



Performing Citizenship in Plato's Laws (Cambridge Classical Studies)

Lucia Prauscello

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In the *Laws*, Plato theorizes citizenship as simultaneously a political, ethical, and aesthetic practice. His reflection on citizenship finds its roots in a descriptive psychology of human experience, with sentience and, above all, volition seen as the primary targets of a lifelong training in the values of citizenship. In the city of Magnesia described in the *Laws* erôs for civic virtue is presented as a motivational resource not only within the reach of the 'ordinary' citizen, but also factored by default into its educational system. Supporting a vision of 'perfect citizenship' based on an internalized obedience to the laws, and persuading the entire polity to consent willingly to it, requires an ideology that must be rhetorically all-inclusive. In this city 'ordinary' citizenship itself will be troped as a performative action: Magnesia's choral performances become a fundamental channel for shaping, feeling and communicating a strong sense of civic identity and unity.

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