

Citizens and Citizenship in Athens

Source 1

"Our form of government is no copy of our neighbors laws: far from imitating others, we are an example to them. Our form of government is called a democracy, that is, power in the hands of the whole people, not just a select few. When there are disputes between individuals, everyone is equal before the law. In public affairs, people are given a position because they deserve it: they get the job because of their own talent, not just because it is their turn. No one is kept out of time light just because he is poor, if he can be of some use to the City. We are tolerant in our personal relationships, and in public life we do not break the law, because it is the law that we fear."

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*; II.37, (extracts)

Source 2

The simplest definition of a citizen is "one who shares in government and administration of justice".

Aristotle; *Politics*; 1275a

Source 3

In the archonship of Antidotos (451 BC) they passed a proposal made by Pericles that a man could only be a citizen if both parents were of citizen birth.

Aristotle; *Constitution of Athens*; 26

Source 4

In this passage, Socrates is urging a young man not to be shy to speak at the Assembly:
"You are not shy with extremely clever people; nor are you nervous of people who have a great deal of influence. And yet you don't have the guts to speak in front of those who are the least clever and have no influence. Surely you are not too shy to meet cleaners and dyers, shoemakers, carpenters, farmers, merchants? Well, these are the sort of people who make up the Assembly".

Xenophon; *Memoirs*; 3.7

Source 5

"The Council passes judgment on most of the government officials, especially those who handle public funds [...] The Council, then, does not have supreme power, but it does discuss beforehand everything that is brought before the people. The people (= the Assembly) cannot vote on anything which has not been previously discussed by the Council"

Aristotle; *Constitution of Athens*; 43-5

Source 6

"They say that the thing which gave most power to the masses was the right to appeal to a jury court."

Aristotle; *Constitution of Athens*; 9

Source 7

"Pericles was the first to introduce pay for the people in the jury courts. This was an attempt to make himself popular. Some people criticize Pericles and say that the courts began to deteriorate because it was the common people rather than the respectable ones who were keen to draw lots for the duty"

Aristotle; *Constitution of Athens*; 27

Source 8

Every month there is a vote to see whether the generals seem to be doing their duties properly. If the vote goes against any of them, he is put on trial in the court. If he is convicted, the people decide what the penalty or fine are to be; but if he is acquitted he takes up his duties again.

Aristotle; *Constitution of Athens*; 61

Source 9

To give a citizen outline, the procedure was as follows. Each man took an ostrakôn and wrote on it the name of the citizen he wished to be removed from the city. He then took it to a place in the Agora, which was marked off with a wooden railing. The archons first counted the total number of the vote casts. (If there were fewer than 6000 voters, the ostracism was void.) Then they separated the names and the man whose name had been written by the most people was proclaimed an exile for ten years, though he was allowed to receive the income from his property.

Plutarch; *Aristeides*; 7

Source 10 : Map of the Peloponnesian War

