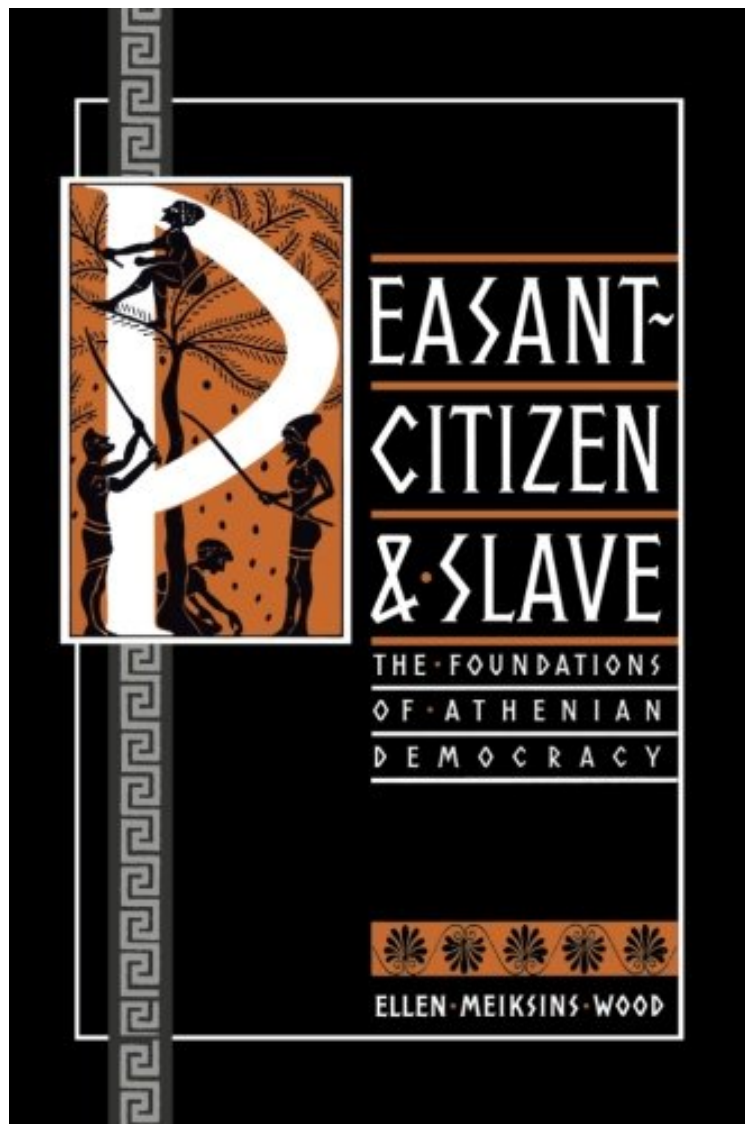


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Peasant-Citizen and Slave: The Foundations of Athenian Democracy

Ellen Meiksins Wood

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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 recent 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 will be of great interest to ancient historians, classicists, anthropologists and political theorists, as well as to a wider reading public.

Learned, elegantly argued and, I think, important ... Ellen Wood is inviting us, indeed I would say obliging us, to reconsider our picture of Athens. The Independent There is much of unquestionable value in this reading of Athenian democracy, not least the honesty with which the limitations of the available evidence are exposed and confronted ... [Wood] has indisputably set the agenda anew. Times Literary Supplement A compelling read ... always surprising and refreshing. Robin Osborne, Magdalen College, Oxford About the Author Ellen Meiksins Wood, for many years Professor of Political Science at York University, Toronto, is the author of many books, including *Democracy Against Capitalism* and, with Verso, *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism*, *The Origin of Capitalism*, *Peasant-Citizen and Slave*, *Citizens to Lords*, *Empire of Capital* and *Liberty and Property*.