CLASS IN ARCHAIC GREECE

Archaic Greece saw a number of decisive changes, including the emergence of the *polis*, the foundation of Greek settlements throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea, the organization of pan-Hellenic games and festivals, the rise of tyranny, the invention of literacy, the composition of the Homeric epics and the emergence of lyric poetry, the development of monumental architecture and large-scale sculpture, and the establishment of "democracy." This book argues that the best way of understanding them is the application of an eclectic Marxist model of class struggle, a struggle not only over control of agricultural land but also over cultural ideals and ideology. A substantial theoretical introduction lays out the underlying assumptions in relation to alternative models. Material and textual remains of the period are examined in depth for clues to their ideological import, while later sources and a wide range of modern scholarship are evaluated for their explanatory power.

PETER W. ROSE is Professor of Classics at Miami University of Ohio. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard and taught at Yale for eight years. His publications include *Sons of the Gods, Children of Earth: Ideology and Literary Form in Ancient Greece* (1992), and articles on Pindar, Sophocles, Homer, Marx and the study of women in antiquity, Thucydides, Cicero, film and pedagogy, Marxism and ideology.

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PETER W. ROSE

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To Irina, Liubasha, and Daniel

"But, as changes do happen, it is desirable that they should be explained."

Arnaldo Momigliano

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Preface

The origin of this book is on one level very simple: Kurt Raaflaub asked me to write a short piece on this topic, then when my first draft was four times too long, encouraged me to consider writing a monograph. His fellow-editor, Hans van Wees, though I never had the pleasure of meeting him face-to-face, also gave much helpful advice – not least with his own excellent offprints. I am indebted as well to David Roselli, James McGlew, Virginia Hunter, Page duBois, Mark Golden, Arch Christopherson, Rick Wolff, Tracy Rihle, Steve Tuck, and David Tandy for helpful comments on earlier drafts or parts thereof. Since I could not bring myself to incorporate all of their suggestions, I hereby absolve them of all remaining errors. Special thanks are due to Steve Nimis, who alone among my circuit of friends and colleagues has read the whole text and offered other sorts of valued support. Thanks as well to Daniel Tompkins for his insights on the works of Moses Finley.

I have a unique debt to Walter Donlan, whose advice and encouragement at an early stage played a key role in my decision to attempt this quite daunting task. Based especially on a grueling three-hour phone conversation about a draft of my chapter on the Dark Age, I know that the tragic death of this very dear man soon after I had sketched a fuller version of that chapter deprived me of what I'm sure would have been a much-needed and trenchant critique. At a dinner in 2002 with colleagues after a joint session of CAMWS on recent developments in Homeric scholarship, Walter complained in his playfully churlish way, "I've learned a lot from you guys, but you've obviously learned nothing from me." This was of course blatantly untrue. The problem, which may be relevant in my text as well, is that we have all internalized and taken for granted so much of his compelling work that we tend to focus on the relatively few areas where we disagree.

Though my training and teaching have been primarily in ancient literature, my interest in the history of the Archaic Period dates back to the late 1950s when I audited a lecture course on the period by H. T. Wade-Gery,

who was visiting for one semester at Harvard. I have no recollection of ever having talked with the great man, but I was totally entranced by his lectures, not to mention the succinct elegance of his written arguments about Homer (1952) and the whole Archaic Period (1958). I recall stimulating discussions with Donald Kagan, when, as a young instructor, I audited one of his graduate seminars. Since then I have read extensively in other scholars about the period; and my Greek Civilization course, which I have taught for many years, is shamelessly weighted in favor of the Archaic Period. In adducing archaeological and art-historical evidence I am very much dependent on the published works I have been able to read.

While I attempt in my introduction to offer an overall account of my theoretical assumptions, I recognize that I cannot count on all readers reading my text from cover to cover and have therefore felt obliged to repeat or expand on some of those theoretical grounds in analyzing specific phenomena where they seem to me most useful for the convenience of readers who are only interested in a particular topic. By "theoretical assumptions" I refer in my introduction primarily to the senses in which my approach is Marxist. Though I do address the question of the nature of the evidence briefly at the end of my introduction, more specifically methodological considerations of approaches to the often radically heterogeneous evidence for different periods are primarily engaged with in connection with those periods.

Again on the assumption that many readers may chose to read only specific chapters, there are pieces of evidence that are relevant to more than one chapter. A more serious area of what I consider unavoidable repetition arises from the unique role of Athens in the surviving evidence. I treat the Solonian Crisis and data about Peisistratos first in connection with the causes and character of tyranny in general, secondly in a separate chapter devoted exclusively to Athenian developments down to the end of the Archaic Age, where the focus is more upon the unique factors that led to Athenian democracy. There is a chronological regression if not extensive repetition in the separate chapter on Sparta, where I return to some issues of *polis* formation dealt with in an earlier chapter.

Though I address his work more systematically in my introduction and in passing where relevant throughout my text, I should note here that I read Jonathan Hall's *A History of the Archaic Greek World: ca. 1200–479 BCE* only after I had already completed more than one draft of most of my text. On a number of issues I was gratified that we had read the same scholarship and reached similar conclusions. On many other issues Hall

compelled me to rethink my conclusions and in some cases impelled me towards more equivocal formulations than I had initially thought justified by the evidence. But the most stimulating and ultimately affirming aspect of his text in relation to my own project was Hall's central focus on historiography and his militant, scornful dismissal of methodologies that reflect the "theoretical or ideological *preferences* of the historian" (2007: 287, my emphasis). His powerfully articulated position on this matter has caused me to modify significantly my theoretical introduction and many formulations in the rest of my text, at the same time that what I perceived as the paucity of explanation in his text as a whole confirmed my commitment to posing the sorts of questions I pose. In particular, beside his enviable command of the archaeological data, his minimalist engagement with the surviving literary remains of the period attests to his relative lack of interest in matters of ideology: he offers a brief, trenchant critique of Morris's concept of a "middling ideology" (Hall 2007: 178–9) and presents scattered, if usually acute, citations from Homer, Hesiod, Trytaeus, and the Theognis corpus on particular points but does not engage with the more or less complete texts as such or explore the range of ideas and values that emerge from the fragments of lyric – in the broad sense of that term. This relative exclusion of course saves him from engaging seriously with the mountain of literary and semi-literary discussions of Homer, Hesiod, and the lyric poets (among whom I include of course the elegiac and iambic poets).

The second edition of Robin Osborne's *Greece in the Making* (2009) appeared when my "final" version was already being assessed by a reader for Cambridge University Press. Only as I went through a "final" version correcting typos have I been able to make very selective use of a work that challenges a number of my assumptions and, for example, appears to consider discussion of Homeric politics and Homer's class sympathies as minimally "productive" (2009: 349) and dismisses the existence of an "aristocracy" as "a modern fantasy" (2009: 209). Overall I have enormous respect for Osborne's major contributions to our understanding of ancient Greece and, as my text attests, have made abundant use of his work. But clearly we view the world and history in radically different terms.

To the extent possible within the limitations of a single book I have tried throughout to cite and explicate the archaic texts that alone give us access to what and how the Greeks of this period thought and felt, though I am well aware that what has survived is not only radically skewed in favor of those males who controlled the means of ideological production but also, with few exceptions, radically fragmentary. But since, as I argue in

my introduction, class conflict is most often carried out on the ideological plane, these texts are crucial to my whole project.

On the assumption that a Marxist approach is likely to provoke a higher level of skepticism than more traditional approaches like those of Hall and Osborne, my text engages in a more or less constant dialogue with as much of the relevant traditional scholarship as I have been able to read. I try to quote these authorities sufficiently to clarify both my agreements and disagreements. This may render my text less easily readable than an uninterrupted account of my conclusions, followed, as, for example, in Hall's text, by a brief section of "Further Reading" or in Osborne's by "Bibliographic Notes" for each chapter. However, I do feel that I need to show very openly the *process* by which I have arrived at my conclusions, exposing what I have been able to read and what I have failed to read out of the usually bottomless accumulation of potentially relevant discussions of all matters classical. I also believe my readers are entitled to a clear enough selection of alternative views to make their own judgment of the validity of my readings. I am painfully aware that I could well spend the rest of my life trying to read everything potentially relevant to my project. Since alas I can pretend to no first-hand expertise in dealing with archaeological data, I have been especially at pains to specify the sources of my necessarily tentative conclusions. Moreover, since one of my goals in this study is to demonstrate where a Marxist approach differs from and where it coincides with non-Marxist approaches, this format best facilitates this goal. Finally, I hope perhaps too optimistically that my attempt to engage by rather generous citation of alternative views may free me from the usual charge against Marxists of a "dogmatic" or "Procrustean" imposition of my conclusions at the same time that it offers serious students of the period a broad account of other scholars' diverse approaches to an inherently conflict-laden area of study.

Translations unless otherwise noted are my own. I avoid quoting Greek letters except in quoting other scholars who use them. I use capitals to mark beginnings of lines of poetry only to insist that my sources – not my translations – are poetry: I make no attempt at rhythm or equal lengths, and am often awkwardly literal in attempting to convey to my reader as much as possible of what I take to be the force of the original. Occasional italics are used to indicate stress suggested by word order or particles like *ge*. I give the transliterated Greek for a small number of key words that change historically or which have no close English equivalents. In transliterating Greek, I use circumflexes to distinguish Greek eta and omega, I usually have *k*'s for Latin *c*'s and *-os* endings for Latinate *–us*, but in the case of

very common names I give the modern form (e.g., Achilles, not Akhilleus, Archilochus not Arkhilokhos, Herodotus, not Herodotos). Moreover, there is inevitable fluctuation in the practice of the scholars I quote, so that some confusion about names is unavoidable.

I would like finally to thank the staff of Cambridge University Press who have been involved in this project. Michael Sharp was both conscientious and sympathetic in dealing with several readers and to my eternal thanks found the finest of all possible final readers, Paul Cartledge, who kindly made his role known to me at a conference on Class and the Classics at the British Academy in July 2010 organized by Edith Hall. For a variety of reasons and in view of various commitments, virtually no further work on the book was possible after that date, but it goes without saying that his decision that the book was worthy of publishing entails no necessary agreement with any particular argument of my text. I would like to thank Josephine Lane and her predecessor Elizabeth Hanlon, who have been consistently helpful and patient in responding to my many queries. Last but not least I would like to thank my copy-editor Andrew Dyck, whose patience, eagle eye, and sensitive ear have saved me from many an error. Any remaining infelicities are purely mine.

Abbreviations

C	Campbell, David (ed., trans.) (1982–91) *Greek Lyric*. 3 vols. Cambridge, MA.
CAH	*The Cambridge Ancient History* (1923–39 [1st edn.], 1961–2005 [2nd edn.]). Cambridge.
D-K	Diels, Hermann and Walther Kranz (eds.) (1964) *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Zurich and Berlin.
FGH	Jacoby, F. (ed., comm.) (1923–) *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin and Leipzig.
G	Gerber, Douglas E. (ed., trans.) (1999) *Greek Elegiac Poetry: From the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*. Cambridge, MA.
IC	Guarducci, M. (ed.) (1935–50) *Inscriptiones Creticae*. 4 vols. Rome.
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae* (1873–) Berlin.
L-P	Lobel, Edgar and Denys Page (eds.) (1955) *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*. Oxford.
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott (1940) *A Greek–English Lexicon*. New edn. rev. Henry Stuart Jones. Oxford.
MECW	Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels (1975–) *Collected Works*. New York.
ML	Meiggs, Russell and David Lewis (1988) *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions: To the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* Rev. edn. Oxford.
PMG	Page, Denys (ed.) (1962) *Poetae Melici Graeci*. Oxford.
W	West, M. L. (ed.) (1971–72) *Iambi et Elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum Cantati*. 2 vols. Oxford.