

κύριος γὰρ ὢν ὁ δῆμος τῆς ψήφον κύριος γίνεται τῆς πολιτείας

for the **people**, having the power of the **vote**, become sovereign in the **government**

Aristotle<sup>1</sup> : Ἀριστοτέλης

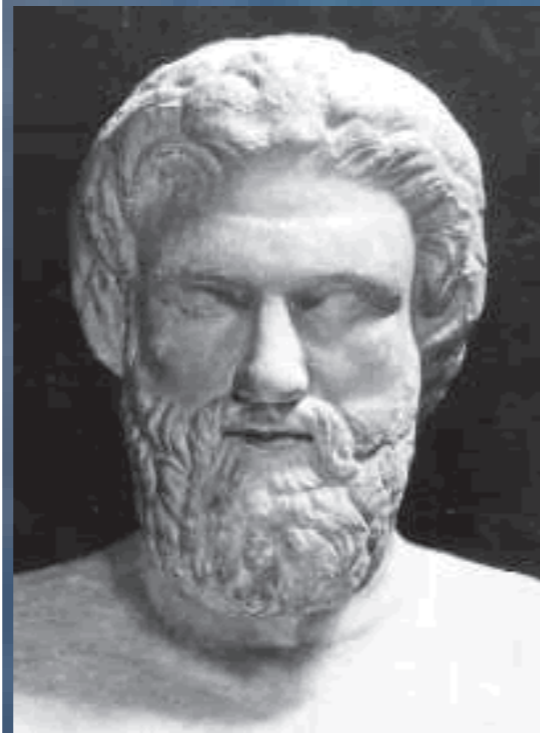


ψηφοὶ  
pebbles

ἔπειτ' ἀναγκάζω πάλιν ἐξεμῆν ἅττ' ἂν κεκλόφωσί μου, κημὸν καταμηλῶν

then, **probing** with a **voting funnel**, I shall force them to **vomit** back up that of mine they have devoured

Aristophanes<sup>3</sup>  
Ἀριστοφάνης



## "Reconstructing popular perspectives: the role of political language in structuring Classical Athenian democracy."

This research project employs post-structuralist theory and techniques to examine the role that political language played in the performance and reception of radical democracy in Classical Athens. It aims to reveal and explore the, otherwise mute, perspectives that the ordinary citizens had of that democracy by analysing the extant texts of those who addressed the *dēmos*, the citizen body.

τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἀσάφειαν καὶ τραυλότητα τῆς γλώττης ἐκβιάζεσθαι καὶ διαρθροῦν εἰς τὸ στρόμα ψήφους λαμβάνοντα καὶ ῥήσεις ἅμα λέγοντα

his inarticulate and stammering pronunciation he overcame and rendered more distinct by **speaking** with **pebbles** in his **mouth**

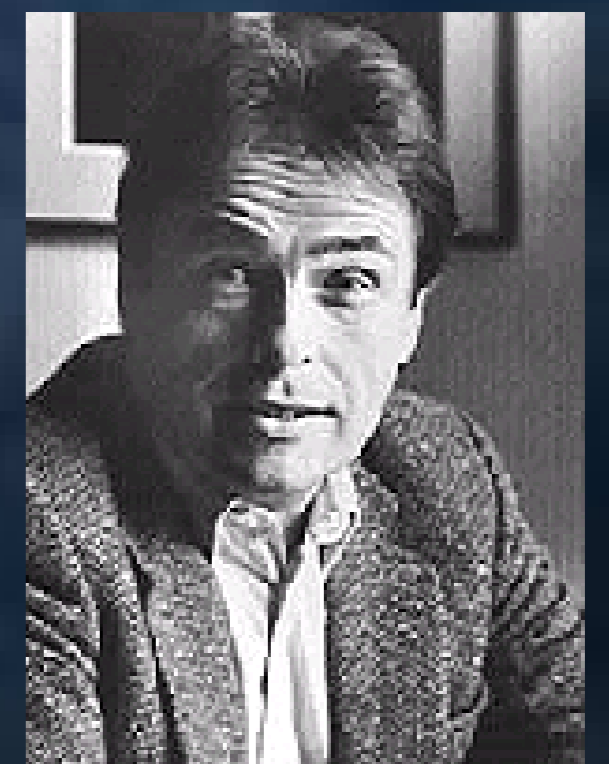
Demosthenes<sup>2</sup>  
Δημοσθένης



ψηφοὶ  
votes

by virtue of the **languages** spoken, the **Speakers** who use them and the groups defined by the possession of the corresponding [linguistic] competence, the whole **social structure** is present in each interaction (and thereby in the **discourse uttered**)

Pierre Bourdieu<sup>4</sup>



Aristotle, *Athenaion Politeia*, 9.1.10-11  
Plutarch, *Demosthenes*, 11.1-5  
Aristophanes, *Knights*, 1147-50  
Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991: 67)

Supervisor: Professor Brian McGing

