

ATHENS, 403 BC

At the end of the fifth century BC, the Peloponnesian War resulted in Athens' shattering defeat by Sparta. Taking advantage of the debacle, a commission of thirty Athenians abolished the democratic institutions that for a century had governed the political life of the city and precipitated a year-long civil war. By autumn 403 BC, democracy was restored. Inspired by the model of the ancient chorus, this strikingly innovative book interprets a crucial moment in classical history through the prism of ten remarkable individuals and the shifting groups which formed around them. The former include familiar names like the multifaceted Socrates, the oligarch Critias and the rhetorician Lysias, but also lesser-known figures like the scribe Nicomachus, the former slave Gerys and the priestess Lysimache. What leads a community to tear itself apart, even disintegrate, then rebuild itself? This question, explored through profound reflection on the past, echoes our tormented present.

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In *Athens, 403 BC* Azoulay and Ismard have produced a superb study of the critical period defined by the brief ascendancy and rapid fall of the Thirty in the aftermath of Athens' defeat in 403 BC. This is an original study with a distinctive voice and a compelling thesis.

*Jeremy McInerney, Professor of Classical Studies,
University of Pennsylvania*

Homonoia (Unanimity) and *Diallage* (Reconciliation) were 5th-century BCE Athenian democratic catchwords but they still resonate today, as perhaps never before. How timely then is this brilliant collaborative investigation of plurality, polyphony and dissonance in the world's first democracy. Let me only add my voice to the chorus of praise that is its due.

*Paul Cartledge, Emeritus A.G. Leventis Professor of Greek Culture,
University of Cambridge*

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