



# Theater of the People

*David Kawalko Roselli*

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Greek drama has been subject to ongoing textual and historical interpretation, but surprisingly little scholarship has examined the people who composed the theater audiences in Athens. Typically, scholars have presupposed an audience of Athenian male citizens viewing dramas created exclusively for themselves—a model that reduces theater to little more than a medium for propaganda. Women's theater attendance remains controversial, and little attention has been paid to the social class and ethnicity of the spectators. Whose theater was it? Producing the first book-length work on the subject, David Kawalko Roselli draws on archaeological and epigraphic evidence, economic and social history, performance studies, and ancient stories about the theater to offer a wide-ranging study that addresses the contested authority of audiences and their historical constitution. Space, money, the rise of the theater industry, and broader social forces emerge as key factors in this analysis. In repopulating audiences with foreigners, slaves, women, and the poor, this book challenges the basis of orthodox interpretations of Greek drama and places the politically and socially marginal at the heart of the theater. Featuring an analysis of the audiences of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, and Menander, *Theater of the People* brings to life perhaps the most powerful influence on the most prominent dramatic poets of their day.

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