These collected papers construct a distinctive view of Classical Athens and of Athenian democracy, a view which takes seriously the evidence of settlement archaeology and of art history. This evidence both casts new light on traditional questions and enables new questions to be asked, questions concerning the experience of being an Athenian citizen, how the institutions of democracy affected the Athenian economy, and how the rituals of religion related to the rituals of democratic politics. Unlike books on Athenian democracy which focus on the Assembly and Council, this book gives full weight to women as well as men, slave as well as free, and the rural worker as well as the leisured man about town. Robin Osborne’s work has been in the forefront of the resurgence of interest in Athenian law and Athenian religion; these essays are each placed in their scholarly context, and point the direction for future research.

**Robin Osborne** is Professor of Ancient History in the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of King’s College, Cambridge. He has written and edited numerous works on ancient history, including *Greek history* (2004); *Rethinking revolutions through Classical Greece* (co-edited with Simon Goldhill, Cambridge, 2006); and *Debating the Athenian cultural revolution: art, literature, philosophy and politics 430–380 BC* (edited, Cambridge, 2007).
ATHENS AND ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY

ROBIN OSBORNE
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Over the last two and a half decades one of the major strands of my work has been concerned with our understanding of Athenian democracy, in its political, its social and economic, its artistic and its religious manifestations. In particular, I have sought in a variety of ways to bring out the links between the nature of Athenian political relations and the way in which Athenian society behaved and in which it represented itself. Those links I have argued to work in both directions: the fact that Athens was a democracy influenced Athenian society, the Athenian economy, the arts at Athens and Athenian religion, but equally social forms, economic activities, artistic expression and cult practice themselves influenced the particular way in which the Athenian democratic constitution worked in practice. Although few scholars would deny the value of such an approach to Athenian democracy, few themselves practise such an approach. If it is scarcely thinkable that anyone today, more than fifty years on, would write about the Athenian constitution as if understanding constitutional history were simply a matter of understanding changing magisterial powers or formal differences in the legal capacities of the people, in the way that Hignett did in 1952 in *A history of the Athenian constitution to the end of the fifth century BC*, nevertheless general discussions of Athenian democracy continue to paint their picture on a narrowly political canvas. In the papers collected here I have endeavoured to show why this is too limited an approach to understanding classical Athens and its democracy.

Following the example – and reviving the vision – of my Cambridge predecessor, A.H.M. Jones, whose work I celebrate and explore in chapter 1, I here collect together what I regard as my major contributions to the study of Athens and Athenian democracy. I have arranged them into an introduction, five parts and a coda. In the introduction (chapter 1), which is based on my inaugural lecture as Professor of Ancient History in the University of Cambridge, I survey the broad outline of the last fifty years of scholarship on Athenian democracy and suggest some future directions.

Preface
Preface

This introduction puts my own work into its more general context and shows how my work relates to that of other scholars. The five following parts are each provided with their own brief preface, outlining the particular lines of argument pursued in those chapters. The first part looks at Athenian democracy as a system in which the institutional framework and the patterns of official expression shaped thought and behaviour not just in the core institutions of Council and Assembly but in the meetings of sub-groups, whether demes, phratries, gene, or even more informal groups. The second part looks at the organisation of production in Athens, at who laboured to what effect and at what drove production. It is interested both in the ways in which who did what influenced individuals’ attitudes to one another and in the way in which the corporate demands of the city impacted upon the economic decisions that Athenians made. A particular concern in this part is with the interaction between economic activity and place of residence, and I attempt to gauge the possible parameters of physical mobility, its causes and its effects. The third part turns its attention to Athenian law, once more to look at the interaction between practice and theory, both in terms of individuals’ private use of the courts and of the way Athenians deployed law in their relations with others. I try to show both the impact of law upon society (e.g. by tracing the effects of the Periclean Citizenship Law upon the effective visibility of women) and of politics upon law (particularly in relation to the oligarchic coups of the late fifth century). The fourth part turns attention to the Athenians’ monumental construction of an image of the city and its concerns in the sculptures of the Parthenon, arguing that the sculptures both have to be read carefully in their particular architectural context, which governed how they were viewed, and in their broader political context. These sculptures inevitably raise questions of the relationship between democratic politics and religion, and it is that theme that is taken up in the final part of the book, whose chapters explore the effect of festival practices upon citizen ideology, the place of particular religious representations in the citizen’s construction of the world, and the ways in which we can use material and pictorial evidence to reveal something of Athenians’ religious experience.

In a coda I bring together many of the concerns of the earlier pages by drawing attention to the importance within democracy of the existence of fixed patterns of behaviour, of secular and religious rituals, which offered the reassurance that what Athenians did and the decisions they took were not arbitrary but the consequence of processes hallowed by tradition. In collecting these papers here I have taken the opportunity to update references, correct errors and add endnotes in which I comment on what
other scholars have contributed to the issue in hand since my paper was originally published. The substance and argument of the papers themselves have not been altered, and, with two minor exceptions, where ignoring subsequent major publications would be unhelpful, each of them refers only to the scholarship of which I was aware when I first wrote. But the papers now observe the same conventions for the transliteration of Greek (a broadly Hellenising convention, except for the most familiar of names), and over the indication of dates (dates between 1 and 1000 are BC unless otherwise indicated; dates over 1000 are AD unless otherwise indicated).

I am grateful to Michael Sharp at Cambridge University Press and to the two anonymous Press readers for their encouragement and for their suggestions about the shape of the collection. The work of updating and of converting the papers to a uniform system of reference, along with many other tedious tasks involved in putting these papers together, has been done by my research assistant, James Watson. I am most grateful to him for his efficiency, care and attention to detail. I thank Philippa Steele for her sharp-eyed reading of the proofs.
Standard abbreviations for ancient authors and texts have been used, although these have been Hellenised where appropriate to conform to the convention used throughout this volume.

AA  Archäologischer Anzeige
ABSA  Annual of the British School at Athens
AION  Annali di archeologia e storia antica
AJA  American Journal of Archaeology
AJAH  American Journal of Ancient History
AJP  American Journal of Philology
AM  Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts: Athenische Abteilung
Annales E.S.C.  Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations
Arch. Delt.  Archaiologikon Delion
Arch. Eph.  Archaiologike Ephemeris
Arch. Eph. Chr.  Archaiologike Ephemeris, Chronik.
BCH  Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique
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<td>CJ</td>
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<td>C&amp;M</td>
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<td>MarbWPr</td>
<td>Marburger Winckelmann-Programm</td>
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MEFRA  Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome
NM  National Museum n.s.
POxy  Oxyrhynchus Papyri
Praktika  Praktika tes en Athenais Archaiologikes Hetaireias
RA  Revue archéologique
REA  Revue des études anciennes
RhM  Rheinisches Museum für Philologie
SEG  Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum
TAPA  Transactions of the American Philological Association
ZPE  Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
List of places of original publication


Ch. 9 ‘Law in action in classical Athens’, JHS 105 (1985) 40–58.

List of places of original publication


Ch. 17 ‘The erection and mutilation of the Hermai’, PCPS n.s. 31 (1985) 47–73.
