1 Programme notes

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Why 'performance'? It is not a word from a Greek root, nor is it easy to see how an adequate case could be made for regarding 'performance' as an ancient Greek conceptual category. The hazard of this volume, however, is that the notion of performance will not merely appropriate ancient materials to a distorting modern framework, but will bring into significant focus a series of related terms, institutions, attitudes and practices integral to the society of classical Athens in a way which will be especially illuminating for the culture of democracy. A politician's speech, a footballer's game, a musician's concert, a lover's antics, can be linked directly enough in contemporary English discourse through the category of 'performance': the persuasiveness of the connection depends on a set of barely concealed, if rarely articulated, assumptions about the subject and the subject's relation to social norms and agendas. When the Athenian citizen speaks in the Assembly, exercises in the gymnasium, sings at the symposium, or courts a boy, each activity has its own regime of display and regulation; each activity forms an integral part of the exercise of citizenship. This volume suggests that 'performance' will provide a useful heuristic category to explore the connections and overlaps between these different areas of activity, and, moreover, that these connections and overlaps are significant for understanding the culture of Athenian democracy.

The temporal and spatial scope of this volume is largely, though not totally, restricted to Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. In part, this is because there is so much more evidence from Athens in comparison with any other classical Greek city; in part it is because of a desire to explore how Athens and its democracy might depend on performance in specific and special ways, for all that gymnasia, symposia, political assemblies, festivals (for example) are seen throughout Greek culture. The intellectual space of this project needs more careful articulation. Let me first try to map some boundaries in Greek. The space we are hoping to explore could be outlined – as a first and

non-exhaustive gesture – by four crucial Greek terms: *agōn*, *epideixis*, *schēma*, and *theōria* (with their relevant cognates). *Agōn* is normally translated 'contest', but it has a wide range of application. It is the normal, general term used to refer to the grand events of the inter-national athletic circuit, such as the Olympic games: in this sense, it is used both of the whole festival and of particular competitions within it. It can denote the space of the contest itself, a competitive arena. Al-though the Homeric and Hesiodic instances of the term may imply a restricted sense of a 'gathering' of people,[1] in the classical period it al-most inevitably implies a competitive framework, and often a space for the contests of manhood. It is thus the standard expression for the debates of the law-court and Assembly (where men compete both for public status and for victory in particular issues), but it is also a privi-leged term for the conflict of war (where masculinity is also para-digmatically tested). Thus, as Greek faces Persian in war – a clash not merely of military forces but of ideology, culture, way of life – Aeschy-lus famously has the troops shout out (*Pers.* 405), 'Now the *agōn* is for everything!.' It also remains the usual expression for any rhetorical conflict, especially the central, formal argumentative scenes of tragedy or the extended clashes of comedy. That this cursory account has already listed the major public institutions of the democratic polis – Assembly, law-court, games, theatre, war – is not by chance. Greek culture in the classical era, and Athens in particular, as has often been noted, is an intensely competitive culture, a culture where authority and status are contested, struggled over and maintained by men, fam-ilies, states, in a series of hierarchical and oppositional institutions and behavioural practices. The *agōn* as form and expectation links the dif-ferent areas of public display for Greek males. Indeed, that Athenian culture is so profoundly agonistic informs not merely the rhetoric and organization of institutions, but also the construction of the social self. The hierarchical pursuit of *timē* ('personal honour'), the concomitant elaborate discourse of outrage (*hubris*), the interactions of *philoi* ('friends') and *ekhthroi* ('enemies') around the injunction to do good/ harm in an economics of carefully observed reciprocal treatment, all play an integral role in the social exchanges in which the Athenian

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[1] See e.g. *Iliad* 18. 376, and its use in *Iliad* 23 both for the audience of Patroclus' fu-neral games (e.g. 258, 617) and for the space of competition (e.g. 685, 799); *Theogony* 91, with West's note *ad loc*; for its shift in the fifth century see Fraenkel's notes to *Agamemnon* 513 and 845, where he comments that Aeschylus' apparent use of the term to mean agora 'was presumably felt as a Homerism by Aeschylus and his audience'.

citizen's self is enacted.[2] For all of this, the *agōn* is a fundamental cul-
tural context.

   Epideixis, 'display', is more markedly a term of the intellectual en-
lightenment of the classical polis.[3] The new intellectuals of the fifth
century (and the more established intellectual teachers of the fourth)
drew on the agonistic nature of public life in the city, along with the
institutional emphasis on verbal activity, to privilege rhetorical display
as a major sign and symptom not merely of the pursuit of success in
democracy but also of what Geoffrey Lloyd has called 'the revolutions
of wisdom' – that is, the turn towards the self-conscious reflection on
the processes of the city of words, or what might be called the elabo-
ration of meta-discursive systems. *Epideixis* becomes, at least by the
fourth century, fully established as the name of one branch of rhetoric
as a formal study – the set, display speech – but it is also linked to the
ideas of argumentative proof and demonstration – showing as well as
showing off.[4] For Herodotus, however – who called his whole history
an *apode[i]xis*, 'demonstrative display' – the display of a naked woman
by her doting husband is also an *epideixis* (Her. 1.11); as is the display
of troops (Xen. *An.* 1.2.14). Display can be physical as much as verbal,
an act of embodying forth authority, glamour, position. So military
display is part of the parade of power and is described in the language
of *epideixis* by historians and orators in their analysis of political
behaviour. Persian displays of wealth are countered by Athenian dem-
onstrations of austere manhood. In democracy, the conspicuous para-
ding of wealth by the polis is set in contrast with personal gain or kingly
grandeur, as the spectacle of consumption becomes fully imbricated in
a politicized discourse of material prosperity.[5] The institutions of de-
mocracy from the gymnasium to the Assembly required display, and
with it comes elaborate protocols and self-aware discussion, of which
the rhetorical theories (and practice) of *epideixis* are only one albeit
most evident and developed aspect. *Epideixis* requires an audience;
when competitive, as *epideixis* almost inevitably is, it necessarily trian-
gulates competition through an audience. It establishes a dynamic of

[2] See on honour Cairns (1993); Adkins (1960); *timai*, 'honours', is a term used of public
   office in democracy; on *hubris*, Fisher (1992); Cohen (1991); Herman (1993), (1994),
   (1996); on *philia*, Herman (1987); Konstan (1997); Blundell (1989); reciprocity, von
   Reden (1995), Millett (1991), all with extensive further bibliography.
[3] See Lloyd (1987).
[4] See e.g. Aristotle *Rh.* 1.3.3ff., and on demonstration, II.22; III.17.
[5] See Hall (1989); Miller (1997); the promised books on money by Kurke, Seaford, and
   von Reden are all eagerly awaited. See now von Reden (1997).

self-representation where self-promotion is restricted by the fears and limitations of the group constituted as an audience. *Epideixis* becomes the site where the self-advancement of the citizen is negotiated in the city of words.

Schēma is a complex term whose history has not yet been adequately researched in contemporary scholarship. I shall trace here some aspects of its range of sense. Demosthenes in his attack on Stephanos describes (45. 68–9) how his opponent walks around town with a grim expression, which a spectator might reasonably think is a 'sign of his propriety' (*sophrosunēs . . . sēmeia*), but which is really a sign of his misanthropy, since, according to the orator, his gait and expression are an attempt to avoid any demands or social contacts by being standoffish. 'This *schēma*', concludes Demosthenes, 'is nothing but a screen (*problēma*) of his character (*tropou*)'. *Schēma* is the physical appearance presented to the gaze of the citizens – appearance which may be simply what is seen, a 'form', but which also may be a mere appearance, a semblance or concealment of true nature. The connection of gait (*badisma*), expression and attitude repeatedly epitomizes a man's *schēma*.[6] So Demosthenes, describing what it is like to be hit in public, explains that it is hard for a victim to express to someone else his attacker's '*schēma*, his expression, his voice' (21.72). Xenophon describes Socrates' grand exit from the courtroom as (*Ap.* 27) 'he departed radiant in his eyes, his *schēma*, and his gait'. Indeed, Xenophon's Socrates generalizes this physiognomics for the painter Parrhasius by claiming that (*Mem.* 3.10.5) 'the dignified and free, the humble and slavish, the controlled and the wise, the outrageous and vulgar, are distinctly visible in still and moving humans through the face (*prosōpon*) and the *schēmata*'. The gaze of the citizens, in which honour and status are contested, constructs the citizen's bodily appearance as a *schēma* open to evaluation, regulation and scrutiny. It is the gap between *schēma* as form and *schēma* as appearance that allows for the performance of self – that is, the self-presentation, self-regulation, self-concealment which construct or stage the citizen in the public eye.

Schēma, then, is a fundamental expression for the embodiment of *epideixis* in the agonistic world of the polis. But its range of sense goes much further. It can be used more generally for the 'form' or 'structure' of a government (so, for example, the '*schēma* of democracy' (Thuc. 6.89) or, more generally, the '*schēma* of a constitution' (Plat.

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[6] For a very brief introduction to this, see Bremmer (1991).

Plt. 291d), although even such expressions can easily become tinged with a negative tone, as when the Great King's rule is described as 'no small *schēma* of power' – the 'pomp' of regal government (Plato *Laws* 685c)). It can refer, in Euripides' memorable phrase, even to a 'manner of living', a 'form of life' – as Medea preparing to kill her children regrets (1038–9) 'you will no more look upon your mother with your dear eyes, when you have departed to another manner of life (*schēma biou*)'. It is not by chance that the deceptive, rhetorical Medea, a barbarian outraged by Greeks, should turn to the language of *schēma*, of (misleading) form. Perhaps more strikingly, however, *schēma* develops a range of technical senses. It standardly and commonly refers to a dancer's moves or gestures or 'positions'. Indeed, Isocrates also describes the aim of athletic trainers as 'teaching the *schēmata* devised for contesting (*agōnia*)' (*Antid.* 183). A *schēma* is a posture which can be learnt, studied, prepared – composed: a model or exemplary form, to be enacted or embodied. Furthermore, *schēma* also refers to the technical 'forms' of composition itself, not merely in such phraseology as Aristotle's description of prose as 'not a metrical *schēma* of expression' (*Rh.* III.8.1), but also in music theory's idea of a 'figure' of musical composition, and rhetoric's use of *schēma* for what Roman writers called 'figura', a figure of speech.[7] *Schēma* thus expresses the composed form of an observed phenomenon. Both the fact that *schēma* thus stresses a regular and regulated form, and that it also emphasizes something which is composed, modelled, learnt, made up, make the language of *schēma* fundamental to the performance of the citizen.

I have already referred several times to 'the gaze of the citizens'. The establishment of democratic institutions made public debate, collective decision making, and the shared ideals of participatory citizenship central elements of political practice. To be in an audience was not just a thread in the city's social fabric, it was a fundamental political act. To sit as an evaluating, judging spectator was to participate as a political subject.[8] *Theōria* is a convenient term under which to discuss this changing politics of spectacle.

As with the previous terms, the range of meaning for *theōria* is extensive, covering indeed each aspect of the dynamic of spectating. At one level, it can mean the act of watching itself. This can be an

[7] The use of *schēma* in rhetoric becomes increasingly technical and increasingly common from the fourth century onwards, see Kennedy (1963) and for a convenient collection of sample passages, Russell and Winterbottom (1972) index *sub* 'figures'.

[8] See Goldhill (1995); (1997) specifically on the theatrical audience; and Lanni (1997) on types of audience; more generally, Sinclair (1988); Ober (1989).

explorer's sight-seeing:[9] the speaker of Isocrates' *Trapezeticus* explains
(4) that since he had conceived a desire to find out about the world, his
father had sent him off 'to trade and to see the world', *kata theōrian* (as,
indeed, according to Herodotus (1.29), Solon left Athens for the same
reason). Particularly under Plato's influence, this expression of the act
of viewing is applied to the act of the philospher's intellectual contem-
plation of the world (and hence arises the English word 'theory': the
connection between 'viewing' and 'theory' has been a commonplace of
contemporary theoretical writing). More commonly, however, *theōria*
has an institutional frame (a sense less often noted by modern theo-
rists). To be a *theōros* or to *theōrein*, is the normal expression for atten-
dance at the games or at religious festivals. Thus in a telling phrase,
where Demosthenes is disparaging Aeschines' political life in compar-
ison with his own, he exclaims scornfully, 'You were a secretary, but
I attended the Assembly; you were an actor, but I was a spectator'
(*etheōroun*). Both the active political status of spectating, and its insti-
tutional frame are neatly marked by Demosthenes' rhetoric, which
makes watching plays in the theatre analogous to political participation
in the Assembly, and – as the orator would have it – being an actor
parallel to taking notes as a scribe. So, the orator marks himself as a
figure defined by this judging audience when he describes himself in
a significant juxtaposition as 'the object of judgement, the object of
gaze' (*krinōmai kai theōrōmai* 18.315).

   Indeed, there is a further more formal sense to *theōros* which dis-
tinguishes it from the closely related word *theatēs*, 'spectator'.[10] For to
be a *theōros* is to be a state official appointed and paid to attend games
or festivals in an official representative capacity – consequently it is
often translated 'state ambassador'. This was funded by liturgy, the
system of raising money from wealthy individuals which was the
mainstay of democratic economics, and the *theōros* often performed a
specific religious duty, and was often splendidly dressed, escorted and
crowned – thus creating a spectacle (*theōrēma*) in himself. In a sense,
however, every citizen performed such a role: the theoric fund (*to the-
ōrikon*) was established to enable every citizen to attend the theatre
(and for other similar purposes), and it was a fund carefully buttressed
by law against any challenge. To be a *theōros* is a right and duty of the

[9] For the historical specificity of 'tourism' as a term, which I have thus avoided, see e.g.
Buzard (1993); and on earlier models of travel, Campbell (1988); Greenblatt (1991);
Pratt (1992). On Herodotus, see Redfield (1985). On the development of pilgrimage
and artistic viewing, see Hunt (1982); Sivan (1988); Ousterhout (1990); Elsner (1992).
On 'world pictures' and travel in general for the Greek material, see Romm (1992).

[10] Whether there is an etymological connection between the two terms is debated.

Athenian citizen, performed in the institutions of the state and institu-
tionally supported by financial and legal means.

As the act of viewing defines the political subject of democracy, so it
becomes a source of discussion and debate. Thucydides' Cleon (3.38)
accuses the Athenians of being merely '*theatai* of speech making' – as
opposed to being willing to act, to provide *erga*, 'deeds', in response to
logoi. Typically for Thucydides' sophisticated and cynical narrative
technique, Cleon addresses these remarks to the people as he fails to
persuade them to keep to an earlier resolution to destroy the city of
Mytilene. From a different perspective, the role of *theōros* becomes
material for Aristophanic comedy, ever swift to debunk the claims of
class and privilege. When Bdelycleon is trying to teach Philocleon how
to behave like a rich man ('look at – *theō* – my *schēma*', he says, 'and see
which rich man I look like'), he advises him to tell 'impressive stories'
of 'how he was a fellow *theōros* of Androcles and Cleisthenes' (both
men are regular butts of comedy for social and sexual improprieties).
'I've never been on state delegation (*tetheōrēka*) anywhere', replies
Philocleon, 'except to Paros, and that was for two obols'. The two obol
payment suggests that Philocleon was a rower in a state ship, rather
than a delegate, as Aristophanes typically sets his 'common man'
against elite expectations. Xenophon's *Hiero* (10–13) – to turn to
political theory – makes the first distinction between a tyrant and a
private citizen (*idiōtēs*) the fact that a citizen can exercise the duties and
pleasures of *theōria*, whereas a tyrant because of his inability to appear
in public or travel cannot enjoy 'spectacles through vision' (τὰ διὰ τῆς
ὄψεως θεάματα[11]). For Xenophon, no democrat, it is pleasure as much
as political positioning that is at stake in the ideology of viewing. In a
similar vein, though with far more complex ramifications, Plato dis-
tinguishes (*Resp.* 475d1ff.) between the *philotheamon* ('lover of spec-
tacles/sights') who is motivated by pleasure to engage in the arts (where
they delight in 'fine voices, colours and *schēmata*'), and the *philosophos*,
who is, as it were, 'a *philotheamon* of truth' (*Resp.* 475c4). The devel-
opment of optics as a new science in this period,[12] tragedy's discourse
of vision and knowledge (especially in plays like the *Oedipus Tyrannus*
or the *Bacchae*),[13] the attack by the new intellectuals on the assumption

[11] The pursuit of what is 'worth seeing' stretches from Herodotus through Xenophon to
Pausanias and the Greek novel: see Elsner (1992); Bartsch (1989); Goldhill (1996a).
[12] See Simon (1988).
[13] Tragedy 'extended the practical problems of vision and visibility that belong to the
conventions of its *mis en scène* into an epistemological concern with insight, knowledge,
revelation and truth', Zeitlin (1955a) 176. See for discussion and bibliography Goldhill
(1986) chs. 8 & 11.

of the necessary connection between perception and knowledge, all contribute to the extensive discussion of the viewing audience as an integral social and political element of democracy. As *epideixis* high-lights the function of speech-making in democracy (which is, as Demosthenes put it (19.184), a *politeia* of *logoi*) and in the construction of the political subject of democracy, so *theōria* emphasizes the role of the evaluating, judging spectator as a key factor in the construction of democratic culture. Both terms show how visual and verbal display become the topic of self-reflexive concern in Athenian democratic discourse.

These four terms, then, *agōn*, *epideixis*, *schēma* and *theōria*, with their cognates and related language, show something of the complexity with which the public discourse of democracy is constructed, articulated and reflected on in Athens. Some evident connections between these vocabularies have already emerged in, say, the agonistic context of *epideixis*, or the focus on the judgemental viewing of a citizen's *schēma*. I wish briefly to stress, however, four particular notions which run throughout the preceding discussion, and which together go some way towards explaining the instructive power of the idea of 'performance culture' for the society of classical Athens.

First, spectacle. Both in the most general sense that, as Xenophon's *Hiero* (*Hier.* 1. 11) puts it, 'different countries certainly have different things worth going to view (*axiotheata*)',[14] and in the more institutional and political sense that the Assembly, law-court, and theatre (not to mention the processions and rituals of religion) depend on staging a scene to be watched, evaluated and enjoyed, Athenian democratic culture constantly parades its politics of spectacle. According to the Old Oligarch (3.8), Athens had more festivals than any other state; according to Aristophanes, more law suits.[15] Demosthenes and Aeschines imagine their speeches to be delivered 'before all Greece'. Plato attacks Athens as a theatocracy, a society ruled by the dangers of a crowd's pleasure in spectacle. There is a public awareness of the specialness of Athens' culture and its concomitant requirements on its citizens. Thus, it can be instituted that the tribute of the allies should be paraded, ingot by ingot, in the theatre before the plays were per-formed at the Great Dionysia,[16] a grand statement of the power and

[14] Cf. *Hiero* 11 for a theoretical discussion of the politics of competitive display.
[15] On Athenian festival calendar, see Mikalson (1975); for other states, see Nilsson (1957); for general introductions, Cartledge (1985), Bruit Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel (1992); and the general case of Seaford (1995). For detailed work on festivals, see for bibliography below nn. 21, 64, 69, 71.
[16] For discussion and testimonia, see Goldhill (1990).

prestige of the polis, but, in turn, Isocrates (*de pace* 82) can see this ritual as a way of the democratic state becoming more hated by its allies. Similarly, Pericles' funeral speech in Thucydides – an *epideixis* central to a major state ritual, instituted by democracy[17] – also reflects (2.38) on Athenians' attitudes to contests and religious rites as part of a culture of festival which is essentially Athenian and quite unlike the Spartans'. Democracy repeatedly makes a spectacle of itself.

Second, audience (or spectators). A spectacle needs its audience, its spectators. And as much as the different types and forms of spectacle can be analysed (as I shall continue below), so too different constructions of the audience are an essential dynamic of the functioning of spectacle and of democracy. Considering the role of the spectator will involve questions of the boundaries of the collective (fundamental to democratic polity), questions of how insiders and outsiders are defined (included and excluded). It will involve issues of how power is circulated in the public events of democracy, which, beyond the interplay of mass and elite, requires a consideration of the activity and passivity of spectators, the role of public knowledge, the (self)-awareness and manipulation of such defining categories. Iconically, Dicaeopolis in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* starts the play sitting in the audience of the Assembly, commenting on his role, and eventually separating himself from the collective by a private peace treaty with the Spartans (after he has invaded the political stage and stripped the masks off returning ambassadors, revealing their corruption). The politics of this comedy articulate at all levels a tension between individual desires and collective procedure, as it stages a series of festival activities (processions, feasts, dressing up), enjoyed by one man at the expense of the community. Enacted before the collective of the city, this comedy makes a joke out of joining in.[18] Democracy privileges 'individual participation in collective processes', and that sense of a dynamic between the collective and the personal makes the formation of an audience an integral and contested aspect of its culture.

Third, the construction of the self. It is important that each of the Greek terms I began by considering plays a fundamental role in the construction of the political subject of democracy. One of the objections that might be raised against utilizing the category of 'performance' for ancient culture is that the modern term may imply and impose anachronistic and distorting ideas of the self as a political and social entity with notions of inwardness, privacy and individual personality

[17] See Loraux (1981); Clairmont (1983).
[18] I have discussed this, with extensive bibliography in Goldhill (1991).

which might be out of place in ancient Athens.[19] What this volume hopes to show, however, is that the notion of a performance culture can enable the development of a historically specific and nuanced account of the constitution of the citizen as a political subject across and through a range of particular social practices and discourses. This in turn may prove instructive for contemporary performance studies, which have not always faced up to the historicity of the category of performance.[20]

Fourth, self-consciousness. By this I mean that each discourse I have considered integrally involves reflection on its processes as they are enacted. The theory of rhetorical epideixis as informing the rhetoric of epideictic oratory; the extensive discussions of how vision functions; or of the philosophy of justice and reciprocity in the most litigious of cities; or of the ethical theory underlying a citizen's behaviour; all these mark the fifth century's turn to self-conscious theorization. Democratic culture proceeds in a symbiotic relation with (democratic) theorizing (a theorizing that goes beyond the narrowly defined political theory of constitutional matters). The citizen's self-representation and self-regulation are formulated within this self-reflective critical discursive system.

'Performance culture', this volume suggests, is a valuable heuristic category to explore the interconnections of these areas of Athenian society. It is intended that thinking thus generally about a cultural system and its connections with the performative will encourage a comprehension of the interplay between aspects of the polis which are often treated as bounded fields but which are integral and interrelated elements of the developing democratic city.

II

It would be easy to produce a diachronic account of the development of Athenian democracy which focused on performative elements. Starting, say, from the tyrant Peisistratus, and the story of his rise to power by the drama of being led into the city by a statuesque woman, dressed as Athena; or, say, from Solon's performance of his political and revolutionary poems in the agora; following through the invention of democratic institutions of public performance, the growth of civic

[19] For discussion of these issues, see Pelling (1990); Gill (1996).
[20] See, for example, the muddled approaches to universality in Turner (1990), Schechner (1990), Blau (1990), or the collections edited by Diamond (1996a) and Parker and Sedgwick (1995) whose admirable pursuit of interdisciplinarity has a far from adequate historical frame.