



Legal Speeches of Democratic Athens: Sources for Athenian History

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"[Wolpert and Kapparis's] anthology . . . stands apart in a number of key ways. Virtually all of the translations, which are of very high quality, are new for this volume. . . .

"Each of the introductions to the individual speeches is accompanied by a convenient outline, entitled 'Key Information', of the important details about the dispute; this feature will be particularly welcome to undergraduates and other beginners, for whom Athenian forensic speeches often present at first glance a welter of soap opera-like complexity. In the summary that precedes *Against Neaera*, for example, the subheadings include 'Speaker', 'Supporting Speaker', 'Defendant', 'Other Individuals' (particularly helpful), 'Action', 'Penalty' and 'Date'. Having this information collected in one handy location is very useful indeed.

"One minor yet remarkably useful feature is that [Wolpert and Kapparis] have placed all cross-references to speeches included in the collection in bold typeface. This allows the reader to know immediately whether he need only flip the pages to see the passage in question or must reach for another volume. It is hoped that this will encourage busy undergraduates to take the trouble to follow up a cross-reference.

"The introduction truly shines. Without getting bogged down in debatable minutiae, it provides a remarkably detailed and clear account of the law and oratory of ancient Athens. Divided into five sections, it begins with an account of Athenian legal development from the Draconian and Solonian periods to the fourth century. It then tackles Athenian politics and society, the court system (a particularly helpful section), the Attic orators (with a substantial biographical sketch of each orator whose speeches appear in the volume), and rhetorical technique and style. The introduction could even be used in a course where no speeches are read but students need to be given a quick, solid initiation into the legal culture of the classical period."

--*Classical Review*

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