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978-0-521-17670-5 - The History Written on the Classical Greek Body

Robin Osborne

Frontmatter

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The History Written on the Classical Greek Body

This book challenges historians of all periods to come to terms with the distortions that they systematically introduce into their work by relying on what has been written on paper, without looking at what was and was not written on the body. Historians use textual evidence to try to understand what people did in the past. But in interpreting that textual evidence they make assumptions about what past peoples could see. In particular they make assumptions about the way in which the classifications of language were visible to the eye, as well as conceivable in the mind. This book is concerned with the ways in which texts relating to classical Greece, and in particular to classical Athens, classified people, and with the extent to which those classifications could be seen by the eye. It compares the qualities distinguished in texts with those distinguished in sculpture and painted pottery and emphasises the frequent invisibility of the categories upon which historians have laid most stress – the citizen, the free person, the foreigner, even the god. The frequent impossibility of seeing who belonged to which category has major political, social and theological implications which are variously explored here. It also has implications for how history is written which go far beyond the case of classical Greece. Nothing short of a revolution in what historians are prepared to treat as source material will be required to take account of the findings of this book.

ROBIN OSBORNE is Professor of Ancient History at the University of Cambridge, a Fellow and Senior Tutor of King's College, and a Fellow of the British Academy. His research ranges broadly across Greek history, Greek archaeology and the history of Greek art. Along with numerous edited and co-edited volumes, he has written monographs on *Demos: the Discovery of Classical Attika* (Cambridge, 1985), *Classical Landscape with Figures: the Ancient Greek City and its Countryside* (1987), *Greece in the Making, 1200–479 BC* (1996, 2nd edn 2009), *Archaic and Classical Greek Art* (1998) and *Greek History* (2004). A collection of his papers has been published as *Athens and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge, 2010). This book was written as a contribution to a project on 'Changing Beliefs of the Human Body' funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

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Preface

Many histories have been and could be written on the classical Greek body. That I have written this particular history is owed in the first instance to the initiative of my colleague John Robb, who enlisted me to be part of a research project on ‘Changing Beliefs of the Human Body from the Palaeolithic to Modern Medical Anthropology’, and to the generosity of the Leverhulme Foundation in funding that project. In second place it is due to the kind invitation of the Wiles Trust to deliver the Wiles Lectures at Queen’s University Belfast in May 2008. For any historian the invitation to deliver Wiles Lectures is an honour and a privilege, but for an ancient historian it is a particularly daunting prospect to follow the trail blazed by E. R. Dodds, whose *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge, 1965), and M. I. Finley, whose *Politics in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1983) formed the Wiles Lectures in 1963 and 1980 respectively.

It is the precious peculiarity of the Wiles Lectures that not only are the lectures extensively discussed but the members of the History Department at Queen’s are joined for those discussions by scholars invited from elsewhere. I am therefore most grateful not only to David Hayton, David Whitehead and the Queen’s University department but to Roger Brock, Ashley Clements, James Davidson, Nick Fisher, Lin Foxhall, Oswyn Murray, Boris Rankov, Claire Taylor and Stephen Todd, who gave up a week of their own research time to listen to these lectures and debate their ideas and arguments. They will see from the text that follows how much I am in their debt.

This book has grown out of research and teaching ancient Greek history and Greek art and archaeology over many years. But this particular development of my ideas has been stimulated by the rich academic interactions of my Cambridge environment, both within the Leverhulme research project and outside it. More conversations than I can reasonably record have left their mark on my text and on my vision. I am particularly grateful to Catherine Osborne, Michael Squire and Caroline Vout for reading and commenting on drafts of the lectures and the additional chapters of this book. My research assistants, Ben Keim and Philippa Steele, played an invaluable part in preparing the book for publication, and Philippa prepared the index. I am grateful to them, and to the valiant copy-editor, Jan Chapman.

Abbreviations

ABL	C. H. Haspels (1936) <i>Attic Black-figure Lekythoi</i> . Paris.
ARV	J. D. Beazley (1963) <i>Attic Red-figure Vase-painters</i> . Second edition. Oxford.
Bekker, <i>Anecdota Graeca</i>	I. Bekker (1814–21) <i>Anecdota Graeca</i> . 3 vols. Berlin.
CAT	C. W. Clairmont (1993) <i>Classical Attic Tombstones</i> . 8 vols. Kilchberg.
GDI	F. Bechtel and others (eds.) (1884–8) <i>Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften</i> . 5 vols. Göttingen.
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> . Berlin.
LGPN	P. M. Fraser and others (eds.) (1987–) <i>Lexicon of Greek Personal Names</i> . 5 vols. to date. Oxford.
LIMC	L. Kahil and others (eds.) (1981–99) <i>Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae</i> . 17 vols. Zurich.
ML	R. Meiggs and D. M. Lewis (eds.) (1969) <i>A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century BC</i> . Oxford. Revised edition (1988).
RO	P. J. Rhodes and R. Osborne (eds.) (2003) <i>Greek Historical Inscriptions 404–323 BC</i> . Oxford.
SEG	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum</i> (1923–)
SIG	W. Dittenberger (ed.) (1915–24) <i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> . Third edition. Leipzig.