with their lot: S. Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen during the Late Republic* (Oxford 1969) 17.

37 Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* 174–75; cf. Fleckner, "The *Peculium*."

38 See, e.g., Roth 2005 on the benefits of the *peculium* to agricultural slaves, including having (and maintaining) a family.

39 G. Alföldy, "Die Freilassung von Sklaven," *Rivista storica dell'antichità* 2 (1972) 97–129 and Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* 115–32 both argue that the purchase of freedom with one's *peculium* was a widespread practice; see also Roth, "Peculium," who suggests that slaves often paid for their freedom twice, first for informal freedom, then for formal freedom (and citizenship). Cf. Bradley, *Slaves and Masters* 108–11, who suggests that in many cases it would have been difficult for slaves to store up enough *peculium* to purchase their freedom, and Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* 159–80, who argues more forcefully against the Alföldy / Hopkins line, saying that self-purchase through a *peculium* was the exception rather than the rule.

40 The practice of giving slaves a degree of independence wasn't foolproof, however. A slave named Midas, who was the manager of his master's lucrative perfume business, managed to rack up five talents in debt (Hyp. 3.9, 25), which redounded in turn to his master. There was, moreover, the possibility of theft: whether or not the allegation is true, Apollodoros accuses Phormion of stealing from the money he was put in charge of (Dem. 45.80).

the day-to-day operations of the business.<sup>41</sup> The slave-allowance may also have encouraged slaves to do their best work on their masters' behalf. It was in this way akin (though not identical) to the salaries that Athens paid to some of its public slaves<sup>42</sup> – including, for example, the *dokimastai*, who were entrusted with the important task of testing Athenian currency, verifying that coins were of pure silver and struck from the official die.<sup>43</sup> The salary (*misthophoria*)<sup>44</sup> that these public slaves earned was clearly a way for the state (the slaves' master) to guarantee their loyalty and hard work, to ensure that they report accurately on the status of the currency and not pocket any of it for themselves. In addition to its practical advantages, the system of the slave-allowance also had *ideological* benefits for the master.<sup>45</sup> Because Athenian citizens, at least in theory, did not engage in banausic work,<sup>46</sup> one advantage to setting up a slave to run a bank or manage a factory was that one didn't have to engage in these "slavish" jobs oneself. This avoidance of work by the master class has some parallels to the situation in Rome, especially after senators were barred from engaging in commerce and their slaves became their surrogates.<sup>47</sup>

For the slave, one benefit of the slave-allowance was that, as in Rome, he could potentially save up money to buy his freedom.<sup>48</sup> The Old Oligarch passage cited above ([Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.11) hints at the possibility of slaves purchasing their freedom with their earnings: "where there is a naval power, it is necessary for financial reasons [for masters] to be slaves to the slaves in order to take *apophora* [from them], and to let

- 41 Acton, *Poiesis* 253, 255, 256, 287 argues that the *apophora* system allowed masters to engage in a relatively low-risk investment, since the slave-manager (he argues) took on all of the risk and the master was guaranteed a steady income (assuming the *apophora* was a fixed amount), regardless of how the business was doing.
- 42 On public slaves in Athens, see O. Jacob, *Les esclaves publics à Athènes* (Liège 1928); P. Ismard, *La démocratie contre les experts: Les esclaves publics en Grèce ancienne* (Paris 2015).
- 43 See R. Stroud, "An Athenian Law on Silver Coinage," *Hesperia* 43 (1974) 157–88 on Ag. Inv. I 7180. These *dokimastai*, like select other public slaves who drew a salary (e.g. Eukles, a public slave at Eleusis who managed the temple's accounts), could presumably use this money however they saw fit. In Aeschines' *Against Timarchos*, for example, we hear of a public slave named Pittalakos who had "an abundance of money" (*euporôn arguriou*) (1.54), which he apparently chose to spend on the sexual services of Timarchos. On Eukles and Pittalakos, see V. Hunter, "Pittalacus and Eucles: Slaves in the Public Service of Athens," *Mouseion* 3<sup>rd</sup> ser. 6 (2006) 1–14.
- 44 Ag. Inv. I 7180, lines 49–50, 54. Unlike the *misthos* that rented-out slaves drew in for their masters, the *misthophoria* referred to wages the public slave earned for himself. The words *misthophoria* (and *misthophora*) are generally used for wages paid by the state (rather than by individuals), especially to soldiers but also to jurors (see *LSJ* s. v.).
- 45 See N. R. E. Fisher, "Citizens, Foreigners, Slaves," in K. H. Kinzl (ed.), *A Companion to the Classical Greek World* (Malden 2006) 327–49, at 338.
- 46 On the various jobs performed by citizens (as well as non-citizens) in Athens, see, e.g., E. M. Harris, "Workshop, Marketplace and Household: The Nature of Technical Specialization in Classical Athens and its Influence on Economy and Society," in P. Cartledge et al. (eds.), *Money, Labour and Land: Approaches to the Economies of Ancient Greece* (London 2002) 67–99; on citizens as craftsmen, see also Acton, *Poiesis* 270–74.
- 47 On this ban (enacted by the *lex Claudia* in 218 BCE), and the attitudes behind it, see, e.g., J. H. D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, Mass. 1981) 20–47.
- 48 See also D. J. Kyrtatas, "Slavery and Economy in the Greek World," in K. Bradley and P. Cartledge (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: The Ancient Mediterranean World* (Cambridge 2011) 91–111, at 107–8; Acton, *Poiesis* 253, 286–87.

them go free.” This passage is difficult to interpret, for a number of reasons.<sup>49</sup> One is textual in nature. The text itself, as handed down to us, is corrupt: the daggered phrase *lambanôn men prattêi* – the reading found in all of the main codices – does not make any sense. Scholars have suggested a number of conjectures, none of which is entirely satisfactory.<sup>50</sup> In addition, even the non-corrupt bits of this passage are potentially ambiguous. For example, it is unclear exactly how the fact of Athens being a naval power is related to the practice of collecting *apophora* from slaves. Is it the case, as some scholars argue, that the Old Oligarch is referring to the practice of masters renting out their slaves either to serve in the navy,<sup>51</sup> or to contribute to the construction and maintenance of fleets?<sup>52</sup> Or is he instead referring to the fact that in order to finance the running of a naval empire, there needs to be a steady supply of cash, and deriving profits from slaves’ labor was the most effective way of accomplishing this?<sup>53</sup>

I am inclined to follow the latter interpretation – namely, that the Old Oligarch is referring to slaves who worked on their masters’ behalf in a number of different sectors of the economy, rather than those who were leased out to row in the navy or build warships. I am particularly keen to favor this reading because the word *apophora* (as mentioned above) refers elsewhere to the portion of earnings that an independently operating slave hands over to his master, rather than to the payment a master gets for leasing out his slaves to a third party. Therefore, what the Old Oligarch appears to be saying in this passage is that masters in Athens let their slaves work independently in order to get *apophora* from them, and that this system has the (to his mind, unfortunate) side-effect of producing slaves with money. And one byproduct of allowing slaves to acquire money is that they could use this money however they wished – including, the Old Oligarch says, making their masters set them free, presumably by putting up the money for their freedom.

Apart from this passage, however, our Athenian sources rarely speak about slaves buying their freedom. I think there are at least a couple of reasons for this silence. First, it is possible that the practice was relatively uncommon (at least compared to Rome),

49 For an analysis of this passage, including its many textual difficulties, see G. Bechtle, “A Note on Pseudo-Xenophon, The Constitution of the Athenians 1.11,” CQ n. s. 46 (1996) 564–66.

50 Leonclavius proposed λαμβάνωμεν ἅς πράττει; Bake, λαμβάνω ὧν ἂν πράττη; Kalinka, λαμβάνω ὧν μὲν πράττη; Marchant, λαμβάνωμεν (ὧν) πράττη. Bechtle, “A Note on Pseudo-Xenophon” favors Marchant’s conjecture.

51 That it refers to slaves in serving navy, see, e. g., B. Jordan, “The Meaning of the Technical Term *Hyperesia* in Naval Contexts of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.,” CA 2 (1969) 183–207, at 204–5; P. Hunt, “Arming Slaves and Helots in Classical Greece,” in C. L. Brown and P. D. Morgan (eds.), *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age* (New Haven 2006) 14–39, at 27.

52 R. Sargent, “The Use of Slaves by the Athenians in Warfare II,” CP 22 (1927) 264–79, at 272 n.3; J. L. Marr and P. J. Rhodes (trans.), *The “Old Oligarch”: The Constitution of the Athenians Attributed to Xenophon* (Oxford 2008) ad loc.

53 See Bechtle, “A Note on Pseudo-Xenophon” 565, explaining *apo khrêmatôn*: “As a result of money many things are accomplished in Athens, and the more money there is the more things are done.” See also J. Ober, “Quasi Rights: Participatory Citizenship and Negative Liberties,” in *Athenian Legacies: Essays on the Politics of Going on Together* (Princeton 2005 [2000]) 92–127, at 112: “the navy required the availability of considerable free capital.”

and therefore has left few traces in the historical record.<sup>54</sup> Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, slaves in Greece, unlike in Rome, did not have the legal capacity to purchase their freedom directly from their masters. This meant that if a slave wanted to acquire his freedom, short of waiting for his master to free him *gratis*, he had to find a way of reimbursing his master for his purchase price. One way of doing so was to make use of a third-party “buyer,” to whom the slave could entrust his or her own money. (In some cases, the third party may have used his own money, or a combination of his money and the slave’s.) The third party then handed over the money to the slave’s master, employing the fiction of a purchase in order to secure the slave’s freedom.

This mode of manumission, known as fictive sale, is best attested in over a thousand inscriptions from Hellenistic and Roman Delphi, dated between 201 BCE and c. 100 CE.<sup>55</sup> In these inscriptions, slaves are recorded as having been “sold” by their masters to Pythian Apollo for the purpose of freedom, with the slave “entrusting the sale” to the god. That is, the god, presumably via his priests, was said to have “bought” the slave (using, we imagine, the slave’s money). Through an act of collusion, the god did not exercise any rights of ownership over his new possession, and so the slave became owner of himself and therefore free. In this way, a slave could in essence pay for his freedom without engaging directly in a contract of sale with his master.

While fictive sale of precisely this sort apparently did not exist in Athens, we do have evidence for a similar practice, albeit one in secular form.<sup>56</sup> Our most thorough account comes from Apollodoros’ speech *Against Neaira*, in which the ex-slave prostitute Neaira is charged with posing unlawfully as an Athenian citizen in order to secure citizen rights for her children. Most important for our purposes is the part of the lawsuit describing how Neaira acquired her freedom.<sup>57</sup> At the time of her manumission, Neaira was co-owned by two young men, who had purchased her from her madam for 30 mnas in order to be their personal sex-slave ([Dem.] 59.29). When they each wanted to get married, they told her that if she could find the means to pay them 20 mnas (a discount from her purchase price), they would grant her her freedom. Because Neaira did not have the right to directly purchase her freedom (and also did not have the requisite 20 mnas), she asked a number of former clients for donations (59.30). She next handed over the total contributions – adding “any money she had saved up herself (*peripoiêsato*)” (59.31),<sup>58</sup>

54 On manumission practices in classical Athens, see, e.g., Kamen, *Status* 32–42.

55 On manumission through “fictive sale” to a god, see, e.g., Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* 133–71; R. Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free: The Concept of Manumission and the Status of Manumitted Slaves in the Ancient Greek World* (Leiden 2005) 86–91, 94–99, and *passim*; D. Kamen, “Sale for the Purpose of Freedom: Slave-Prostitutes and Manumission in Ancient Greece,” *CJ* 109 (2014) 281–307, at 285–89. Cf. J. D. Sosin, “Manumission with *Paramone*: Conditional Freedom?,” *TAPA* (forthcoming).

56 See Kamen, “Sale for the Purpose of Freedom.”

57 On Neaira’s manumission, see K. A. Kapparis, *Apollodoros “Against Neaira”* [D. 59] (Berlin 1999) *passim*; D. Hamel, *Trying Neaira: The True Story of a Courtesan’s Scandalous Life in Ancient Greece* (New Haven 2003) *passim*; Zelnick-Abramovitz, *Not Wholly Free* (*passim*); Kamen, “Sale for the Purpose of Freedom” 291–98; A. Glazebrook, “The Erotics of Manumission: Prostitutes and the *πρᾶσις ἐπ’ ἐλευθερίᾳ*,” *EuGeStA* 4 (2014) 53–80 (*passim*).

58 The verb *peripoiêō* in the middle voice means to acquire something (usually money) and save it up for oneself (see *LSJ* s.v. II).

presumably from her years working as a *hetaira* – to yet another former client, a man named Phrynion, and begged him to make up the difference. Phrynion gave the total amount to the young men, thus “buying” her and ensuring her freedom ([Dem.] 59.31–32). Even if the portion Neaira contributed toward her manumission was comparatively small, it is clear that she had a sum of money at her disposal for this purpose, a sum we might consider the prostitute’s slave-allowance.

In fact, of all female slaves in Athens, prostitutes – especially high-status prostitutes – may have been especially able to save money to buy their freedom.<sup>59</sup> Further evidence for this phenomenon may come from the so-called *phialai exeleutherikai* (“freedman bowl”) inscriptions, which date to ca. 330–320 BCE.<sup>60</sup> These inscriptions are generally believed to record dedications of (100-drachma) silver bowls to Athena by freed slaves after they had won (possibly fictive) lawsuits for desertion (*dikai apostasiou*) against their former masters, a victory that earned them complete freedom from any remaining obligations.<sup>61</sup> What is interesting is that the vast majority of the female freed slaves listed in these records (over 80 %) are called *talasiourgoi* (“woolworkers”), a term which some scholars have taken as a euphemism for prostitutes.<sup>62</sup> If this is indeed the case (and it is hard to know for sure), we can speculate that at least some of these women were able to afford their complete freedom either from their earnings as prostitutes (what I am calling their slave-allowance), or – as with Neaira – from a combination of their own earnings and donations from clients. And if they were *not* prostitutes, these inscriptions may provide our only evidence for female slaves engaged in non-sexual work who managed to save up money to purchase their freedom.<sup>63</sup>

### III. Why do our Sources Never Mention the Slave-Allowance?

In the face of direct evidence for the *apophora* and indirect evidence for a slave-allowance (namely, “wealthy slaves”) – and having explored the relationship between the slave-allowance and manumission – I would like to turn briefly to the question of why our Greek sources never mention the slave-allowance directly. After all, they have no problem talking about the *apophora*: the word, as we have seen, appears throughout Greek literature in a variety of genres (including oratory, philosophy, and comedy).

59 See Kamen, “Sale for the Purpose of Freedom”; Glazebrook, “The Erotics of Manumission.”

60 IG II<sup>2</sup> 1553–78; Ag. Inv. I 3183, 4665, 4763, 5656, 5774. See also E. A. Meyer, *Metics and the Athenian Phialai-Inscriptions: A Study in Athenian Epigraphy and Law* (Wiesbaden 2010).

61 See Zelnick-Abramovitz *Not Wholly Free* 282–90 and *passim*; but cf. Meyer, *Metics and the Athenian Phialai-Inscriptions*, who radically argues that they represent instead prosecutions of metics in *graphai apostasiou*.

62 That the *talasiourgoi* were prostitutes, see Cohen, *Athenian Nation* 226 and “Free and Unfree Sexual Work: An Economic Analysis of Athenian Prostitution,” in C. A. Faraone and L. K. McClure (eds.), *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World* (Madison 2006) 95–124, at 105–8; K. L. Wrenhaven, “The Identity of the ‘Wool-Workers’ in the Attic Manumissions,” *Hesperia* 78 (2009) 367–86.

63 That at least some slave-spinners and weavers likely worked under an *apophora* arrangement, see Acton, *Poiesis* 154.



To better understand this silence, it helps once again to consider the situation on the Roman side. Even though the word *peculium* shows up all the time in Roman legal sources, it is mentioned relatively infrequently *outside* of legal sources. It has been suggested that this discrepancy might be due to the fact that *peculium* is a technical legal term, not one in everyday or literary use.<sup>64</sup> A similar explanation might also hold true to some extent for Greece, and since Athens had nothing comparable to the massive legal texts of Rome – only laws scattered in oratory and on stone – there are fewer places, by far, in which a technical word for slave-allowance might appear.

There might, in addition, be ideological reasons for the lack of any mention of a slave-allowance in Athenian literary texts. At this point, I think it will be helpful to return one last time to the Old Oligarch passage, in particular to the statement that masters in Athens are “slaves to the slaves” and are compelled to let their slaves go free. The Old Oligarch is raising two related problems here. First of all, because citizens in Athens were ideologically the polar opposite of slaves, for a citizen to be a slave, even a figurative slave, was a reversal of the normal order of things. Secondly, the idea of masters *having* to free their slaves was also vexed, since the Athenians had mixed feelings about manumission:<sup>65</sup> on the one hand, masters had both economic and sometimes emotional reasons for freeing their slaves; on the other, they harbored anxieties about allowing slaves – not to mention being compelled to allow slaves – to transcend their (notionally) natural position in the status hierarchy.

And so, if we take the Old Oligarch, as always, with a grain of salt, it appears that from the perspective of masters, the institution of allowing slaves to work independently, while beneficial in many respects for both parties, also had consequences that were less desirable. Primary among these was the potential to disrupt the proper master-slave hierarchy, both by “enslaving” masters to their slaves and by allowing slaves to transcend their social and legal status through manumission. I would like to suggest, then, that it was at least in part this anxiety about status reversal that led to Greek authors’ reluctance to speak about the slave-allowance – even while they reaped the benefits of its corollary, the *apophora*.<sup>66</sup>

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64 See Fleckner, “The *Peculium*” 218–19 (on this discrepancy), 235–36 (where he points out that this explanation does not account for why there are not more references to the phenomenon in literature under a different, i. e. non-technical, name).

65 On Athenian anxieties about manumission, see D. Kamen, “Servile Invective in Classical Athens,” *SCI* 28 (2009) 43–56.

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