

Portraits of Metics: Rhetorical Representation of Metics in Athenian Forensic Oratory

Much attention has been paid to the legal status of metics in Athens in the recent years (e.g. Kamen 2013) and metic ideology was the subject of a seminal work by Whitehead 1977. Yet little attention has been paid to rhetorical representation of metics – and the corresponding ideological implications of the Athenian attitudes to metics – in the Athenian forensic oratory. There are brief modern accounts primarily interested in citizenship in relation with metic status, but their scope is limited (cf. e.g. Bakewell 1999-2000).

This paper aims to offer a fresh look at the rhetorical representation of metics, their *ethos*, and associated ideology in Attic forensic (and politically charged) speeches, starting by examining the ‘metic view-point’ in Lys. 12. The speech offers Lysias’ ‘theory’ about metic status, *ethos* and morality, in action, and it will be the canvas against which other metic representations produced (e.g. Lys. 5, 31, Dem. 20, 22) will be explored and contrasted with the image we receive from Lysias 12: how are such metic images reconstructed and presented in political trials? How is the ideal metic in Athens compared with the degraded Athenian citizen residing in another city? What these images tell us about the Athenian attitudes towards metics as against citizen status and the associated morality? As this paper argues, both positive (or neutral) and negative representations of metics in the speeches suggest ambivalent ideological attitudes to this status group, which admittedly made a substantial contribution to the Athenian society, politically and financially.

Bibliography

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