

THE VERB *EMPOLITEUŌ* AND GREEK CITIZENSHIP UNDER ARSACID RULE*

Abstract: The primary translation for the ancient Greek verb ἔμπολιτεύω in several dictionaries is “to be a citizen, have civil rights.” That definition is untenable. The connotations of ἔμπολιτεύω for citizen status are usually indeterminate, but where they are clear, the verb has the opposite meaning and refers to non-citizens rather than citizens. This sense is crucial to the study of Greek citizenship in the Arsacid empire, because ἔμπολιτεύω appears twice in a key passage from Josephus on Greco-Babylonian relations in the poleis of Arsacid Mesopotamia. The verb’s dictionary definition has led some historians to the conclusion that non-Greeks were citizens of these poleis. Along with local evidence in Akkadian, a review of ἔμπολιτεύω’s appearances in literature and epigraphy suggests the opposite.

Keywords: Greek citizenship, Josephus, Parthian empire, Arsacid dynasty, Mesopotamia, Babylon

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The primary translation for the Greek verb ἐμπολιτεύω in several dictionaries is “to be a citizen, have civil rights.”¹ That definition cannot be substantiated, because there is not a single attestation of the word that clearly exhibits this meaning. In fact, while the connotations of ἐμπολιτεύω for citizenship are usually indeterminate, where they are explicit, the verb has the opposite meaning and refers to non-citizens rather than citizens. A survey of the word’s appearances in literary and epigraphic sources from the classical period to late antiquity shows the need to reassess.

The citizenship question is a consequential one for the history of the post-Hellenistic east, because ἐμπολιτεύω is used in a key passage from Josephus that deals with the status of non-Greeks in the poleis of the Arsacid empire, Rome’s imperial neighbor in Mesopotamia and Iran. Josephus twice applies ἐμπολιτεύω to a Mesopotamian demographic group whom he calls “Syrians.”² The verb’s dictionary definition has led some scholars to the conclusion that these people enjoyed citizen status in their polis of residence,³ while others hold that the “Syrians” in question had their own πολιτεύμα that operated independently of the polis and its institutions.⁴ The evidence contradicts the first view, and it fails to support the second. A full investigation of ἐμπολιτεύω illuminates the condition of non-Greek disenfranchisement in the chief cities of Arsacid Mesopotamia.

Much of the confusion over the meaning of ἐμπολιτεύω stems from Thucydides’ history, where the word is first attested. Thucydides uses the verb twice in his account of the Spartan attack on Amphipolis as he describes the reaction of the town’s inhabitants to the arrival of Brasidas. The first appearance of ἐμπολιτεύω pertains to people from the nearby city of Argilos. Argilian settlers

¹ Lidell and Scott (1973) 547; Danker (2000) 324; Montanari (2015) 1.676; Diggle (2021) 481.

² Joseph. *AJ* 18.372, 18.378.

³ “Syrians” as citizens: Feldman (1965) 209, 211; Rajak (1998) 315; Goodblatt (1987) 61n23, 613; Mazzini (2021) 171. See further below.

⁴ Tarn and Griffith (1961) 157; Downey (1961) 115; Sherwin-White (2004 [1963]) 185; Kasher (1985) 182; Oppenheimer (1983) 221; Andrade (2013) 42–3n27, 108n50. See further below.

in Amphipolis were among those who planned to betray the city to the Spartan commander, Thucydides explains. Argilos itself had long maintained designs on Amphipolis, so its people were quick to join the Spartan effort when Brasidas drew near. The collaborators included some Argilians who lived in Argilos and others who lived in Amphipolis. The former, Thucydides writes, “had for some time contrived the surrender of the city with those of their people who were residing (ἐμπολιτεύοντες) there [in Amphipolis].”⁵ The initial bid at treachery failed, however, because the Spartan sympathizers in Amphipolis were outnumbered, at least at first.

The second occurrence of the word comes shortly thereafter and applies to the Athenian residents of Amphipolis. After Brasidas besieged the city and offered lenient terms for its surrender, the inhabitants’ resolve began to waver. The Spartan commander offered safe passage to those who wished to leave, and he guaranteed the property and rights of those who wished to remain. According to Thucydides, the unexpected generosity of these terms caused a change of heart, “especially because few Athenians were residing (ἐμπολιτεῦον) in the city, and the majority [of the inhabitants] were of various backgrounds.”⁶ The Athenian general on site failed to dissuade the people from capitulation, and the city opened its gates to Brasidas.

The only certainty about the use of ἐμπολιτεύω in these passages is that it connotes expatriate status: Thucydides uses it for people who reside away from the place that furnishes their core political identity. The ἐμπολιτεύοντες of the first reference are Argilians who live not in Argilos, but in Amphipolis. Likewise, the second group consists of “Athenians” who live away from Athens. In both cases, Thucydides assumes that the native city of the ἐμπολιτεύοντες dictates their political behavior. The treachery of the Argilians in Amphipolis was occasioned by their still vital connection to Argilos, and on the other side of the conflict, the text treats it as self-evident that the Athenians in the city would refuse to surrender to Brasidas.

⁵ Thuc. 4.103.4: οἱ Ἀργίλιοι... ἐπραξάν τε ἐκ πλείονος πρὸς τοὺς ἐμπολιτεύοντας σφῶν ἐκεῖ ὅπως ἐνδοθήσεται ἡ πόλις.

⁶ Thuc. 4.106.1: ἄλλως τε καὶ βραχὺ μὲν Ἀθηναίων ἐμπολιτεῦον, τὸ δὲ πλεόν ξύμμεικτον.

For Thucydides, then, an ἐμπολιτεύων is someone whose primary political affiliation lies elsewhere than their place of residence.

What about the citizenship status of these Argilians and Athenians? Were they citizens of Amphipolis, or did they retain citizenship in their cities of origin? Scholarly disagreement reveals the inability of the extant evidence to answer the question. Michel Casevitz's position was that the Argilians and Athenians of Amphipolis had not renounced citizenship in their home cities. Pierre Vidal-Naquet agreed, and made the additional suggestion that the Athenians, at least, may have held dual citizenship in Athens and Amphipolis.⁷ By contrast, Franz Hampl and A.J. Graham both wondered whether Thucydides' reference to "Athenians" in these chapters amalgamated short-term visitors and long-term residents, but they ultimately concluded that the "Athenians" in question must have been citizens of Amphipolis, not Athens.⁸ R.A. Bauman, David Asheri, and Simon Hornblower take the same view.⁹ The formal relationship of Amphipolis to Athens does not resolve the issue, because it is unclear whether it was a colony, or a cleruchy, or an independent ally.¹⁰ The divergence of scholarly views shows that no obvious answer to the citizenship question can be found in Thucydides' text.¹¹ It turns out, then, that the primary citations of ἐμπολιτεύω with the supposed meaning "to have citizenship (in a place)" cannot substantiate that definition.

Most other literary attestations of ἐμπολιτεύω resemble the Thucydidean ones in that the verb means "to be in, reside, inhabit" irrespective of voice and without any necessary implications for citizenship. Like Thucydides, Isocrates uses the word to describe residence abroad in a city that is not properly one's own. In a complaint about poorly chosen sites for Athenian colonization

⁷ Casevitz (1985) 99; Vidal-Naquet (1988) 345–6.

⁸ Hampl (1939) 4–5; Graham (1964) 245–8. Note, however, their divergent views on the phrase Ἀμφιπολιτῶν καὶ Ἀθηναίων τῶν ἐνόντων at Thuc. 4.105.2, on which see also Westlake (1962) 280n4.

⁹ Bauman (1968) 174 (with n37, which makes plain the author's understanding of ἐμπολιτεύω); Asheri (1967) 20–1; Hornblower (1996) 329, 337. Olson (2014) 254 assumes the same.

¹⁰ See Bauman (1962) 174n34 for references.

¹¹ Rightly agnostic on this question is Tzanetou (2012) 128.

(namely Amphipolis), Isocrates declares that Athens “must avoid the sorts of colonies that have destroyed those who resided there (τοὺς ἐμπολιτευθέντας) four or five times now.”¹² Here ἐμπολιτεύω indicates colonists who retain an Athenian political identity abroad, but since the chief settlement to which Isocrates refers is Amphipolis, the implications of the word for citizen status are again indeterminate. Nor does Polybius’ single use of ἐμπολιτεύω decisively connote citizenship. He writes that the Macedonian king Antigonos Doson, victorious over Sparta, was able “to deal with the city and those residing in it (τοῖς ἐμπολιτευομένοις) however he wished.”¹³ Here the referent of the participle includes Spartan citizens, but it must also encompass the various non-citizens, women and the enslaved among them, who were physically present in the city and thus at the mercy of Antigonos.¹⁴

The meaning “to be in, reside, inhabit,” is also attested in later Greek literature of the Roman empire. When Lucian remarks of a Macedonian city, “I was struck straightaway when I saw its size, its beauty, and the mass of people who reside (τῶν ἐμπολιτευομένων) in it,” he is referring to the city’s total population, not specifically to its citizens.¹⁵ Likewise, Philostratus has the sage Apollonius speak figuratively of “the pleasures that reside (τὰς ἐμπολιτευομένας) in Rome.” The point here is not that pleasures have civic rights, simply that they exist in the city.¹⁶ Philostratus’ phrase points to a related but distinct usage in the letters of Basil of Caesarea. Basil extends “to be in residence” to give ἐμπολιτεύω the sense “to be in force; to be in effect.” Again, there is no connection to the matter of citizen

¹² Isoc. 5.5: χρὴ τὰς μὲν τοιαύτας φεύγειν ἀποικίας, αἱ τινες τετράκις ἢ πεντάκις ἀπολωλέκασι τοὺς ἐμπολιτευθέντας.

¹³ Polyb. 5.9.9: αὐτός τ’ ὢν κύριος ὁ βούλοιτο χρῆσθαι καὶ τῇ πόλει καὶ τοῖς ἐμπολιτευομένοις; cf. 2.70.1.

¹⁴ Vidal-Naquet (1988) 346.

¹⁵ Lucian, *Scyth.* 9: ἐξεπλάγην μὲν εὐθὺς ἰδὼν τὸ μέγεθος καὶ τὸ κάλλος καὶ τῶν ἐμπολιτευομένων τὸ πλῆθος. Also in this sense: Lucian, *Iupp. trag.* 8; *Gallus* 24.

¹⁶ Philostr. *VA* 5.36.4: τὰς δὲ ἐμπολιτευομένας ἡδονὰς τῇ Ῥώμῃ. In a similar sense: Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems* (ed. and trans. Russell and Konstan (2005)) 69.3 (transitively), 76.14; Celsus, *On the True Doctrine* 4.65 (cf. Tijsseling (2020) 61).

status.¹⁷ Citizenship might be detectable in Cassius Dio's advocacy of monarchy as "the most practical [form of government] to reside under (ἐμπολιτεύσασθαι)."¹⁸ In context, however, Dio is more likely to be saying that monarchy is the optimal regime type for society at large. There is no compelling reason to confine his assertion to citizens. Once again, no unavoidable connection between ἐμπολιτεύω and citizenship is evident in these references.

A final set of passages exhibits yet another meaning, but again without the necessary connotation of citizenship. Three authors employ ἐμπολιτεύω with the sense of "to conduct political business." Cicero interjects the Greek verb into a letter to Atticus from December, 50 BCE. After detailed discussion of the impending civil war with Julius Caesar, the author desists from the theme with the words "I have been conducting affairs of state with you (ἐμπολιτεύομαί σοι) for a long time already, and I would continue to do so if my lamp weren't going out!"¹⁹ Here ἐμπολιτεύω cannot mean "to have citizen rights" or, for that matter, "to inhabit." Full explication of the Greek phrase seems beyond the reach of available linguistic data, but context suggests the discussion or transaction of politics.²⁰ A comparable usage is evident in Julian's hymn to Helios. The emperor beseeches the god, "may he grant that I live and that I conduct political affairs with my life (ἐμπολιτεύεσθαι τῷ βίῳ), for as long as it is pleasing to him, agreeable to me, and advantageous to the Roman state."²¹ Like Cicero, the speaker uses the verb to signify engagement with state business. Also similar is the appearance of

¹⁷ Basil of Caesarea, *Letters* 54, 73, 90, 101, 140, 160, 258. In Christian literature, see also *Acta Pauli et Theclae* 18; *Pauli et Corinthiorum epistulae* 2:15; Origen, *Against Celsus* 1.19, 4.28, 4.65–6 (quoting Celsus); *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 19.148, 28.211; *Philocalia* 18.4; *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* 14.12, 16.8; *Selecta in Ezechielem* 777 (Migne). With one potential exception (see below, n25, on Origen, *Matthew* 14.12), ἐμπολιτεύω does not mean "to be a citizen" in any of these passages.

¹⁸ Cass. Dio 44.2.1: χρησιμώτατον δὲ ἐμπολιτεύσασθαι ἐστί. In the same sense: Heraclitus, *Homeric Problems* 76.11.

¹⁹ Cic. *Att.* 7.7.7: ἐμπολιτεύομαί σοι iam dudum, et facerem diutius nisi me lucerna desereret.

²⁰ Shackleton-Bailey (1968) 177 translates, "I have been inflicting my political views on you"; followed by Swain (2002) 152.

²¹ Jul. *Or.* 4.157b: ζῆν δὲ καὶ ἐμπολιτεύεσθαι τῷ βίῳ δοίη ἐφ' ὅσον αὐτῷ τε ἐκείνου φίλον ἡμῖν τε λώιον καὶ τοῖς κοινοῖς συμφέρον Ῥωμαίων πράγμασιν.

ἐμπολιτεύω in a passage from Clement of Alexandria's *Paedagogus* on the subject of women's attire. Women are permitted to wear a single gold ring, Clement intones, so long as it is a signet, since it is an inevitable necessity that some household items must be kept under seal. Under certain circumstances, men may wear the same adornment: "Should it be necessary for us to seal something for the sake of safety when we are conducting city affairs (ἐμπολιτευομένους) or are administering other business in the countryside, since we are often away from our wives [while doing these activities], [Scripture] allows us a signet ring for that purpose only."²² Clement limits the attendant activities of ἐμπολιτεύω to the urban sphere, contrasting them with the matters that might preoccupy one in the country. His use of the verb marks participation in the affairs of a certain space, namely the urban one. It is not signposting the legal status of the participants.

In contrast to the aforementioned passages where ἐμπολιτεύω cannot be shown to mean "to be a citizen," there are two attestations from Lucian where the case for this definition can be made – though doubt persists even here. In the *Hermotimus*, the speaker Lycinus develops an extended metaphor of Virtue as a city whose citizens live in a state of perfect happiness and justice, free of crime and vice. The first use of ἐμπολιτεύω comes during his introduction of this metaphor: "Virtue to my mind is like a city that has happy inhabitants/citizens (εὐδαίμονας ἔχουσα τοὺς ἐμπολιτευομένους)."²³ Lycinus recalls hearing about such a city during his youth from an old man, and ἐμπολιτεύω appears once more as he recounts the old man's testimony:

ἔλεγε δ' οὖν περὶ τῆς πόλεως, εἴ γε μέμνημαι, ἄλλα τε πολλὰ καὶ δὴ καὶ τάδε, ὥς ξύμπαντες μὲν ἐπήλυδες καὶ ξένοι εἶεν, αὐθιγενῆς δὲ οὐδὲ εἷς, ἀλλὰ καὶ βαρβάρους ἐμπολιτεύεσθαι πολλοὺς καὶ δούλους καὶ ἀμόρφους καὶ μικροὺς καὶ πένητας, καὶ ὅλως μετέχειν τῆς

²² Clem. Al., *Paed.* 3.11.58: Εἰ δὲ ἄρα δέοι καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐμπολιτευομένους καὶ ἄλλας τινὰς τῶν κατ' ἀγρὸν διοικουμένων πράξεις, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ ἄνευ γυναικῶν γενομένων ὑπὲρ ἀσφαλείας ἀποσφραγίζεσθαι τινα, δίδωσιν καὶ ἡμῖν εἰς τοῦτο μόνον σημαντήρα.

²³ Lucian, *Herm.* 22: "Ἐστω δὴ μοι ἡ μὲν ἀρετὴ τοιόνδε τι οἶον πόλις τις εὐδαίμονας ἔχουσα τοὺς ἐμπολιτευομένους.

πόλεως τὸν βουλόμενον· τὸν γὰρ δὴ νόμον αὐτοῖς οὐκ ἀπὸ τιμημάτων ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἐγγραφὴν οὐδ' ἀπὸ σχημάτων ἢ μεγέθους ἢ κάλλους οὐδ' ἀπὸ γένους τοῦ τῶν λαμπρῶν ἐκ προγόνων, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν οὐδὲ νομίζεσθαι παρ' αὐτοῖς, ἀποχρῆν δ' ἐκάστῳ πρὸς τὸ πολίτην γενέσθαι σύνεσιν καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν τῶν καλῶν καὶ πόνον καὶ τὸ λιπαρὲς καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐνδοῦναι μηδὲ μαλακισθῆναι πολλοῖς τοῖς δυσχερέσι κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἐντυγχάνοντα, ὡς ὅστις ἂν ταῦτα ἐπιδείξηται καὶ διεξέλθῃ πορευόμενος ἄχρι πρὸς τὴν πόλιν, αὐτίκα μάλα πολίτην ὄντα τοῦτον ὅστις ἂν ἦ καὶ ἰσότημον ἅπασιν.²⁴

If I recall, he told me many things about the city, and especially this. Everyone in it was a stranger and foreigner. Not one was a native, and moreover many barbarians, slaves, people with deformities, dwarves, and paupers **resided [or: were citizens]** there – in short, anyone who wished to participate in the city. For it was not their law to make registration dependent on property qualification, or on rank, stature, looks, or distinction of family ancestry. They didn't care about these things at all. Instead, a sharp mind, a desire for goodness, hard work, perseverance, neither giving in nor weakening from the many misfortunes encountered on the road: these attributes sufficed to become a citizen. Whoever exhibited such traits and kept going until he reached the city, he became a citizen straightaway, and the equal of all the others.

This fictional polis subverts the customary legal regimes for the bestowal of citizenship. The exclusionary criteria that ringfenced citizenship in normal circumstances—parentage, wealth, class, freedom—are no barriers to membership in this community, which awards citizen status to any worthy male who seeks it (though gender, it seems, remains a barrier). The verb ἐμπολιτεύω is applied early in the quotation to people who would usually be denied citizenship like barbarians and slaves, but the speaker is developing the point that, contrary to what the listener (or reader) might expect, such people *are* citizens in this polis. Since the passage is expressly concerned with citizenship, the case can be made that ἐμπολιτεύω means “to be a citizen” or “to have citizen status” in these references.

But there are also several reasons to reject that translation in this context, and to favor instead the more neutral meaning “to inhabit.”

²⁴ Lucian, *Herm.* 24.

First, mere residence irrespective of citizen status is the meaning that ἐμπολιτεύω exhibits wherever else it appears in Lucian's works, as shown above.²⁵ Its meaning in other texts need not dictate its meaning in the *Hermotimus*, of course, but it does call into question whether Lucian would use the verb to denote a specific legal status here while refraining from doing so elsewhere. Second, there is another expression in the passage that covers the meanings "to be a citizen" and "to become a citizen," namely πολίτης εἶναι and γίνεσθαι. Lycius' point about this fictional city's radical citizenship model is not decisively made until he mentions a) ἐγγραφή, the formal process by which people were enrolled among the ranks of a polis' citizens; and b) his use of the word πολίτης to describe the achievement of citizen status. His use of ἐμπολιτεύω at the beginning of the passage does not immediately communicate the citizen status of the barbarians and slaves who dwell in this fictional city; additional terminology and discussion is necessary to get that point across. Nor is Lycius the only character to employ political vocabulary in this way. His interlocutor, the dialogue's namesake Hermotimus, expresses his approval of Lycius' fictional polis by saying, first, "isn't it right for everyone to want to become a citizen (πολίτας γίνεσθαι) of such a city... if upon arrival they will be enrolled as citizens (ἐγγραφῆσεσθαι) and participate in the government?"²⁶ and second, "I myself desire to become a citizen (πολίτης ἐπιθυμῶν γενέσθαι) of such a noble and happy city."²⁷ In sum, it is conceivable that ἐμπολιτεύω means "to be a citizen" in the *Hermotimus*. But the conclusion is not inevitable.

²⁵ Above, n15. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* 14.12 should be taken in the same sense. The text reads: οἱ δὲ πολῖται αὐτοῦ (ἐμπολιτευσαμένου <τούτῳ> τῷ κόσμῳ κατὰ τὸ ἐνηνθρωπηκέναι), οἱ μὴ θελήσαντες αὐτὸν βασιλεῦσαι / "His [i.e. Jesus'] citizens, not wishing for him to be king when he inhabited this world through his incarnation..." Here ἐμπολιτεύω could conceivably mean "to be a citizen" because of its proximity to πολῖται. But Origen uses the verb in that sense nowhere else, whereas he does use it with the meaning "to reside" (above, n17). "To reside" is a better translation in this context.

²⁶ Lucian, *Herm.* 23: οὐκ ἄξιον ἅπαντας ἐπιθυμεῖν πολίτας γίνεσθαι τῆς τοιαύτης πόλεως...εἰ μέλλουσιν ἀφικόμενοι ἐγγραφῆσεσθαι καὶ αὐτοὶ καὶ μετέξειν τῆς πολιτείας;

²⁷ Lucian, *Herm.* 25: πολίτης ἐπιθυμῶν γενέσθαι καὶ αὐτὸς οὕτω καλῆς καὶ εὐδαίμονος πόλεως.

While no appearance of ἐμπολιτεύω clearly and unambiguously justifies the definition of “to be a citizen,” there are two epigraphic references that exhibit the opposite meaning: that is, the verb connotes not citizen status, but the absence of it. The inscriptions in question both come from the Peloponnese and date to the Hellenistic period. The first is a proxeny decree from Antigoneia/Mantineia attesting the benefactions of an Argive man named Aphrodisios towards the city. The key phrase praises the care and kindness that Aphrodisios has shown to “the citizens and those residing (τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ τῶν ἐμπολιτευόντων) in Antigoneia.”²⁸ The wording establishes incontrovertibly that, at least in the civic context of public decrees, someone who was ἐμπολιτεύων was not a πολίτης. These were distinct categories, not equivalent ones, and separate terminology was required to disambiguate them. Moreover, although the text praises the benevolence that Aphrodisios has shown to Antigoneia’s citizens and to its ἐμπολιτεύοντες, the latter played no part in the resolution that the inscription records: line 14 shows that proxeny status was bestowed on the authority of “the magistrates and the rest of the citizens (τοῖς συνέδροις καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πολίταις)” of Antigoneia. The ἐμπολιτεύοντες, then, were governed by the polis, but they were not active participants in its governance. They were neither citizens nor in possession of citizen rights.

The other inscription comes from Tegea and tends towards the same point. The text honors a man named Timocles who was evidently a citizen of Megalopolis, for he is called a Μεγαλοπολίτας in the text. The operative clause runs, “When Timocles, son of Apollonius, the Megalopolitan, having come to the city [of Tegea], and having resided (ἐνπολιτεύσας) in it for many years, made his return...”²⁹ The return in question must be to Megalopolis, the city that supplied Timocles’ core political identity and his citizenship. The inscription breaks off after the phrase τᾶς ἰδίας on line 5, and if the editorial conjecture of πόλιος/πόλεως as the first

²⁸ IG V,2 263, lines 18–9: τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ τῶν ἐμπολιτευόντων | ἐν Ἀντιγονείαι. On the text as a proxeny decree, see Hansen and Nielsen (2004) 98n10.

²⁹ IG V,2 19, lines 1–4: ὁπότε Τιμοκλῆς | Ἀπολλωνίου Μεγαλοπολίτας παραγενόμενος εἰς | τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἐνπολιτεύσας ἔτη καὶ πλείω τάν | [τ]ε ἀναστροφὴν ἐποιήσατο...

word on line 6 is correct, then the text would contrast the city of the Tegeans with Timocles' *own* city (τῶν τε Τεγεατᾶν καὶ τᾶς ἰδίας [πόλιος]).³⁰ To be sure, nothing in the inscription explicitly rules out the possibility that Timocles had Tegean citizenship. But the legible text militates against this conclusion. Not only does the inscription fail to connect ἐμπολιτεύω to possession of citizen rights, it suggests the very opposite: the absence of citizenship, not its presence.

In sum, none of the passages cited by lexicographers offer definitive support to the view that ἐμπολιτεύω means "to have citizen rights." Thucydides has been cited as the primary exhibitor of this meaning, but one cannot ascribe it to his uses of ἐμπολιτεύω without begging the question. In some works of Greek literature, the word means "to reside as an expatriate" or simply "to reside." In others, it signifies the conduct of politics, a meaning that bears some relation to the possession of citizenship, but is not equivocal with it. In one passage from Lucian's *Hermotimus*, the case for a connection between ἐμπολιτεύω and citizenship can be made. But the locus is inconclusive, and it certainly cannot clinch the argument on its own. By contrast, one Hellenistic inscription suggests, and another incontrovertibly demonstrates, that people who were ἐμπολιτεύοντες in a city were not its citizens. Most of the evidence is ambiguous on the matter of citizenship, but where firm conclusions can be drawn, they run contrary to the word's definition in most dictionaries. If ἐμπολιτεύω is to be pressed on the question of citizen status, the more defensible position is that the verb describes people who were *not* citizens in their polis of residence.

The verb's more probable indication of non-citizenship is consequential to the interpretation of Josephus' testimony on Greco-Babylonian interaction in the poleis of the Arsacid empire, which counted several Greek cities among its territorial possessions. Chief among these was Seleucia on the Tigris, one of the most populous cities of the ancient world. A Seleucid foundation, the city was absorbed during the conquest of Mesopotamia by the Arsacids in the second century BCE, but it retained a Greco-Macedonian character for centuries thereafter, at least in the estimation of

³⁰ Vidal-Naquet (1988) 346.

Roman authors.³¹ Despite Seleucia's status as a preeminent city, there is little evidence for its internal governance. Local coinage attests a βουλή, but the relative power of this institution within the city is unclear, as is the ethnic makeup of its membership.³² Pausanias reports that Seleucus I settled "Babylonians" in Seleucia when he founded it, but he does not discuss their integration (or the lack thereof) into the Greco-Macedonian citizenry.³³ Tacitus speaks of perpetual antagonism between oligarchic and democratic factions within the Seleucian citizen body, and of the Arsacid king's occasional intervention in these conflicts.³⁴ He does not, however, describe the composition of the citizenry, which leaves the matter of Greek/non-Greek interaction obscure.

Given the meager evidence for Seleucia's inner workings, Josephus' testimony is indispensable, and the meaning of ἐμπολιτεύω is essential to its proper evaluation. The Jewish historian touches on Seleucian demography in a digression about the massacre of Jews in Babylonia, an event that took place across several southern Mesopotamian localities, Seleucia included, in the late 30s or early 40s CE.³⁵ Josephus describes the Seleucian populace as follows:

οικοῦσιν δ' αὐτὴν πολλοὶ μὲν Μακεδόνων, πλεῖστοι δὲ Ἕλληνες, ἔστιν δὲ καὶ Σύρων οὐκ ὀλίγον **τὸ ἐμπολιτευόμενον**.³⁶

Inhabiting this city are many Macedonians and a majority of Greeks, and there are also not a few Syrians in **residence**.

³¹ Greco-Macedonian character: Plin. *HN* 6.122; Tac. *Ann.* 6.42; Cass. Dio 40.16.

³² βουλή on Seleucian coins: McDowell (1935) 117, 142, 150, 189–90, 225–6; Le Rider (1998) 24, 58.

³³ Paus. 1.16.3; cf. App. *Syr.* 58.

³⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 6.42.1–2; cf. Dąbrowa (1994) 196–7n63.

³⁵ Josephus' digression on the Jews of Babylonia: *AJ* 18.310–79. On the date of the episode, see Goodblatt (1987) 616–9; Rajak (1998) 315–6. The digression is dominated by the story of the Jewish "robber barons" Anilaus and Asinaeus, on which see Colpe (1974) 105–6; Shaw (1993); Herman (2006); Fowler (2007); Gregoratti (2013) 187–8; Gruen (2017) 235–6. On Josephus and Jewish citizenship, see Kraft (1971) 88–90.

³⁶ Joseph. *AJ* 18.372.

Macedonian and Greek contingents inhabit Seleucia, both presumably with citizenship in the polis.³⁷ But what are Syrians doing in southern Mesopotamia? The label has caused confusion and fueled debate. Some discussions sidestep the issue and assume that “Syrian” means “non-Greek Babylonian.”³⁸ Nathanael Andrade offers a more detailed explanation. He adduces an early passage of the *Antiquities* where Josephus speaks of “Aramaean, whom the Greeks call Syrians.”³⁹ In Andrade’s view, Josephus’ use of the label Syrian “perhaps homogenized what were assorted Aramaic-speaking ethnicities.”⁴⁰ That is, Josephus’ Syrians are a linguistic group of Aramaic speakers, apparently in contradistinction to Greek speakers. The predominant vernacular in Mesopotamia at this date was indeed Aramaic, since Akkadian was now extinct as a spoken language and nearly so as a written one too.⁴¹ It is unclear whether the Aramaic language actually underpinned a distinct ethnic or group identity in Parthian Mesopotamia, but Andrade makes a good case that Josephus thought as much. Assuming Andrade is correct, though, what does it mean that the Syrian contingent is ἐμπολιτευόμενον at Seleucia?

The second appearance of ἐμπολιτεύω comes a few sections later. When the Jews fled Seleucia for the “Greek city” of Ctesiphon, Josephus narrates, they fared little better, for

ἐφοβήθη δὲ καὶ πᾶν τὸ τῇδε Ἰουδαίων ἔθνος τοὺς τε
Βαβυλωνίους καὶ τοὺς Σελευκεῖς, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ὁπόσον ἦν
Σύρων ἐμπολιτεῦον τοῖς τόποις ταῦτόν ἐλεγον τοῖς
Σελευκεῦσιν ἐπὶ πολέμῳ τῷ πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους.⁴²

³⁷ Spawforth (2006) 3–4 discusses the distinction between Macedonian and Greek in this passage.

³⁸ Herman (2006) 267; Gregoratti (2012) 132; Olbrycht (2017) 13.

³⁹ Joseph. *AJ* 1.144: Ἀραμαίους δὲ Ἀραμὸς ἔσχεν, οὓς Ἕλληνας Σύρους προσαγορεύουσιν.

⁴⁰ Andrade (2013) 108, emphasis added; see also Bivar (1983) 72; Cohen (2013) 368–928.

⁴¹ Gzella (2015) 154; Hackl (2021) 1460, 1471.

⁴² Joseph. *AJ* 18.378. Ctesiphon is called a Greek city at 18.377.

Now the entire Jewish people grew fearful of both the Babylonians and the Seleucians, since the Syrians who **resided** in those places followed the Seleucians into war against the Jews.

Josephus' wording in this sentence is confusing and requires disambiguation. Who were these "Babylonians," and in what sense was their Syrian contingent ἐμπολιτεῦον? It can first be observed that Babylonians are being distinguished from Seleucians, and the phrase "in those places" (τοῖς τόποις) implies that "Babylonians" is not an ethnonym, but instead a designation for "people who reside in Babylonia (of whatever ethnicity)" just as "Seleucians" means "people who reside in Seleucia (of whatever ethnicity)." Incidentally, this usage of "Babylonian" accords well with the testimony of Strabo, who says that the label is applied to people who come from the region of Babylonia (not the city of Babylon).⁴³ Two possible construals of Josephus' sentence follow. One possibility is that these Syrian Babylonians lived in various sites throughout Babylonia, both urban and otherwise. In that case, ἐμπολιτεύω would not have any implications for Greek citizenship, and it would simply mean "to reside," as translated above. A second possibility, however, is that the Syrian Babylonians are specifically residents of Ctesiphon, a city that Josephus has just mentioned and that he describes as a Greek polis. In that case, the situation at Ctesiphon would be analogous to the one at Seleucia: Greeks and "Syrians" live together in an urban territory that operates as a polis, and the Syrian contingent is ἐμπολιτευόμενον in both cases.

What can be said about the relationship between Greeks and Aramaic-speaking non-Greeks in Seleucia and Ctesiphon on the basis of these passages? The meaning of ἐμπολιτεύω is critical to proper assessment, but several scholars have been misled by the

⁴³ Strab. 16.1.16: ὥσπερ δὲ Βαβυλωνίαν τὴν χώραν καλοῦμεν, οὕτω καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας τοὺς ἐκεῖθεν Βαβυλωνίους καλοῦμεν, οὐκ ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας: ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Σελευκείας ἦττον, κἂν ἐκεῖθεν ᾧσι, καθάπερ Διογένη τὸν Στωικὸν φιλόσοφον. The final comment that even people from Seleucia on the Tigris (like Diogenes) could be called "Babylonians" is inapplicable to this passage in Josephus, since the author needs to distinguish between people from Seleucia and people from elsewhere in Babylonia at this point in the narrative.

verb's dictionary definition, and they have arrived at erroneous conclusions about the poleis of Arsacid Mesopotamia as a result. Louis Feldman's Loeb edition of the *Antiquities* translates the first occurrence of ἐμπολιτεύω with the phrase "holding civic rights" and the second with "to be a citizen."⁴⁴ Scholars relying on his translation may thus conclude, like Luca Mazzini, that "Josephus says that most of the citizens of Seleucia were Greeks and Macedonians, with a considerable minority of Syrians included in the civic body."⁴⁵ Tessa Rajak likewise thought that Josephus attested a Seleucian population of "Macedonians, Greeks, and so-called Syrians, all of them holding citizen rights."⁴⁶ David Goodblatt recognized that the sense of ἐμπολιτεύω was critical to the interpretation of these passages, and he expressed some doubt that the "technical meaning" of the verb indicated citizenship. But he ultimately accepted the idea, and hence decided that the Syrians of Seleucia were "Babylonians who have been enfranchised as citizens of the polis."⁴⁷

This position is untenable. The safest conclusion is that nothing about the citizenship of non-Greeks at Seleucia or Ctesiphon can be concluded on the basis of *AJ* 18.372 or 18.378, because the most frequent meaning of ἐμπολιτεύω is simply "to inhabit" without specification of citizen status. Relevant here is the single additional appearance of the verb in the Josephan corpus. Describing the numerous civil disturbances throughout Judaea in the wake of Herod's death, Josephus summarizes, "in this way a great madness took up residence (ἐνεπολίτευσε) in the nation [of the Jews]."⁴⁸ The verb's usage here closely resembles those found elsewhere in Greek literature of the Roman empire, where it signifies *being in* a place, and nothing more. Already in the 19th century another translator of Josephus into English, William Whiston, translated the appearances of ἐμπολιτεύω at 18.372 and 18.378 as "dwell" and "live in," respectively.⁴⁹ That translation is preferable to Feldman's.

⁴⁴ Feldman (1965) 209, 211.

⁴⁵ Mazzini (2021) 171.

⁴⁶ Rajak (1998) 315.

⁴⁷ Goodblatt (1987) 611n23, 613.

⁴⁸ Joseph. *AJ* 17.277: οὕτως πολλή ἀφροσύνη ἐνεπολίτευσε τῷ ἔθνει.

⁴⁹ Whiston (1854) 508–9.

But Whiston's verbiage ducks the question of citizen status, and there are reasons to confront it instead. Josephus invites consideration of citizenship with his choice of verbs at 18.372: Greeks and Macedonians simply inhabit the city on the one hand (οικοῦσιν...μὲν), but on the other (δὲ) the Syrian group is ἐμπολιτευόμενον. If Josephus intended to signify Syrian residence and nothing else, he need not have switched verbs to describe their habitation, and he could have dispensed with the μὲν...δὲ construction, as well. The δὲ seems to signpost a new verb with connotations beyond mere residence. And if those connotations relate to citizen status, the epigraphic attestations of ἐμπολιτεύω point decisively at disenfranchisement. The Hellenistic inscriptions from Antigoneia and Tegea provide clear testimony on the overlap between a polis' citizens and its ἐμπολιτεύοντες: there was none. Those inscriptions come from a context that is germane to Josephus' discussion of Arsacid Mesopotamia, since they pertain to the political administration of the polis and the authority of citizens to participate in its governance. The text from Antigoneia shows that ἐμπολιτεύοντες were distinct from citizens, and that decrees were not issued in their name. If Josephus' use of ἐμπολιτεύω at *AJ* 18.372 and 18.378 has any implications for citizen status, then, the conclusion must be that the Syrian populations of Seleucia and Ctesiphon did not hold citizenship in the polis and were excluded from participation in its political institutions.

The case for this reading can be strengthened by comparison with Arsacid Babylon, where internal sources make a distinction between Greek citizens and unenfranchised non-Greeks. Evidence for Greco-Babylonian interaction comes from the Babylonian chronicles and astronomical diaries.⁵⁰ The scribes who composed these cuneiform texts make frequent reference to a group of people at Babylon and Seleucia whom they call *pulitānu* or *pulitē*, an Akkadian rendering of the Greek word πολῖται.⁵¹ In one chronicle of Seleucid date, this group is explicitly described as "the Greeks [literally: Ionians] who are called *p[ulitānu]*," and it is noted that these people "anoint

⁵⁰ For background on this corpus and its historiography, see recently Tuplin (2019); Robson (2019); Haubold (2019).

⁵¹ Attestations are catalogued in Mitsuma (2019) 295–6.

themselves with oil like the *pull[iṭānu]* who are in Seleucia.”⁵² At Babylon, the *puliṭānu* were headed by the *pāḥāt Bābili*, or “governor of Babylon,” which is probably the Akkadian equivalent of Greek ἐπιστάτης.⁵³ They met in the *bīt tāmartu* (“house of observation”), a close translation of Greek θέατρον, in the sense of “place for seeing.”⁵⁴ Two references may indicate that the operative political institution for the *puliṭānu* of Babylon was the *būlē* (sc. Greek βουλή), but both readings of that word depend on restorations and are not secure.⁵⁵

Aside from the *puliṭānu*, the Akkadian texts mention several other Babylonian population contingents, and they attest the continuation of pre-Hellenistic Babylonian institutions in parallel with those of the polis. The most politically consequential Babylonian population was the *mārē Bābili*, literally “the sons of Babylon,” themselves only a subset of the city’s population, to be sure, and an elite one, at that. All the same, the sources treat these Babylonians as a group distinct from the *puliṭānu*. Their chief organ of government was an institution called the *kiništu* (“council”) of Esagil, which was the temple of the chief Babylonian deity Marduk. The *kiništu* did not meet in the theater as the *puliṭānu* did, but in the *bīt milki* (“house of deliberation”). Its leader was an official called the *šatammu*, “chief administrator and high priest.”⁵⁶ Many Akkadian diaries and chronicles contain references to both the *šatammu* and *kiništu* on the one hand, and the *puliṭānu* under the leadership of the *pāḥāt* on the other. The scribes treated these two groups and their respective institutions as distinct and separate entities. Other Babylonian groups appear in the sources as well. One is the “people of the land who are in Babylon” who fight with the *puliṭānu* in the chronicle quoted above.⁵⁷ The “royal slaves” and the “temple slaves”

⁵² *BCHP* 14, lines 2, 4–5. These appearances of *puliṭānu* must be restored, but the intact appearance of the word in line 9 of the same text allows editors to do so with confidence: Mitsuma (2019) 296–7 (whose translation I quote).

⁵³ van der Spek (2001) 446; van der Spek (2009) 108; Shayegan (2011) 213; but cf. Boiy (2004) 205; Clancier (2007) 57.

⁵⁴ van der Spek (2001) 447; Potts (2011) 246; Canepa (2018) 87–90.

⁵⁵ Mitsuma (2019) 298.

⁵⁶ van der Spek (2001) 451; Boiy (2004) 194–204; van der Spek (2009) 108.

⁵⁷ *BCHP* 14, line 7; trans. Mitsuma (2019) 297; cf. above, n52.

are two other groups that appear clearly in the sources, though their composition is poorly understood.⁵⁸

Specialists debate the relationship between the *pulītānu* and the wider Babylonian population, especially the members of the *kiništu* of Esagil. R.J. van der Spek initially spoke of “ethnic segregation” and even “apartheid” between Greeks and Babylonians, but later softened his position.⁵⁹ “Apartheid” is an inappropriate term, since South Africans under that regime could not have multiple identities across racial categories.⁶⁰ “Segregation” too is problematic, since there is no evidence that Babylon’s *pulītānu* lived in a distinct quarter of the city or forbade their non-Greek neighbors access to certain areas.⁶¹ At the other end of the spectrum, Philippe Clancier adduces evidence from nearby Uruk for individuals with double names, one Babylonian and one Greek, and for mixed marriages between spouses from apparent Greek and Babylonian backgrounds.⁶² On the basis of such material, he concludes that “no ethnic groups, as defined by a unique cultural or ‘blood’ origin, can be seen in the sources,”⁶³ and even goes so far as to say that “[it] is probable that most—if not all—the ‘Babylonians,’ that is the members of the Assembly [*kiništu*] of Esagil, became citizens of the new polis, although we have no firm attestation of that.”⁶⁴ These positions may also be too strongly worded. Greekness clearly *is* a distinct cultural category in the diaries and chronicles,⁶⁵ and while

⁵⁸ See esp. van der Spek (2009) 108 on *AD* 3 -144 35'-37'; Clancier (2017) 66.

⁵⁹ van der Spek (2001); van der Spek (2005); van der Spek (2009).

⁶⁰ van der Spek (2019). On the racial categories of South African apartheid, see Posel (2011) 331-4; Clark and Worger (2016) 47.

⁶¹ This qualification appears already in van der Spek (2009) 113.

⁶² Clancier (2017) 72n103-6; see further Clancier (2007) 27; Boiy (2005); Boiy and Mittag (2011) 119-23; Monerie (2012) 333-43.

⁶³ Clancier (2017) 72.

⁶⁴ Clancier and Gorre (2021) 96.

⁶⁵ In addition to the ethnographic remark that the *pulītānu* anoint with oil (above, n52), see *BCHP* 18B/A B21'=A14', trans. van der Spek, which mentions sacrifices conducted “in the Greek fa[shio]n”; Sciandra and van der Spek (2019) on *AD* 3 -124A rev. 21, which has a Greek person taking over some of the duties of a *šatammu* in 125 BCE; and van der Spek (2001) 451-3 on *AD* 3 -124B rev. 16, which tells of the *pulītānu* storming a temple and forcibly removing an object “whose Greek name is ‘*thronos*’” (the site in question is the Day One Temple, on which see recently Debourse (2020)

it is surely true that some Babylonians became *puliṭānu* over time, complete overlap between the citizen body and the *kiništu* would accord poorly with the representation of these two groups as separate entities in the sources. Most scholars come down closer to van der Spek on these issues, though debate will surely continue as new publications of the chronicles broaden the topic's evidentiary basis.⁶⁶ For now, Rolf Strootman's judgment seems prudent: "although there were cultural boundaries demarcating the Babylonian *politai* as a social group, these boundaries were permeable and the *politai* must at least partly have consisted of 'native' Babylonians."⁶⁷

In any case, one need not pin down the ethnic and cultural character of Babylon's *puliṭānu* to obtain clarifying context for the appearance of ἐμπολιτεύω in Josephus; the key point is that Greek citizenship was the exclusive possession of a limited faction in a broader cityscape. Even if, at a maximum, Clancier is right that all the Babylonians of the *kiništu* became *puliṭānu*, the citizen body would still be no more than one group among several in the Babylonian population. Other contingents like the "people of the land," the "royal slaves," or the "temple slaves" did not enjoy Greek citizenship. The Akkadian sources show that "Greekness" must be understood as a political status at the very least, because they import the Greek word for "citizen" to describe a new class of political agent in the Seleucid and Arsacid periods. With "ethnic segregation" and "apartheid" out of the picture, no scholar claims that this status was categorically restricted to people from certain genealogical lines of descent. But the fact remains that it was an elite status for the city's new ruling class. Historians will continue to debate how many locals became members of this group, but the exclusion of numerous Babylonians from its ranks is beyond dispute.

contra Kosmin (2018) 39–41). All such references presuppose the concreteness of "Greek" as an ethnic and cultural category in the eyes of Babylonian scribes.

⁶⁶ Closer to van der Spek are Mitsuma (2018) 56 and (2019) 296–7; Kosmin (2018) 188; Tuplin (2019) 107n112. Canepa (2018) 57 tends towards Clancier's view, but stresses that Greek citizen status was an elite one.

⁶⁷ Strootman (2013) 86; cf. Wiesehöfer (2015) 331.

In sum, the Akkadian evidence from Babylon supports the view that ἐμπολιτεύω implies residence *without* citizenship in Josephus *AJ* 18.372 and 18.378. When Josephus writes that “Syrians” were ἐμπολιτευόμενοι at Seleucia on the Tigris (and perhaps also Ctesiphon), the word may pertain to their political status, and if it does, then a proper accounting of ἐμπολιτεύω’s meaning enjoins the conclusion that the Syrians in question were not πολῖται. The evidence therefore suggests similar political and demographic conditions at Babylon, Seleucia, and possibly Ctesiphon as well. In these cities, Greek πολῖται had citizen rights in the formal institutions of the polis. Non-Greeks did not. To be sure, many questions remain. It is impossible to know how many Greeks in the area were made rather than born, for instance. The ethnic, cultural, and linguistic character of the non-Greeks is also unclear. They were likely unified by their use of the Aramaic language, but Josephus is the only evidence for this linguistic affiliation as the basis for a group identity and collective political action – and even this idea rests on a particular understanding of the obscure label “Syrian.” Ironically, the non-Greek textual evidence from the area that survives for study is not in the predominant vernacular of Aramaic, but rather the scribal language of Akkadian. Akkadian sources might suggest “Babylonian” as the dominant non-Greek identity, but this label is most often applied in a limited sense to the members of the *kiništu*. Its wider adoption by the other urban contingents of Babylon—to say nothing of other groups in the wider region—cannot be assumed. Ultimately, there may have been no single regional identity that existed in counterpoint to the Greek one, whether as a political status or an ethnicity. What is clear, however, is that Greek citizenship was held by some but denied to others in the major cities of Arsacid Mesopotamia.

One other idea about Josephus’ use of ἐμπολιτεύω in these sections deserves scrutiny. In the view of W.W. Tarn, the verb indicated that the “Syrians” of Seleucia lived in a Hellenistic ethnic πολιτευμα whose participants had “definite political rights short of citizenship, with their own organization, their own (equivalent of) magistrates, but were not part of the city.”⁶⁸ Other scholars have

⁶⁸ Tarn and Griffith (1961) 157; cf. Tarn (1997) 18.

followed him on this point.⁶⁹ Caution, however, is necessary here, for several reasons. First, none of the attestations reviewed above demonstrate a connection between ἐμπολιτεύω and πολίτευμα. Etymology does not require one, since ἐμπολιτεύω comes from the adjective ἔμπολις, not from πολίτευμα.⁷⁰ Second, aside from four ambiguous cases from Sidon, Hellenistic πολιτεύματα of the ethnic variety are attested only in the territories of the Ptolemaic empire.⁷¹ There is no sign of them in southern Mesopotamia in the Seleucid or Arsacid periods. Third and finally, Ptolemaic epigraphy suggests that the verbal correlate of πολίτευμα was συμπολιτεύω, not ἐμπολιτεύω.⁷² As for those who are called ἐμπολιτευόμενοι in the sources, there is no direct evidence that they maintained parallel governmental structures outside those of the polis. Such structures could potentially have existed, to be sure. The office and institution of the *šatammu* and *kiništu* of Babylon may well have looked like a πολίτευμα to Mesopotamian Greeks. Yet the same arrangement cannot be assumed at Seleucia, a Hellenistic foundation, and it is equally possible that non-Greeks at Seleucia and Ctesiphon were not politically organized in any way; the πολῖται may have simply ruled over them, not alongside them. Lack of Greek citizenship need not have entailed membership in a different kind of political collectivity. In sum, there is nothing to substantiate Tarn's reading of Josephus on this matter.

In 1978, Getzel Cohen wrote that “[the] difficulty lies in determining whether ἐμπολιτεύω is ‘the verb of *politeuma*’ (as Tarn

⁶⁹ Downey (1961) 115; Sherwin-White (2004 [1963]) 185; Kasher (1985) 182; Oppenheimer (1983) 221; Andrade (2013) 42–3n27, 108n50.

⁷⁰ Vidal-Naquet (1988) 345; Tzanetou (2012) 128; Cohen (2013) 167n14. There is one firm attestation of ἔμπολις in Soph. *OC* 1156, where it refers to Oedipus, who is not an Athenian citizen; another possible appearance in the same text depends on a controversial restoration (*OC* 637). The word is also attested in a fragment of the comic poet Eupolis (fr. 492 K.-A./137 K.), with indeterminate connotations for citizenship. See Vidal-Naquet (1988) 342–8; Olson (2014) 254.

⁷¹ Sängner (2014) 53–4, 61–2; Sängner (2021) 107. The cases from Sidon are potential exceptions, but the classification of these groups is unclear, and they should probably be associated with the Ptolemies rather than the Seleucids in any event. See Honigman (2003) 61–2; Sängner (2019) 229–39; Sängner (2022).

⁷² See *SEG* II, 871; perhaps also *CPI* 136 = TM 6599; discussion in Fischer-Bovet (2020) 147–8; Fischer-Bovet (2021) 222–3.

claims...), or whether it means ‘to be a citizen, hold civil rights in a place’ (*LSJ* s.v. ἐμπολιτεύω).⁷³ The preceding discussion has attempted to resolve this difficulty, and its conclusion is: neither. Scholars who consult standard lexica are told that the ancient Greek verb ἐμπολιτεύω means “to have citizenship” in a place. They shouldn’t be, because there is no unambiguous evidence for this definition. By contrast, there *is* unambiguous evidence for the opposite meaning: that the verb connotes residence in a place without citizenship. The confusion that has surrounded this verb has led to misreading of Josephus’ key testimony on the place of non-Greeks in Seleucia on the Tigris, and possibly also Ctesiphon, during the Arsacid period. The “Syrians” he mentions were not πολῖται in Seleucia, or at least the author’s use of ἐμπολιτεύω does not indicate as much. It more likely means that they were not citizens. The Syrians may have had their own system of political organization that looked to Greeks like a πολίτευμα, but the appearance of ἐμπολιτεύω cannot be used to argue for this proposition. The dearth of sources for the Arsacid era precludes certainty, but Josephus’ use of ἐμπολιτεύω suggests that non-Greeks were non-citizens in the poleis of southern Mesopotamia.

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⁷³ Cohen (1978) 86n71.

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