Both the *Euthyphro* of Plato and the *Symposium* of Xenophon - especially the second - refer to many aspects of Athenian life of the latter part of the fifth century B.C. They are not unusual in this respect, for if there is any one part of the history of the ancient world about which we are extremely well informed it is 5th century Athens. There are still gaps in our knowledge but basically we have a good picture from a large variety of sources.

The fifth century saw the climax of Athenian democracy, and since the people of the city all had the right to know of the state’s affairs a rich number of public inscriptions from the period presents us with many details of political and economic history. In this way they fill out for us the military record of the ancient historians. This was the most productive single period in all art forms; thus, in addition to a host of writers, of both prose - like Plato and Xenophon - and verse, we have a rich testimony from the visual arts. This includes buildings and sculpture as well as smaller pieces such as statuettes, gems, and most noticeable of all, the red-figure vases. Many of the small objects and vases were so highly esteemed as to be exported all over the Greek world; when found abroad they are themselves testimony to another aspect of 5th century Athens, i.e. her extensive trade.

Actually mentioned by Plato and Xenophon are many professions (farmers, doctors, architects, shipwrights, carpenters, sculptors, poets, rhapsodes, entertainers and musicians) and activities of the daily life of the city and its people (law courts, the market place, the gymnasia, sports, and, of course, the symposia). In the plates I have attempted to illustrate a selection of these various subjects by depictions from the contemporary visual arts. I have also attempted to give as much of a cross-section of those visual arts as possible, though the vase paintings inevitably outnumber all other forms.

I have kept as far as possible to fifth century products for the sake of contemporaneity with the texts. In some cases, however, the subject matter itself is drawn from an earlier period and so is the illustration, cf. Plates 7 and 19. In some cases the best illustrations of particular subjects are a little earlier or later in date, cf. Plates 9, 21, 24, 26, 29. Since the main purpose of the plates is to depict social life, mythological matter is normally excluded; yet this was a very common subject in the art of the period and so two examples occur, Plates 18 and 31.

Acknowledgements for individual plates are given at the end of Volume Two, but I would here like to express my thanks in general to all the friends and colleagues who helped in obtaining the necessary photographs, and especially to my student Miss S. Matarasso.

Much has been written about the life of 5th century Athens, but one book especially stands out. It is again based on particular texts of the period, this time the plays of the comic writer Aristophanes, and by these and contemporary art pieces many aspects of Athenian life are illustrated. Anyone interested in the subject will get great enjoyment out of reading Victor Ehrenberg’s *The People of Aristophanes* (Oxford 1943).

John M. Fossey
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