

KUCEWICZ (C.) **The Treatment of the War Dead in Archaic Athens: An Ancestral Custom.** (Bloomsbury Classical Studies Monographs). London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Pp. 296 + illus. £85. 9781350151543.
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This thoughtful, engaging work is a must-read for anyone interested in archaic Greece, ancient military culture or the transition into the Classical period. While the treatment of war dead remains the focus throughout, Cezary Kucewicz demonstrates how this subject illuminates wider social trends. This work explores how society changed from a climate in which mutilating a dead enemy was a source of satisfaction and in which very few achieved the honour of a funeral and tomb, to one in which all war dead were included in a state-managed funeral and post-mortem mutilation was taboo. How did this transition occur? What wider changes does it reflect? And what does this reveal about classical Athenians' perception of their archaic past? Kucewicz offers compelling answers to these questions, using pottery, monuments, burials and myth to augment the more well-trodden paths of ancient historiography. It is argued that changes in the treatment of war dead grew out of the gradual increase in the centralization and institutionalization of numerous social practices, including warfare. As such, this work contributes considerably to the debate on the organization and conduct of warfare throughout these periods, as well as to the more specific area of post-mortem care.

Chapter 1, 'The Homeric War Dead', discusses the Homeric epics as evidence of a military culture that was still recognizable into the seventh century and beyond. It analyses class difference through the revealing question of who gets buried and who gets abandoned when they meet their deaths on the battlefield. Kucewicz takes us through an environment in which elite men take huge risks to despoil a fallen enemy or to protect the bodies of their deceased allies. The conspicuous funerals of the few are contrasted with the fate of those left abandoned, open to night-time stripping and food for dogs and birds.

Chapter 2, 'The War Dead in the Greek Mythological Tradition', explores further mythical traditions as evidence for archaic military values. When modern authors write their versions of the Trojan War, they must decide how to represent the violence of early traditions to suit contemporary audiences and values. Chapter 2 demonstrates how classical authors addressed this same issue. Pre-classical traditions of the Seven Against Thebes, the decapitation of Eurystheus and post-mortem mutilations at Troy, are contrasted with sanitized versions of these myths written by classical authors such as Aeschylus and Euripides, and Plato's objections to the violent tales of the past. That these traditions did not completely die out is evidenced by their resurgence in the post-Classical era, yet their rarity in the Classical period demonstrates a turn away from practices which had previously been celebrated.

Black-figure combat scenes have frequently been dismissed as purely mythical. Chapter 3, 'The War Dead in the Early Greek Iconographic Tradition', argues that this approach is ill-advised, that the line between myth and history is not so absolute. With this reading, scenes of duels, stripping the dead and fights to recover bodies demonstrate the continuation of these practices well into the Archaic period. That such scenes drop off markedly before the end of the sixth century indicates that it was not the advent of democracy alone which caused a shift away from traditional practices.

Monuments, tombs and epigrams contribute a new strand of evidence in chapter 4, 'Archaic Monuments for the War Dead'. The discussion of the changes in monuments, burial practices and in the themes of epigrams continues in chapter 5, 'Ancestral Customs in the Classical City'. This chapter analyses the steep rise in burials at the end of the sixth century, the increase in casualty lists, the impact of the Persian Wars with its mass battlefield burials and the advent of universal repatriation for war dead – a more

expensive custom which required a 'robust administrative system' (130). Kucewicz also discusses evidence of elite families responding to this new situation, including changes in dedications and iconography.

Chapter 6, 'War, State and Society in Archaic Athens', brings together the lines of thought from previous chapters to chart the process of change. Kucewicz offers a fresh perspective on the move from oligarchy through tyranny to democracy in Athens. He challenges the notion of a hoplite revolution, presenting an archaic world that was still profoundly hierarchical. He then takes us from Cylon's failed attempt to establish a tyranny in the 630s, through the initiatives of Solon, the Peisistratids and Cleisthenes. We see the state playing a growing and more formal role in society, with marked consequences for the treatment of the war dead.

This work makes a bold contribution to the understanding of archaic warfare and the social changes involved in the transition from archaic to classical culture. It is a lively read that will prompt much thought and discussion.

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KAMEN (D.) **Insults in Classical Athens**. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2020. Pp. xv + 258. \$99.95. 9780299328009. doi:[10.1017/S0075426922000660](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0075426922000660)

This book by Deborah Kamen is useful in shedding welcome new light on a wide range of issues concerning the use of insults in ancient Athens. Its greatest virtues are that it is simple in language; clear in the presentation of the matters discussed; well researched, written, and structured (for example, each chapter starts with a useful summary of its content and main arguments); and fully comprehensible for researchers at all levels – both academics and students. The virtue of being simple, of explaining one's arguments clearly, without pedantic eccentricities and verbal complexities, is precious in a scholarly world that promotes diffusion of knowledge across several disciplines.

The book consists of five chapters, in addition to an introduction and conclusions. Chapter 1 is about 'benign' or 'non-insulting' insults. Kamen argues that not all insults have a devastating effect on their target; there are some, especially those related to religious festivals (which Kamen calls 'ritual mockery', 17) that are not only allowed but also encouraged as a means of contributing to the unity of the Athenian community. In the category of benign insults, Kamen also includes those that relate to the everyday parlance and customs of the Athenians – for example, frequenting the Agora. Religious/ritualistic mockery may have a profane sexual dimension, as *aischrologia* (roughly translated as 'foul language') has in Demeter's cults. A great wealth of information about religious mockery, its nature and features, and its purposes within the context of Athenian society is provided in chapter 1 (for example, *gephurismos*, 'bridgery', as when insults are levelled by a prostitute or a man against people crossing the Kephisos River, either prominent figures or individuals who have evident physiognomic flaws). Kamen rightly argues that insulting rituals which are expressed by or involve women may have the aim, among other things, of allowing women to resist male rules about their public appearance and behaviour.

Chapter 2 focuses on an examination of the features and functions of, and possible responses to, insults found in Old Comedy. Kamen starts by detailing both the similarities and differences between ritual and comic insults (a stark difference is that, for example, unlike ritual insults targeting private citizens with physiognomical flaws, comic insults are