

computerized files of sundry organizations should my own humble, written proofs ever disappear. It's enough to make even a partial paranoid flinch.

What of the world of Ancient Athens? How did you prove that you were who you said you were? The answer is rather simple -- you had to fall back on centrally-held records, or community recognition of your status or, in the final analysis, the law courts. No simple I.D. cards for ancient Athenians existed since this would have been too expensive and too prone to corruption by forgeries for an ancient state's purpose.

From our records it appears that Athenians only took full pains to officially recognize their boy children since they were the ones who would be exercising political rights and serving in the army. Of course a woman's identity could always be (as with a man too) a matter of affidavit, written or verbal, especially when it came time for her to marry: "Yes Agathon, my wife, Creusa, and I are both legally married Athenian citizens and I am looking to betroth our legitimate daughter, Tecmessa, to your son." Should this statement later prove fraudulent the courts would then have to consider it. Women in public would then be known as the daughter of Timon or the wife of Agathon, etc., men whose own identity would be a clear matter of public record. There was, however, an official record made of newly-married women to aid in authenticating legitimate offspring.

For boy children more official steps needed to be taken. On the third day of a public religious festival held around the beginning of November, the Apatouria, all citizens' children of both sexes were enrolled by their fathers into an ancient subdivision of the Athenian tribe called the phratry (brotherhood). At the same festival newly-married young women were also taken note of for the record. This was the first basis of proof as to who you were.

Later, at age 18, the boys only were received as voting citizens by being recorded on the Deme (county: there were about 190 of them) lists which would have been kept in the demarch's (reeve's) office. The deme was itself a subdivision of one of the 10 Athenian tribes based originally on locality, though deme membership later was hereditary. If one were of sufficient status one might also be enrolled as an ephebe (military cadet). Being enrolled in your deme at 18 was, however, the most critical act in legitimizing your I.D. as a citizen -- a record to which you would turn if your citizen status was challenged. We could presume, though we do not hear of it, that central records were kept in the city of Athens as well which divided the citizens into their four wealth categories, a list which could be used for taxation and civil and military service. Separate lists of the wealthiest citizens probably also existed apart from the general record.

I.D. in Ancient Athens

R.L. Porter

In Canada today there are many ways for a person to prove who he/she is. Our wallets are indeed miniature record collections indicating our exact identities; a birth certificate, a social insurance number card, an OHIP card, and an immensely long-numbered driver's licence with a photo attached give me an official persona that no ancient could ever match. I haven't even mentioned my official passport, again with photo, hidden in my safety deposit box. Then there's my commercial identification: my Visa and Mastercard, my Sear's card, my bank books and personalized cheques. We must also throw in a horde of private membership cards proving I'm a faculty member at the University of Waterloo, a member (full) of the Canadian Legion, National Geographic Society, University of Waterloo Credit Union, etc. Much more impressive than all of this is that I'm in various central

People who came from outside Athens to settle permanently without citizenship in Athens were called metics (home-changers). Each metic had to find a citizen patron (prostates) who would register his name in the deme of his residence and act for him in areas reserved only for citizens. Permanent residents of foreign birth living in Athens, then, had to be centrally listed for taxation, military service, etc. But, of course, in a world without I.D. (especially passports) you were who you said you were (e.g. Antimachos, son of Leophron, the Samian) when you registered.

To us this world with no identity cards would prove most unsatisfactory and confusing. Charlatans and imposters would seem to have an open field. Yet there was a sobering check on this apparent laxity. There were always the law courts or sundry political commissions which could be set up to investigate status. Making a false claim of citizenship was punishable by death, or at best enslavement (a possible punishment also for not properly registering as a metic). This would dampen the larcenous spirit of would-be impostors considerably.

The only Athenians who actually had what we would consider I.D. were the members of the popular jury courts, the annually allotted 6,000 dicasts. They had identification, however, for technical purposes only. Their small wood or bronze rectangular tablets with a personal name, the name of a deme, and a number from 1 to 10 were required for the mixing machine (kleroterion) used to randomly select juries.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIGS, SHORT COURSES, ETC.

SUMMER 1990

Cyprus: Dig, Late Roman settlement, June 3-22. Late Bronze Age town, July 16-Aug. 3 (Adult volunteers, no previous experience needed). Also 10 places for Grades 11, 12 students July 16-Aug. 3. Enquiries: Antichità Archaeological Research Teams, 109 Village Road, St. Catharines, Ontario L2T 3C3.

South Italy: Course and dig, June 18-July 28, Classics 475, Practical Methods in Classical Archaeology. Contact Prof. Chris Simpson, Classics Dept., Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3C5. Tel: (519) 884-1970 a.s.a.p. for information about this University of Alberta course (deadline may be past).

England: Course and Dig, July 23-Aug. 18, Classical Studies 335 (Roman [Neronian] Fort, Baginton). Contact Prof. A.A. Barrett, Dept. of Classics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5. Tel: (604) 228-4063 (office), (604) 228-8991 (home).

England: Summer School, July 4-Aug. 3. University of Warwick. Ten courses include The Romans in Britain. Contact Prof. D. Mervin, University of Warwick (summer school), Coventry, England, CV4 7AL. Tel: 011 44 203 523113 (from Canada, 24 hours). (Telex - 317472 UNIREG, FAX - 203 461606).