

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.

SONYA NEVIN

University of Cambridge

Email: sn239@cam.ac.uk

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

invariably directed by a playwright at a leading member of society) and proceeds with an examination of the limits of comic mockery. I agree with Kamen's argument that, despite being in many ways not fully reliable, there are sources (mainly late, but also those presenting the feud between Aristophanes and Cleon) that point to legal restrictions on (comic) *parrhēsia*, 'free speech'. There is one point of caution about terminology and argument in the section 'Sexual/Gender Deviance' (49–52) of this chapter: Kamen rightly mentions the *kinaidos* (that is, to be effeminate in many respects, such as in physical movements and clothing) as being the target of mockery because of sexual deviance. However, referring (on page 52) to homosexuality/homoeroticism as an aspect of sexual deviance is wrong: in ancient Greece, to be homosexual was one thing; to be *kinaidos*, and therefore sexually deviant, was a different matter altogether.

Chapter 3 explores the use of insults in Attic oratory, especially forensic. The chapter starts with a necessary comparison between insults in oratory and comedy as these two genres present both stark similarities (for instance, the audience before which theatrical and oratorical performances were delivered) and differences as to how insults are used and for what purpose (notably, different historical periods and the general avoidance of blatant obscenity in oratory). Useful in this chapter is the attempt to define key terminology concerning the practice of hurling insults in the law court. I would side with Kamen in arguing that free speech in oratory, as in comedy, is restricted either because law prohibits specific types of insults (the so-called *aporrhēta* or *arrhēta*, that is, calling someone a murderer, a father- or mother-beater, or accusing him of throwing his shield away) or because speakers should avoid alienating the judges with outright obscenity and the use of irrelevant arguments. It is true that speakers make abusive accusations in less insulting ways (*cf.* Aeschines 1.37–38); however, they never, as Kamen rightly argues, say that their opponent threw away his shield in battle, but rather accuse him of having deserted the front line.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with a similar topic: the forbidden nature of insults. The former discusses verbal abuse, and the latter all sorts of hubris, including physical assault. I found convincing Kamen's argument that insult is forbidden when exerted in a public place or when the target is dead, a hero or a magistrate. Yet I cannot fully understand the difference between insult and hubris. Kamen argues, supported with bibliography, that hubris both dishonours an individual and creates disunity in the city. But this is also a feature of other kinds of insults, like, for example, *kakēgoria* ('slander'). It is easy to understand why physical hubris is not acceptable (even when carried out against slaves), but what it is about verbal hubris that makes it unacceptable, *more so than other kinds of insult*, is a question that the book does not fully answer.

Overall, this is a well-researched book, stellar in its in-depth analysis of sources and the presentation of arguments to a wider interdisciplinary audience, and an invaluable source of information about the features, purposes and functions of insults in ancient Athens. A few points of concern that I have raised in this review indicate the most worthwhile quality of the book: that it gives food for thought and ignites interest for further research.

ANDREAS SERAFIM

Academy of Athens

Email: aserafeim@academyofathens.gr