The Athenian Democracy In The Age Of Demosthenes Structure Principles And Ideology

For two centuries classical Athens enjoyed almost uninterrupted democratic government. This was not a parliamentary democracy of the modern sort but a direct democracy in which all citizens were free to participate in the business of government. Throughout this period Athens was the cultural centre of Greece and one of the major Greek powers. This book traces the development and operation of the political system and explores its underlying principles. Christopher Carey assesses the ancient sources of the history of Athenian democracy and evaluates criticisms of the system, ancient and modern. He also provides a virtual tour of the political cityscape of ancient Athens, describing the main political sites and structures, including the theatre. With a new chapter covering religion in the democratic city, this second edition benefits from updates throughout that incorporate the latest research and recent archaeological findings in Athens. A clearer structure and layout make the book more accessible to students, as do extra images and maps along with a timeline of key events.

This history of Athenian democracy covers the period 403-322 BC, and focuses in particular on the crucial last thirty years which coincided with the political career of Demosthenes and ended with his suicide in 322. It examines Athenian democracy both as a political system and as an ideology. In describing the former it distinguishes between the three major decision-making organs (the Assembly, the Legislators and the People's Courts) and the magistrates who were responsible for preparing the agenda for the legislature and also for carrying its decisions into effect. In discussing Athenian democratic ideology, the book also makes the important distinction between the ideals held by the democrats themselves and those imputed to them by the critics of democracy. The Athenians conceived of liberty both as the ability to participate in the decision-making process, and as the privilege to live without oppression from state or other citizens. Equality was not considered as an equality of nature, but as one of opportunity.

*Includes pictures *Includes ancient accounts of Athenian democracy by Aristotle, Plutarch, and others *Includes footnotes, online resources and a bibliography for further reading *Includes a table of contents *Includes ancient accounts of Athenian democracy by Aristotle, Plutarch, and others *Includes footnotes, online resources and a bibliography for further reading *Includes a table of contents
Athenian Democracy

Routledge

The public aspects of the lives of Athenian citizens (c. 450 to 322 BC.) are assessed to establish the nature and extent of citizen participation in the governing democracy of that period. The system of government in classical Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries BC has provided the world with the most famous and perhaps the most perfect example of direct democracy. When democratic rule was ended by the conquering Macedonians in 322, the Athenians had evolved principles and practice of democratic ideology that became the direct inspiration of those liberal ideas cherished by the Western world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Mogens Hansen examines Athenian democracy both as a political system and as an ideology. In describing the former he distinguishes between the three major decision-making organs - the Assembly, the Legislators and the Peoples Courts, and the magistrates who were responsible both for preparing the agenda for the legislature and for carrying its decisions into effect. In discussing Athenian democratic ideology Dr Hansen also makes the important distinction between the ideals held by the democrats themselves and those imputed to them by the critics of democracy, principally (and ironically, given that they would barely have survived under any other system) the philosophers. The Athenians conceived liberty both as the ability to participate in the decision-making process, and as the right to live without oppression from the state or other citizens. Equality was conceived not as an equality of nature, but as an equality of opportunity. The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes is based on unrivaled knowledge of the subject, the result of more than thirty years' sustained research.

This 1999 book discusses the ways performance is central to the practice and ideology of Athenian democracy.

An unrivaled collection of source material, often unavailable in translation, on the history and philosophy of the world's first democracy.

"Die wissenschaftliche Welt wie alle an der Geschichte Griechenlands im klassischen Zeitalter Interessierten ueberraupt, haben B. fuer einen wertvollen und originellen Beitrag zur althistorischen Diskussion, vor allem aber fuer eine nuetztliche und konzise Monographie ueber eine trotz reicher Detailforschung nur selten in zusammenfassender Form dargestellte Epoche der athenischen Geschichte zu danken." Tyche "Although Thrasybulus of Steiria was a major player in some of the most important events of Athenian history, he has been largely neglected by ancient commentators and modern scholars alike. By way of giving Thrasybulus the attention his deeds warrant, Buck provides in his brief study a Thrasybulus-centered history of the period from 411-389. [...] The reader will find a concise, clearly-written, and well-argued discussion of the events of the period." Bryn Mawr Classical Review Content: Sources and Scholarship


The Athenian democracy of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. is the most famous and perhaps most nearly perfect example of direct democracy. Covering the period 403-322 B.C., Mogens Herman Hansen focuses on the crucial last thirty years, which coincided with the political career of Demosthenes. Hansen distinguishes between the city's seven political institutions: the Assembly, the nomothetai, the People's Court, the boards of magistrates, the Council of Five Hundred, the Areopagos, and ho boulomenos. He discusses how Athenians conceived liberty both as the ability to participate in the decision-making process and as the right to live without oppression from the state or other citizens. Equality was conceived of as an equality not of nature but of opportunity.

In 508/7 B.C.E., after years of chaos and uncertainty, the city of Athens was rocked by a momentous occurrence: the passage of a series of reforms that resulted in what has come to be known as the world's first democracy. Exactly how the Athenians did this is still a fundamental question 2,500 years later. The results of the reforms transformed the very nature of what it meant to be Athenian and their far-reaching effects would come to leave their mark on nearly every aspect of society, including the structures at which they prayed and in which they debated legislation. By attending to the built environment broadly, and monumental architecture specifically, this book investigates the built environment of ancient Athens precisely during this time, the late Archaic period (ca. 514/13 - 480/79 B.C.E.). It was these decades, filled with transition and disorder, when the Athenians transformed their political system from a tyranny to a democracy. Concurrent with the socio-political changes, they altered the physical landscape and undertook the monumental articulation of the city and countryside. Interpreting the nature of the fledgling democracy from a material standpoint, this book approaches the questions and problems of the early political system through the lens of buildings. The focus on monumental structures erected during this particular time period demonstrates how the built environment worked to facilitate the functioning of the nascent political regime. While Athenian democracy -- its institutions, ideology, and capabilities -- has been intensively studied, little attention has been paid to the intersection between built structures and the political system during its earliest phases. This book draws attention to a pivotal period of Athenian political history through the built environment, thereby exposing the richness of the material record and illustrating how it participated in the creation of a new democratic Athenian identity.

Classical Athens perfected direct democracy. The plays of this ancient Greek state are still staged today. These achievements are rightly revered. Less well known is the other side of this success story. Democratic Athens completely transformed warfare and became a superpower. The Athenian armed forces were unmatched in size and professionalism. This book explores the major reasons behind this military success. It shows how democracy helped the Athenians to be better soldiers. For the first time David M. Pritchard studies, together, all four branches of the armed forces. He focuses on the background of those who fought Athens' wars and on what they thought about doing so. His book reveals the common practices that Athens used right across the armed forces and how Athens' pro-war culture had a big impact on civilian life. The book puts the study of Athenian democracy at war on an entirely new footing. "This is unlike any recent work I know of. It offers a challenging, often refreshing, and what will certainly be a controversial assessment of classical Athenian democracy and its significance to modern America. Samons is willing to tread where few other classicists are willing to go in print. He reminds readers that the Athenian democracy offers just as many negative lessons as positive ones, and topics like the popular vote, the dangers of state payments to individual citizens, the naturally acquisitive foreign policy of democratic governments, and the place of religion in democracy all come up for discussion and criticism. Samons has written an original and very provocative book."—James Sickinger, author of Public Records and Archives in Classical Athens

"Professor Samons' lively and challenging account of ancient Athens raises important questions about democracy, ancient and modern. It will surely arouse keen interest and debate."—Donald
Kagan, author of The Peloponnesian War "In this elegantly written, carefully researched, and perceptive book, Samons presents a penetrating analysis of ancient Athenian democracy's dark sides. His book is as much about the errors and weaknesses of our own political system as it is about those of ancient Athens. Whether or not we agree with his critique and conclusions, this book is not merely thought-provoking: it is annoyingly discomforting, forcing us to re-examine firm beliefs and to discard easy solutions."—Kurt A. Raaflaub, author of Discovery of Freedom in Ancient Greece "In this marvelously unfashionable book, Samons debunks much of what passes in the current-day academy as scholarship on classical Athens, demonstrating that it is an ideologically-driven apologia for a radically defective form of government. In the process, he casts light on the perspicacity of America's founding fathers and on the unthinking populism that threatens in our own day to ruin their legacy."—Paul A. Rahe, author of Republics Ancient and Modern: Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution "We are in the greatest age of democracy since antiquity and in the most need of guidance about the wisdom of government by majority vote. Precisely for that reason Professor Samons offers a bold and unbridled look at the nature and history of democracies, ancient and modern. He reminds us that we are capable of doing as much evil as good when constitutional protections and republican oversight are not there to moderate the instant desires of the majority. This is an engaging, provocative, and timely study of ancient Athens and modern America that should serve as a cautionary reminder to both romantic scholars and zealous diplomats."—Victor Davis Hanson, author of The Other Greeks

These collected papers construct a distinctive view of classical Athens and of Athenian democracies, 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 leisureed 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. The Classical Athenians were the first to articulate and implement the notion that ordinary citizens of no particular affluence or education could make responsible political decisions. For this reason, reactions to Athenian democracy have long provided a prime Rorschach test for political thought. Whether praising Athens's government as the legitimizing ancestor of modern democracies or condemning it as mob rule, commentators throughout history have revealed much about their own notions of politics and society. In this book, Jennifer Roberts charts responses to Athenian democracy from Athens itself through the twentieth century, exploring a debate that touches upon historiography, ethics, political science, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, gender studies, and educational theory. This book seeks to understand Xenophon as an elite Athenian writing largely for an elite Athenian audience in the first half of the fourth century BC. It argues that Xenophon calls on men of his own class to set aside their assumptions of superiority based on birth or wealth and to reinvent themselves as individuals who can provide effective leadership to the democratic city and serve it as good citizens. Xenophon challenges, criticizes, and sometimes satirizes the Athenian elite, and seeks to instruct them concerning the values, knowledge, and practical skills they will need to succeed as civic leaders. Xenophon is thus best understood not as an aristocratic dinosaur who is out of place in a democratic setting, as some have assumed, but as a thoughtful and pragmatic reformist who seeks to ensure that meritorious members of the elite step forward to lead within the democracy. The fifth century BC witnessed not only the emergence of one of the first democracies, but also the Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars. John Thorley provides a concise analysis of the development and operation of Athenian democracy against this backdrop. Taking into account both primary source material and the work of modern historians, Athenian Democracy examines: the prelude to democracy how the democratic system emerged how this system worked in practice the efficiency of this system of government the success of Athenian democracy. Including a useful chronology and bibliography, this second edition has been updated to take into account recent research. When does democracy work well, and why? Is democracy the best form of government? These questions are of supreme importance today as the United States seeks to promote its democratic values abroad. Democracy and Knowledge is the first book to look to ancient Athens to explain how and why directly democratic government by the people produces wealth, power, and security. Combining a history of Athens with contemporary theories of collective action and rational choice developed by economists and political scientists, Josiah Ober examines Athenian democracy's unique contribution to the ancient Greek city-state's remarkable success, and demonstrates the valuable lessons Athenian political practices hold for us today. He argues that the key to Athens's success lay in how the city-state managed and organized the aggregation and distribution of knowledge among its citizens. Ober explores the institutional contexts of democratic knowledge management, including the use of social networks for collecting information, publicity for building common knowledge, and open access for lowering transaction costs. He explains why a government's attempt to dam the flow of information makes democracy stumble. Democratic participation and deliberation consume state resources and social energy. Yet as Ober shows, the benefits of a well-designed democracy far outweigh its costs. Understanding how democracy can lead to prosperity and security is among the most pressing political challenges of modern times. Democracy and Knowledge reveals how ancient Greek politics can help us transcend the democratic dilemmas that confront the world today. This critical study, designed for the modern reader, provides a useful overview and bibliography, this second edition has been updated to take into account recent research. Incorporating important recent work by historians, epigraphists, and archaeologists, Stockton traces the broad development of the Athenian constitution from the reforms of Solon in the early sixth century to those of Ephialtes in the late 460s B.C., carefully examining the fully-developed democratic system of the post-Ephialtic period. Stockton translates all Greek terms and explains difficult essaysmaking the volume highly accessible to students of ancient and modern history, and to the general reader. Includes pictures Includes ancient Greek accounts of the tyrants and democracy in Athens Includes a bibliography for further reading States are as are the men are; they grow out of human characters. Like State, like man. " - Plato, The Republic Tyranny in ancient Greece was not a phenomenon limited to any particular period. Tyrants could be found in power throughout Greece, ruling poleis from the 7th century B.C. right through to the 2nd century B.C., when Roman domination effectively put an end to this form of government throughout the Hellenistic world. That said, the heyday of tyranny was undoubtedly the 7th and 6th centuries B.C., and it is in this period, known as the Age of Tyrants, that large numbers of tyrannies arose, particularly in the
Peloponnesian. The “Age of Tyrants” ended on the Greek mainland with the expulsion of the Peisistratidai in 510 B.C., but it continued in other parts of the Greek world, particularly in the Greek cities of Sicily, where tyranny did not finally end until the removal of Dionysius II of Syracuse in 344 B.C. In Asia Minor, tyranny survived the Persian conquest until the days of the Roman conquest. The governments of the majority of the Greek states in the Archaic and Classical periods were in the hands of local aristocrats, and it is a modern preoccupation with the Athenian democracy or Sparta’s unique system that has tended to obscure this fact. Oligarchy was the norm, and political power derived from wealth and birth. As the wealth of city states grew, so, too, did the number of citizens who, despite personal wealth, found themselves outside the very limited aristocratic elite that conspired to maintain the political power of the few. In today’s modern world every political regime, even the most authoritarian or repressive, describes itself as democracy or a Democratic People’s Republic. The concept of rule by the people, on behalf of the people, has come to be accepted as the norm, and very few would overtly espouse the cause of dictatorship, absolute monarchy or oligarchy as the most desirable political system upon which to base the government of any country. It is also generally accepted that democracy, as a political ideology, began in Greece, specifically in Athens, in the 7th century B.C. and reached its zenith in the 5th century under the leadership of Pericles. Dating an exact starting point is impossible, but at the beginning of the 7th century B.C. Solon inaugurated a series of reforms that began the move away from rule by individuals, or tyrants, and by the end of that century the reforms of Cleisthenes provided the basis of the Athenian democratic system that culminated in the radical institutions introduced by Ephialtes and Pericles in the 5th century. The result was the first, and possibly only, truly participative democratic state. Ironically, between 322 B.C. and the 19th century, Athenian democracy was almost totally forgotten. If there was any mention of democracy in Athens at all, it was in reference to so-called but largely mythical notions of Solon’s democracy as recorded in Plutarch’s Life of Solon or Aristotle’s Politics. At the beginning of the 19th century, scholars such as August Boeckh began the evaluation and study of democratic Athenian institutions, and inscriptions and the writings of Thucydides and Demosthenes, among others, were used to re-construct those democratic bodies and to gain an understanding of their workings. Later in the century, academics, particularly George Grote, provided new insights into the Athenian democratic processes, and today there is a much fuller understanding of what contributed to Athenian political life. That said, the questions of how and why Athens came to develop the political system it did remain a major area of academic contention.

Where did “democracy” come from, and what was its original form and meaning? Here Josiah Ober shows that this “power of the people” crystallized in a revolutionary uprising by the ordinary citizens of Athens in 508-507 B.C. He then examines the consequences of the development of direct democracy for upper and lower-class citizens, for dissident Athenian intellectuals, and for those who were denied citizenship under the new regime (women, slaves, resident foreigners), as well as for the general development of Greek history. When the citizens suddenly took power into their own hands, they changed the cultural and social landscape of Greece, thereby helping to inaugurate the Classical Era. Democracy led to fundamental adjustments in the basic structures of Athenian society, altered the forms and direction of political thinking, and sparked a series of dramatic reorientations in international relations. It quickly made Athens into the most powerful Greek city-state, but it also fatally undermined the traditional Greek rules of warfare. It stimulated the development of the Western tradition of political theorizing and encouraged a new perception of justice that has striking parallels to contemporary theories of rights. But Athenians never embraced the notions of inherency and inalienability that have played the concept of rights at the center of modern political thought. Thus the play of power that constituted life in democratic Athens is revealed as at once strangely familiar and desperately foreign, and the values sustaining the Athenian political community as simultaneously admirable and terrifying.

A history of the world’s first democracy from its beginnings in Athens circa fifth century B.C. to its downfall 200 years later. The first democracy, established in ancient Greece more than 2,500 years ago, has served as the foundation for every democratic system of government instituted down the centuries. In this lively history, author Thomas N. Mitchell tells the full and remarkable story of how a radical new political order was born out of the revolutionary movements that swept through the Greek world in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., how it took firm hold and evolved over the next two hundred years, and how it was eventually undone by the invading Macedonian conquerors, a superior military power. Mitchell’s history addresses the most crucial issues surrounding this first paradigm of democratic governance, including what initially inspired the political beliefs underpinning it, the ways the system succeeded and failed, how it enabled both an empire and a cultural revolution that transformed the world of arts and philosophy, and the nature of the Achilles heel that hastened the demise of Athenian democracy. “A clear, lively, and instructive account…. [Mitchell] has mastered the latest scholarship in the field and put it to good use in interpreting the ancient sources and demonstrating its character and importance in shaping democratic thought and institutions throughout the millennia.”—Donald Kagan, author of The Peloponnesian War [Mitchell’s] close scholarship shines in documenting the transition of Athens from financially and morally bankrupt oligarchy to emancipated democracy 2,500 years ago… with a commendable attention to detail that beautifully captures the essence of ancient Greek culture and politics.”—Roslyn Fuller, Irish Times

Illustrates how the theatre and Sophoclean tragedy, in particular, was crucial to the life and politics of the time.

The controversial thesis at the center of this study is that, despite the importance of slavery in Athenian society, the most distinctive characteristic of Athenian democracy was the unprecedented prominence it gave to free labor. Wood argues that the emergence of the peasant as citizen, juridically and politically independent, accounts for much that is remarkable in Athenian political institutions and culture. From a survey of historical writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the focus of which distorted later debates, Wood goes on to take issue with influential arguments, such as those of G.E.M. de Ste Croix, about the importance of slavery in agricultural production. The social, political and cultural influence of the peasant-citizen is explored in a way which questions some of the most cherished conventions of Marxist and non-Marxist historiography.

This book asks an important question often ignored by ancient historians and political scientists alike: Why did Athenian democracy work as well and for as long as it did? Josiah Ober seeks the answer by analyzing the sociology of Athenian politics and the nature of communication between elite and nonelite citizens. After a preliminary survey of the development of the Athenian “constitution,” he focuses on the role of political and legal rhetoric. As jurymen and Assemblymen, the citizen masses of Athens retained important powers, and elite Athenian politicians and litigants needed to address these large bodies of ordinary citizens in terms understandable and acceptable to the audience. This book probes the social strategies behind the rhetorical tactics
employed by elite speakers. A close reading of the speeches exposes both egalitarian and elitist elements in Athenian popular ideology. Ober demonstrates that the vocabulary of public speech constituted a democratic discourse that allowed the Athenians to resolve contradictions between the ideal of political equality and the reality of social inequality. His radical reevaluation of leadership and political power in classical Athens restores key elements of the social and ideological context of the first western democracy. Western democracy is now at a critical juncture. Some worry that power has been wrested from the people and placed in the hands of a small political elite. Others argue that the democratic system gives too much power to a populace that is largely ill-informed and easily swayed by demagogues. This classic study of democratic principles is thus now more relevant than ever. A renowned historian of antiquity and political philosophy, Sir M.I. Finley offers a comparative analysis of Greek and modern conceptions of democracy. As he puts the ancient Greeks in dialogue with their contemporary counterparts, Finley tackles some of the most pressing issues of our day, including public apathy, partisanship, consensus politics, distrust of professional politicians, and the limits of free speech. Including three lectures that Finley delivered at Rutgers University, plus two additional essays that further illuminate his thinking, Democracy Ancient and Modern explores the dramatic differences between the close-knit civil society of the ancient Greeks and our own atomized mass societies. By mapping out democracy’s past and its present manifestations, this book helps plot a course for democracy’s future.

Athens’ democracy developed during the sixth and fifth centuries and continued into the fourth; Athens’ defeat by Macedon in 322 began a series of alternations between democracy and oligarchy. The democracy was inseparably bound up with the ideals of liberty and equality, the rule of law, and the direct government of the people by the people. Liberty meant above all freedom of speech, the right to be heard in the public assembly and the right to speak one’s mind in private. Equality meant the equal right of the male citizens (perhaps 60,000 in the fifth century, 30,000 in the fourth) to participate in the government of the state and the administration of the law. Disapproved of as mob rule until the nineteenth century, the institutions of Athenian democracy have become an inspiration for modern democratic politics and political philosophy. P. J. Rhodes’s reader focuses on the political institutions, political activity, history, and nature of Athenian democracy and introduces some of the best British, American, German and French scholarship on its origins, theory and practice. Part I is devoted to political institutions: citizenship, the assembly, the law-courts, and capital punishment. Part II explores aspects of political activity: the demagogues and their relationship with the assembly, the manoeuvrings of the politicians, competitive festivals, and the separation of public from private life. Part III looks at three crucial points in the development of the democracy: the reforms of Solon, Cleisthenes and Ephialtes. Part IV considers what it was in Greek life that led to the development of democracy. Some of the authors adopt broad-brush approaches to major questions; others analyse a particular body of evidence in detail. Use is made of archaeology, comparison with other societies, the location of festivals in their civic context, and the need to penetrate behind what the classical Athenians made of their past.

Studies all four branches of the Athenian armed forces to show how they helped make democratic Athens a superpower. Ancient Greece first coined the concept of "democracy", yet almost every major ancient Greek thinker—from Plato and Aristotle onwards—was ambivalent towards or even hostile to democracy in any form. The explanation for this is quite simple: the elite perceived majority power as tantamount to a dictatorship of the proletariat. In ancient Greece there can be traced not only the rudiments of modern democratic society but the entire Western tradition of anti-democratic thought. In Democracy, Paul Cartledge provides a detailed history of this ancient political system. In addition, by drawing out the salient differences between ancient and modern forms of democracy he enables a richer understanding of both. Cartledge contends that there is no one “ancient Greek democracy” as pure and simple as is often believed. Democracy surveys the emergence and development of Greek politics, the invention of political theory, and-intimately connected to the latter—the birth of democracy, first at Athens in c. 500 BCE and then at its greatest flourishing in the Greek world 150 years later. Cartledge then traces the decline of genuinely democratic Greek institutions at the hands of the Macedonians and subsequently and decisively-the Romans. Throughout, he sheds light on the variety of democratic practices in the classical world as well as on their similarities to and dissimilarities from modern democratic forms, from the American and French revolutions to contemporary political thought. Authoritative and accessible, Cartledge’s book will be regarded as the best account of ancient democracy and its long afterlife for many years to come.

Describes the life and accomplishments of the Athenian leader who held power during the high point of Athenian civilization, and places him in the context of his times. Constructs a distinctive view of classical Athens, a view which takes seriously the evidence of archaeology and of art history.

Democracy was born in Athens. From the city’s founding myths to its golden age and chaotic downfall, this timely and well-informed political history is rich with lessons for contemporary America. Why did vital civic engagement and fair debate in Athens descend into populism and paralysis? Can we compare the demagogue Cleon to President Trump; the Athenian Empire to modern America; or the stubborn island of Melos to Brexit Britain? How did a second referendum save the Athenians from a bloodthirsty decision? Who were the last defenders of democracy in the changing, globalized world of the fourth century BC—and how do we unconsciously echo these leaders today? With verve and acuity, the heroics and the critics of Athenian democracy are brought to bear on today’s politics, revealing in all its glories and its flaws the system that still survives to execute the power of the people.

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