The World of Athens

Classical Athens boasted some of the most original and influential achievements in literature, art, philosophy, medicine and politics. This best-selling book, now issued in a second edition, provides a comprehensive and highly illustrated introduction to its history, society, culture and values aimed at the student and the general reader. The text has been extensively revised from the first edition and the bibliography updated. A wide range of topics is discussed, but the book refuses to divide up the Athenian world neatly into separate compartments, insisting that sense can only be made of the society by making connections between its history, institutions, values and environment. The book can be used either on its own or as an accompaniment to students learning Greek with the Reading Greek course.
The World of Athens
An Introduction to Classical Athenian Culture
SECOND EDITION

Revised by Robin Osborne
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Preface

_The World of Athens_ is an introduction to the history, culture, values and achievements of classical Athens. It requires no knowledge of ancient Greek, but was designed to be used with profit by those learning Greek using _Reading Greek (Text and Grammar, 2nd edition, Cambridge University Press, 2007)_. It begins with a sketch of the history of Athens from earliest times till the destruction of Athenian democracy in 322 BC. There are then seven chapters on different aspects of the Athenian world, and the main text closes with a chapter on the way in which the Athenians situated themselves with regard to other worlds and the way in which they themselves pictured their own world. The main text is followed by a Greek alphabet with a simplified English transliteration and pronunciation guide, a glossary of terms used, suggestions for further reading keyed in to chapters and paragraphs of the text, a bibliography of the works referred to, and an index.

The first edition of this book was produced by a scholarly team presided over by Peter Jones and including Paul Cartledge, George Cawkwell, John Gould, Desmond Lee, Jeremy Paterson, Brian Sparkes, Virginia Webb and John Wilkins. The revisions for the second edition have been entirely my responsibility. I have reviewed the whole original text, substantially rewriting the historical introduction and some sections of other chapters, but leaving intact both the original structure of the book and substantial discussions. I have replaced the very brief suggestions of ‘Further Reading’ in the first edition with a bibliography keyed to the numbered paragraphs of each chapter. The illustrations have also been reviewed, and various changes made. I am very grateful to the ancient history graduate students reading the M.Phil. in Classics in the University of Cambridge in 2001–2, who offered detailed views of what they thought needed changing, to the JACT Greek Committee for its initiative and support, and to Michael Sharp of Cambridge University Press, without whose assistance with the pictures my job would have been a great deal more tedious.

Passages from the _Iliad_ are taken from the translation by E.V. Rieu, revised and updated by Peter Jones (Penguin, 2003). The passage from the _Odyssey_ is taken from the translation by Richmond Lattimore, copyright 1951 and 1965 University of Chicago. Acknowledgement is due to the late Richmond Lattimore and the University of Chicago Press for the use of this material.

Robin Osborne, _King’s College, Cambridge, August 2006_
Director’s note

Professor Osborne is due all our thanks for his superb updating of what has so far been a very successful complement to the Reading Greek series, and is now set fair to become even more so. My thanks also to Dr Janet Watson for the Index.

Peter Jones, Director, JACT Reading Greek Course, January 2007

Notes

1 The usual messy-ish compromise has been made in turning Greek words into English, opting sometimes for the traditional form, sometimes for the strict transliteration. Macra have been added where the transliteration is literal (but not in the maps). Note that ‘Attica’ and ‘Sparta’ are the Romanised forms of the Greek; we have opted for the Greek transliterated forms ‘Attikē’ and ‘Spartē’. But we have kept e.g. Roman ‘Persia’ rather than Greek ‘Persikē’. We have also used ‘z’ in transliteration in place of the technically more correct ‘sdl’, producing e.g. ‘Zeus’ instead of ‘Sdeus’, etc. For the traditional Romanisation of Greek words in English, see p. 365 and Reading Greek (Grammar and Exercises), pp. 494–5, or Peter Jones, An Intelligent Person’s Guide to Classics (London, 1999), pp. 138–9.

2 All dates are BC unless stated otherwise.

3 All writers quoted are given a brief pen-sketch in the Glossary. Where inscriptions are quoted, the references are as follows:

IG i3 = Inscriptiones Graecae (3rd edn.).


4 Numbers in brackets in the text indicate chapters and paragraphs of this book (e.g. (4.23)).
Map 2 Greece and the Aegean Islands
Map 3 Attikē
Map 5 The Persian Empire c. 500 B.C.