REVIEWS OF BOOKS

REVIEW ARTICLE

Violence

HERMAN (G.) **Morality and Behaviour in Democratic Athens. A Social History**. Cambridge UP, 2006. Pp. xxi + 472, illus. £60. 9780521850216.

SEIDENSTICKER (B.) and VÖHLER (M.) *Eds.* **Gewalt und Ästhetik. Zur Gewalt und ihrer Darstellung in der griechischen Klassik.** De Gruyter: Berlin and New York, 2006. Pp. xiv + 308, illus. €68. 9783110184327.

RAINA (G.) *Ed.* **Dissimulazioni della violenza nella Grecia antica**. Ibis: Como-Pavia, 2006. Pp. 246. €18.50. 9788871642123.

FISCHER (G.) and MORAW (S.) *Eds.* **Die andere Seite der Klassik. Gewalt im 5. und 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Kulturwissenschaftliches Kolloquium Bonn, 11.-13. Juli 2002.** Franz Steiner: Stuttgart, 2005. Pp. 328, illus. €48. 9783515084505.

BERTRAND (J.-M.) *Ed.* **La violence dans les mondes grec et romain. Actes du colloque international (Paris, 2-4 mai 2002).** (Histoire ancienne et médiévale 80). Publications de la Sorbonne: Paris, 2005. Pp. 467, illus. €28. 9782859445300.

'You can slap him in the face without paying the price' is 'a somewhat rustic expression' which refers to a man who cannot defend himself and is therefore doomed to lose all his property to his enemies and 'live without honour (*atimos*) in the city' (Plato, *Gorgias* 486c). The predicament of such a man perfectly encapsulates a now common image of the Greek city as a place where men fight constantly in the courts, and sometimes in the streets, to defend their possessions and status from incessant attack by their personal enemies. This image has featured strongly in modern scholarship at least since Kenneth Dover's *Greek Popular Morality* (1974) and has gained particular prominence since the early 1990s, with the publication of important studies by Nick Fisher, David Cohen and others. What levels and kinds of violence were tolerated in ancient Greek society, and in particular classical Athens, remains a matter of lively debate – which has now been addressed on a grand scale in two colloquia, a symposium, a seminar series and a monograph, amounting to a total of more than 1,800 pages written by 54 authors in four languages.

Gabriel Herman's *Morality and Behaviour in Democratic Athens* offers the most startling contribution to the discussion: the author tries to persuade us that classical Athens was a deeply non-violent society, because its citizens believed in turning the other cheek and, unlike most Christians, did not just pay lip service to this ideal (409-10, 414 n.117). Instead of 'tit for tat', Athenians returned 'no tit at all for multiple tats' (402-6). As well as doing 'less harm to others than they did to him' an Athenian was expected to be altruistic: 'to give more than he was given, … treat his fellow-citizens as if they were related to him and do everything in his power to maintain public order' (375). Hence 'economic transactions [were] conducted in a friendly and uncalculating spirit' (389); people queued up to donate money for public use, so that the Athenian state managed 'to support itself mainly on voluntary dues and contributions for almost 200 years' (395). Such behaviour created levels of happiness 'rarely … surpassed … in the annals of the entire pre-industrial West' (375); without it democracy and philosophy could not have flourished (413).

This interpretation of Athens is based primarily on fourth-century speeches in which the speaker claims to have suffered great insult and injury without ever retaliating until he was finally forced to bring down public punishment, not private revenge, on the aggressor. The strategy of self-representation chosen here certainly tells us something interesting about attitudes towards violence, and H. is right to point out – as he has done previously in a series of articles dating back to 1993 – the contrast with the common 'Mediterranean' notion that violent private retaliation is essential in order to restore the victim's 'honour'. His argument runs into trouble, however, when he goes on to claim that in classical Athens honour was no longer dependent on the ability to retaliate – Code A, the 'tribal' code of behaviour – but on the ability to live by Code B, a 'civic' code dominated by non-retaliation and public punishment (chs 5-6).

One of H.'s key witnesses to the latter code of behaviour is Demosthenes, whose speech *Against Meidias* may serve as an example of what the sources tell us, and how H. handles them (pp. 167-73, 237). Demosthenes was punched by Meidias in front of thousands of witnesses in the theatre, and instead of hitting back took his assailant to court. In the speech *Against Meidias* he claims that he is making a public-spirited stand against a man who has long been a public menace (21.2, 6-8, 19-21, 128-31, etc.). He argues that the jury should find in his favour so as to encourage other victims of insulting violence (*hybris*) to take offenders to court rather than 'retaliate in person in a fit of anger' (21.76). So far, Demosthenes' self-representation fits H.'s understanding of typical Athenian behaviour.

Far from being 'entirely free from ambiguity' (167), however, the speech also reflects a very different set of attitudes. Demosthenes announces that he himself has 'a great deal of sympathy (*pollên sungnômên*) for anyone who resorts to self-help (*autôi beboêthêken*) when he is dishonoured (*atimazomenos*)' (21.74). He insists that the 'dishonour' (*atimia*) inflicted by the punch justifies angry retaliation (21.72). And he claims that in the recent trial of Euaion, who killed a man who had struck him, almost half the jury had voted for acquittal because they felt that even this level of retaliation was acceptable (21.75). This story need not be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, but Demosthenes tells it as part of an argument which assumes that jurors

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approved of some kinds of violent private retaliation at least as much as they approved of civic-spirited public prosecutions.

H. simply refuses to consider this different set of values. Confining himself to mocking a straw-man opponent who believes that Athenian 'society takes not a blind bit of notice' of 'nasty things' like Euaion's lethal revenge (169), he concludes that 'we have not the faintest idea of what the murder rate was like at the time' (170). But of course our inability to quantify the frequency of violence does not change the fact that *Against Meidias* 21.70-6 treats violent retaliation for insults to honour as appropriate behaviour – a fact which H. can avoid facing only because he unaccountably misinterprets Demosthenes' expression of sympathy for those who retaliate as a 'self-righteous' *rejection* of self-help (p. 173).

One might argue that Demosthenes spends much more time claiming that his case is in the public interest than acknowledging the legitimacy of private retaliation, and that this indicates the greater importance of public-spirited motives. But the real reason for the balance of the values to which *Against Meidias* appeals is clearly that Demosthenes was bringing a public suit rather than a private prosecution and he needed to explain why it should be a matter of state that he had been punched by one of his enemies (21.25-41). This speech does not support, therefore, H.'s view that only the civic code B was 'currently legitimate' in classical Athens while the tribal code A 'had been publicly discredited' (p. 182). Instead, it shows that both violent retaliation, within certain limits, and legal action were acceptable means of restoring honour, but that a public prosecution was unsurprisingly seen as something that ought to serve the public interest and should not be driven purely by private resentment.

H. might fall back on the argument that the values expressed by our sources may be misleading and that we should look at what people do, rather than what they say (12-15, 98-9). Demosthenes suffered many years of provocation by Meidias without ever retaliating until the punch 'finally triggered some sort of response', he argues (169-70). But this overlooks several important points. First, this prosecution was not in fact the first time Demosthenes had retaliated: he had first sued Meidias much earlier, for 'slander', and that case had run for many years without reaching a resolution (21.81-96). Secondly, Meidias was a formidable opponent, about fifteen years his senior (21.154) and already one of the richest and most influential men in Athens, while Demosthenes had barely come of age when their enmity began. Whatever the demands of honour, they will have been curbed by the balance of power, which was heavily in Meidias' favour. Thirdly, the public prosecution of Meidias was not 'some sort' of weak response, but raised the stakes sky high: if the jury found that his punch amounted to 'unjust or illegal behaviour in connection with the festival' (21.9), Meidias might be put to death. Demosthenes urged that his opponent 'deserves many deaths, not just one' (21.21; *cf*. 70, 152). If we look only at his actions, then, Demosthenes was a man who, so far from refusing to retaliate, spent the first dozen years of his adult life trying to get even with Meidias as best he could, through the courts, and seized the first opportunity he saw to have his old enemy executed.

Unfortunately, the weaknesses of H.'s treatment of *Against Meidias* recur throughout his discussion of the law court speeches and other types of evidence. Too often, sources are cited selectively and without regard to context; sometimes, they are misrepresented. Some crucial evidence – such as the central tenet of ancient Greek ethics, 'help your friends and harm your enemies' – is far too casually dismissed (94, 271, 278). The arguments of other scholars are rarely seriously addressed, merely caricatured and criticized for being less 'objective' (94), 'professional' (101), 'rigorous' (117), 'rational' (169), and so forth, than the author's own. Above all, the discussion is vitiated by the assumption that classical Athenian ethics must be reduced to one simple rule of behaviour. Either Athens was an honour-bound, vengeance-ridden, bloodstained 'tribal' society or it was a utopia of altruism and civic spirit. 'A single accurate interpretation' must prevail (100); anything that does not fit is discarded as mere 'opinion', not the norm (*cf*. 23-30, 147), or as abstract 'morality' rather than part of a generally observed 'code of behaviour' (*cf*. 15-23). No historical society can ever have had so simple, clear-cut and internally consistent a set of norms, and H.'s approach is thus from the outset doomed to fail.

Morality and Behaviour nevertheless makes an important point in showing that classical Athens went further than many another society in rejecting violence: a slap or punch between rivals may have been regarded 'with a certain sympathy' and as 'nothing terrible' (Dem. 21.66, 71), but violence aggravated by *hybris* was not tolerated, and very few forms of provocation were deemed sufficient to justify killing or inflicting serious bodily harm. As Demosthenes sums it up, the laws treated many serious crimes as essentially private matters, but the use of force made even a small offence 'a public injustice, committed also against those not involved in the affair' (21.45; *cf*. 42-50). H. is right to stress the significance of such attempts to stop private violence from escalating, even if he is wrong to ignore the evidence that there was indeed a constant threat of escalation which made such legislation necessary.

What characterizes classical Athenian society, then, is a remarkable, but precarious, balance between forces encouraging and discouraging violent behaviour. An indication of when this balance may have been first achieved is provided by the changing iconography of violence in Attic vase painting, identified in a series of papers in the two excellent volumes edited by Fischer and Moraw (hereafter F.M.), and Seidensticker and Vöhler (S.V.). In the late archaic period, many painters show graphic violence, but from 480/70 BC such

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imagery is drastically toned down. Scenes of combat tend to show a clearly superior victor inflicting serious wounds on a bleeding enemy from about 530/20 onwards, but from *c*. 470 generally represent only the threat of force, not actual violence; battle scenes also become less common and more often mythological (S.V. 259-93; F.M. 185-209). The most brutal episodes from the Trojan War disappear from the repertoire: the mutilation of Hector is no longer shown after *c*. 500, while the sacrifice of Polyxena and scenes from the sack of the city vanish a little later. From 470/60 onwards, the ambush of Troilos comes to be represented by a scene of Achilles in pursuit of his quarry without any sign of the physical violence shown on earlier vases (S.V. 223-57; F.M. 33-43, 225-46). Images of combat sport also feature far fewer injuries or bloody noses after about 480 (F.M. 28-32, 129-41).

Some of the authors who discuss this iconography argue that the graphic scenes of the late archaic period draw attention to the suffering of the victim and thus raise ethical questions about the use of force. These questions are subsequently resolved by the formulation of a clear iconographic distinction between legitimate force, represented without any hint at bloodshed, and illegitimate violence, portrayed as savagery or madness. This position is defended most fully by Barbara Borg (S.V., esp. 248-57) and Ralf von den Hoff (F.M., esp. 242-5). Several authors note that the legitimate forms of violence which continue to be shown in art are explicitly directed against outsiders, while all violence within the community is glossed over (Moraw, Bentz, F.M.), even the legitimate use of force by masters against slaves, husbands against wives, or parents against children – well discussed in other chapters (Schmitz, Klöckner, F.M.; Leduc and Bonnard in Bertrand's volume).

Others, notably Susanne Muth in both volumes, argue the opposite view, that graphic violence draws attention to the superiority of the victor rather than the misery of victim, and does not reflect ethical qualms about the use of violence but admiration for displaying prowess and winning power and status in a fiercely competitive world. The later, less violent images represent a new concept of such superiority as 'inherent' and unchallenged (S.V. 259-93; F.M. 185-209; *cf*. Stähli, F.M., esp. 41). Images of killing and maiming may indeed very well be celebrations of force rather than denunciations of violence, especially when they represent acts of revenge – a topic which is barely mentioned in the iconographic papers, but addressed in several interesting other pieces (Gagarin, Scheid, B; Flaig, S.V.).

Both views seem to me valid, each for one part of the range of images. In generic images of combat and combat sports, the sight of blood and injuries is hardly enough to raise questions about the legitimacy of the use of violence, and surely the damage done to the loser is here meant to reflect favourably on the prowess of the winner. In images of notorious episodes from the Trojan War, such as the mutilation of Hector, by contrast, deeds of violence which already in Homer are the subject of ethical debate can hardly have become simple celebrations of superior force in late archaic art. They indicate continuing and increasing reflection on the boundaries between legitimate force and excessive violence, in particular in pursuit of revenge. Such reflection would be a natural consequence of the greater glorification of individual prowess attested in the rest of the iconography of combat and contest. Images of drunken violence at symposia, briefly popular from 500 to 480 (Stähli, F.M. 24-8), mirror both developments simultaneously: they represent excess in competitive self-assertion and invite the question whether such excess is to be celebrated or condemned.

The transformation of the iconography around 480/70 suggests a wider cultural development in which the scope for violent behaviour within the community was significantly reduced. A series of vase paintings from 490-470/60, which show the contest over the arms of Achilles being decided by voting rather than fighting, fit the same pattern (Kunze, F.M.). Several authors see here the replacement of 'aristocratic' or 'heroic' ideals by 'democratic' or '*polis*' norms (Stähli, von den Hoff, F.M.; Flaig, Borg, S.V.), but such a sharp separation between élite and community values – commonly posited as it is – seems questionable to me. I would argue instead that late archaic iconography reflects a widely shared code of behaviour which encouraged the use of private force, especially in retaliation, while the later iconography reflects an equally widely shared code which had less room for such use of force and adopted the sort of attitude towards violence which we find in fourth-century law-court speeches.

The masking, 'occluding' or 'negating' of violence in much of classical Athenian literature, as identified by several contributors to Raina's volume – Beltramenti on tragedy, Stella on Plato's *Laws*, and the editor himself on Menander – is another aspect of this picture of a relatively pacified Athens. One might add the rarity in Athenian art of scenes of animals being killed for sacrifice (Henrichs, S.V.; Moraw, F.M.; *cf*. Huet, B., on Roman Imperial art), and the taboo on staging acts of violence in Athenian tragedy (Seidensticker, S.V., offering a literary explanation). But these things may reflect a long-standing inhibition against acts of violence in sacred places, rather than 'crystal clear' evidence of a new general revulsion from all violence in Athens, as H. has it (289). The development of new attitudes towards violence may have been more notable in Athens than elsewhere. It was at any rate not universal in Greek cities, as the more violent repertoire of vase painting in Magna Graecia shows (Schmidt, F.M.; Cassimatis, B.), nor is it found in fourth-century Etruscan art, where combat scenes show the enemy 'physically and morally annihilated', not merely threatened (Steuernagel, F.M. esp. 220-3; *cf*. Pirson, B.).

Restrictions on the use of private force are bound to affect concepts of masculinity, as Pierre Brulé points out (B.), and a study of classical vase paintings of Menelaus

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and Helen hints at a growing emphasis on emotional self-control as a vital characteristic of men (Ritter, F.M.). Images of women conversely feature their supposed inability to control violent emotions, as in images of raving maenads (Villanueva, B.; *cf.* Junker, F.M., on changes in the representation of women in monumental sculpture, which he connects with the rise of democratic ideology). As gender differentiation became sharper, and violent behaviour less acceptable, male homosexual relations must have become more difficult to negotiate, both because anal penetration was seen as an act of violence and because it made a 'woman' of the man or boy who submitted to it. That classical Greeks saw it this way has recently been denied by James Davidson but is a view defended here by Brulé (B. 252-3) and more fully by Nick Fisher (B.). Felix Pirson (B.) sees the same idea in Etruscan images of Celts humiliated in combat, crawling away from a victor whose spear points towards the loser's raised buttocks.

An arena for male violence which always remained open, of course, was warfare, aspects of which are the subject of several interesting papers (Trampedach on violence against sanctuaries, F.M.; Ager on religious sanctions in interstate relations, Couvenhes on coercive military discipline, and Chaniotis on the legitimation of conquest in the Hellenistic world, all in B.). Most striking is Anton Powell's demonstration (B.) of the extreme gendering of military roles in Sparta, where men monopolized warfare to the point of excluding women from the last-ditch military role which they played in other cities, where they would climb on the roofs of their houses to throw tiles at the enemy and ululate in support of their men. Even in warfare violence may have begun to be played down, and not just in Athens. The decline in dedications of armour at Delphi and Olympia after 440 BC, noted by Anne Jacquemin (B.), may be part of a trend recently identified by Peter Krentz (*Hesperia* 71 (2002) 23-39): several of the 'agonal' rules of hoplite warfare were probably not created until shortly after the Persian Wars.

Many other aspects of violence are covered in these volumes, ranging from civil strife (Pinotti, R.; Maffi, Veisse, B.) via nemesis (Stafford, B.) to purification (Ellinger, B.); from pugnacious gods and other Homeric themes (Lanza, R.; Cantarella, Sebillotte Cuchet, B.) via the representation of pain on stage (Budelmann, S.V.) to judicial mutilation in Byzantium where many a condemned man was forced to save face with a prosthetic nose (Paradiso, B.).

The ubiquity and variety of violence in Greece is well brought out by the general surveys compiled by Nicolas Richer (B.) and Egon Flaig (S.V.), who ask why violence should have been such a central concern in art and literature. The latter answers, as does Kai Trampedach in another stimulating piece, that the explanation lies in the lack of a concept of legitimate power in Greece: even the implementation of a majority decision could be seen as an act of violence against the minority (S.V. 25-6, 51-6). I am inclined to turn this argument upside down. Insofar as the legitimation of power – and central coercive authority – remained little developed in Greece, it was because there was little room for it in the prevailing culture of fierce competition for wealth, status and power. Violent internal conflict fascinated our sources, not because a deficiency in political theory made them imagine it everywhere, but because it was a real and pervasive threat. Classical Athens was not the secular paradise of H.'s vision, but did manage better than most Greek cities to keep violence at bay.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

Reception Studies of Greek Drama

GARLAND (R.) **Surviving Greek Tragedy**. Duckworth, 2004. Pp. xvii + 286, illus. £16.99. 9780715631232.

GUASTELLA (G.) *Ed*. **Le rinascite della tragedia. Origini classiche e tradizioni europee**. Carocci, 2006. Pp. 380. €31.60. 9788843037032.

MACINTOSH (F.), MICHELAKIS (P.), HALL (E.) and TAPLIN (P.) *Eds*. **Agamemnon in Performance. 458 BC to AD 2004.** Oxford UP, 2005. Pp. xv + 484, illus. £82. 9780199263516.

HALL (E.), MACINTOSH (F.) and WRIGLEY (A.) *Eds*. **Dionysus since 69. Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millenium**. Oxford UP, 2004. Pp. xviii + 480, illus. £80, 9780199259144 (hbk); £32, 9780199281312 (pbk).

It is a rare, and enviable, position for a reviewer in our discipline to comment on an emerging sub-discipline, even more so if it is as vibrant and stimulating as Reception Studies in Classics currently are. The business case for investing resources into this area is irrefutable: it keeps Classics on the map (or puts it there, as the case may be), courses enrolled, departments alive and researchers busy. Critics (who are seldom vocal in public) fear some kind of decentring and dilution, a loss of focus on the core mission and the emergence of 'Mickey Mouse Classics' (accompanied by further erosion of language skills). The works under review here (and other current research) are ample testimony to the irrefutability not just of the economics but, most of all, the intellectual merit of Reception Studies in Classics. It gets us somewhere as classicists – and, as is demonstrated by some less successful efforts, doing it well is not at all easy (and may, indeed, require a great deal of competence in the ancient languages).

Greek drama, especially tragedy, has been the main driver of the market and its hottest commodity over the

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