ANGER

S. Braund, G. Most (eds.): *Ancient Anger. Perspectives from Homer to Galen*. (Yale Classical Studies 32.) Pp. x + 325. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. Cased, £45, US$65. ISBN: 0-521-82625-X

'These days, the emotions are hot stuff', begin the editors of this interesting and timely volume. They do not mean, of course, that we have entered a new era of passionate interaction in the West, and still less is their statement a personal confession (I assume). Rather it is a recognition that professional classicists, to whom this book is addressed, have become extremely interested in the expression of powerful feelings in the ancient world. William Harris's *Restraining Rage* (Cambridge, MA, 2002) has recently taken a long look at anger management in classical culture, and that book is an obvious starting point for this volume. But in philosophy in particular the complex rôle of the emotions in Aristotle's ethics, and the place of the passions in Hellenistic thinking, have become particularly fruitful areas of debate. While the arguments about *furor* in the *Aeneid* show no sign of abating, new approaches to 'pity', 'rivalrous emotions', and 'love' have been prominent in the cultural history of classical Athens. Emotions are, it seems, all the rage.

This 'fashion for passion' is easy to spot, but harder to diagnose. In part, it seems yet another reaction to the 'calm' and 'orderliness' that ground Winckelmann's long-lasting view of the classical. As Dodds did with the irrational, we too need to put some dirty disturbance back into the pure, white Greeks. In part, and more pointedly, the continuing post-Foucauldian interest in 'self-fashioning' and 'the care of the self' makes the dynamic between emotion and control central to the formation of the classical subject: Seneca's *De ira* or Aristotle's discussion of the desire for revenge now seem to go to the heart of how ancient intellectuals reflected on their inner lives and explored their social behaviour. But perhaps most importantly the emotions are an area where the question of cultural similarity and difference becomes most pressing.

It has become a commonplace that the modern West both traces the origin of its most prized values and institutions back to Greece and Rome, and at the same time finds in antiquity an alien and strange otherness. The birth of democracy (etc.) is celebrated, but slavery, the disenfranchisement of women, and the use of lot are rejected as unacceptable forms of political life. This act of reaching across the divide of time is the founding gesture of Classics. In what ways are the Greeks and Romans like us? Nineteenth-century idealism often answered that question with a wish: if only we could be (more) like the Greeks and Romans! Twentieth-century anthropological study has tended to privilege the distance: how different the assumptions and attitudes of men and women of the past are! Nowhere is the issue more vivid and insistent than with the emotions. Did the Greeks and Romans feel love (etc.) like us? Or do the different institutions and social expectations of the ancient world mean that humans had a different internal life? Do all humans always experience 'anger'? Or is 'anger' only a poor modern version of the specificity of 'ira' and 'furor'? Thucydides may place 'human nature' on the agenda as a historical constant, but is that claim not a culturally specific construct?

What is at stake, then, in looking at ancient anger is nothing less than the way modern Classics figures the continuities and ruptures between us and the ancient Greeks and Romans as human beings.

Douglas Cairns in the first chapter faces this central issue head on (in a way few

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other chapters do). He argues trenchantly that studies of facial expression show that there are universal forms of human emotion. There are therefore continuities between cultures and across time, he argues, which makes intelligibility possible. It is on such a grounding that different social institutions or different patterns of emotional stimuli are erected in different societies. Disgust, he argues, has the same bodily and emotional form, even if it is caused by different stimuli. From this general case, he looks at the Homeric vocabulary of rage, and finds in the *Iliad* a pattern of engagement between individuals that is universal and based on an 'ethics of reciprocity'. It is far from clear, however, that Cairns's starting point is as certain as he makes out. The semiotics of the face as signs of inner life are much more contested than he suggests, not least in the attribution of primary, cross-cultural feelings to them. But it is good to start the volume with such a direct expression of such a fundamental question, and it would have been good to have an equally trenchant expression of the counter case for the non-universal nature of human emotions.

Glenn Most continues the focus on the *Iliad* and looks at anger in relation to pitilessness and pity. As always, Most's work is well worth reading. But he also shows the difficulties with the cross-cultural reading of emotions. I am not convinced, for example, that the rejection of supplication in the *Iliad* is morally neutral or even supported by the poem. Nor am I persuaded that self-pity is a category in the *Iliad* or in Greek thought in general. Although many characters in tragedy and elsewhere describe themselves as *talaina* (etc.), pity *per se* is in Greek also an expression of a power relation, which I do not think is applicable to oneself by oneself. The juxtaposition of Most's and Cairns's chapters leaves open the question of just how far cross-cultural norms of emotion can be applied.

The next six chapters of the book deal with the diffuse influence of the *Iliad* on discourses of anger. Danielle Allen looks at the politics of *orgê* in Athenian rhetoric. The anger that motivated Achilles, she argues, is reframed by a new democratic sense of political order and the responsibilities of citizenship. David Konstan, who has been at the fore of the new turn to the emotions, explores Aristotle's influential expression of rage and revenge. William Harris adds some thoughts on the rage of women—patriarchal dismissal and fear of female lack of control rather than feminist triumph. Chris Faraone looks at magic spells, and at the rôle of *thumos* as a male ideal in these indicators of social tension. It is good to see this very different type of material rubbing shoulders with Aristotle. J. H. D. Scourfield writes intelligently about anger as a motivating force in Chariton's novel, *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, its association with male aggression, and how the novel is open to philosophical and other intellectual influences. Ann Hanson writes revealingly about anger in babies in Greek medicine, though most of her piece is actually concerned with other aspects of child-rearing.

There are only three brief chapters on Roman material, and Chris Gill's discussion of the *Aeneid* is concerned with the impact of Hellenistic philosophy on the Roman reader. Elaine Fantham writes on Lucan: a calm view of a very angry poet. Susanna Braund, together with a former student of hers, Giles Gilbert, gives something of a lexical overview of the language of *ira* in Roman epic. The Latin topics are less developed than the Greek: no place for Juvenal, for the angry men of comedy, nor even for Seneca or the Roman orators.

This is a stimulating book, which creates between its chapters many directions for future discussion of what is a major topic.

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