

Topics in Ancient History: The Citizen in Athens 190: 580 (AKA Democracy and Oligarchy in Athens 415-408 BCE) RAB 003 DC W 5-7:40

Instructor

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Course Description

This is a course in Athenian political culture. The general focus is democratic citizenship (and alternatives) in the last quarter of the 5th c. BCE. We will read selected texts in the hope of understanding the ideas of citizenship and community that are inextricably woven (neither as causes or accidents) of the events of this period. We will be particularly interested in the emergence of oligarchy (and the oligarchic citizen), and what that emergence expresses in the Athenian imaginary. A topic in the philosophical literature of the next century, our concern instead is with the arguments and coercion that propelled oligarchy to the forefront of Athenian political life.

Readings

Pseudo-Xenophon, Constitution of Athens ("The Old Oligarch") (available on SAKAI)
Herodotus 3.80.5-82 (available on SAKAI)
Thucydides 6.8-24, 6.53-61, 8.52-68.
Aristophanes: Lysistrata
Euripides: Orestes

Grading

There will be unannounced quizzes, a final language exam, a seminar report, and seminar paper. Attendance is required and class participation is crucial for a successful seminar.

Suggested Commentaries

"Old Oligarch": H. Frisch: The Constitution of the Athenians: A Philological-Historical Analysis of Pseudo-Xenophon's Treatise de publica Atheniensium Copenhagen, 1942.

The “Old Oligarch”: The Constitution of the Athenians, attributed to Xenophon, edd. J.L. Marr and P. J. Rhodes, 2008.

Thucydides: Gomme, Andrewes, Dover; Hornblower

Aristophanes Lysistrata: Henderson, Wilamowitz

Euripides, Orestes, Willink

Some Secondary Bibliography

Davies, J. K. Democracy and Classical Greece, 21993.

Dunn J. (ed.), Democracy: the Unfinished Journey 508 BC to AD 1993, 1992.

Gagarin, M, Antiphon, the Athenian, 2002.

Meyer, E. A. “Epitaphs and Citizenship in Classical Athens”, JHS 113 (1993): 99-121.

Hölscher, T. “Images and political identity: the case of Athens,” in Democracy, Empire and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens ed. D. Boedeker & K. Raaflaub, 1998.

Ober, J. Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens, 1989.

---- Political Dissent in Democratic Athens, 2002.

Ostwald, M, Oligarchia, 2000.

Pendrick, J. Antiphon the Sophist, 2002.

Raaflaub, K. A. “Contemporary Perceptions of Democracy in Fifth-Century Athens,” Classica and Mediaevalia 40 (1989): 37-41.

---- Discovery of Freedom (Entdeckung der Freiheit, 1985) tr R. Franciscono, 2003.

---- “The Transformation of Athens,” in Democracy, Empire and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens ed. D. Boedeker & K. Raaflaub, 1998.

Wohl, V. Love among the Ruins, 2002

Tentative Schedule

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: “The Old Oligarch”

Week 3: Thucydides 6.8-24

Week 4: Thucydides 6.53-61

Week 5: Thucydides 8.52-68

Weeks 7-9: Aristophanes Lysistrata

Weeks 10-12: Euripides, Orestes

Week 13: no class

Week 14-16: class papers