



Revenge in Athenian Culture

By Fiona McHardy

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Revenge was an all important part of the ancient Athenian mentality, intruding on all forms of life - even where we might not expect to find it today. Revenge was of prime importance as a means of survival for the people of early Greece and remained in force during the rise of the 'poleis'. The revenge of epic heroes such as Odysseus and Menalaus influences later thinking about revenge and suggests that avengers prosper. Nevertheless, this does not mean that all forms of revenge were seen as equally acceptable in Athens. Differences in response are expected depending on the crime and the criminal. Through a close examination of the texts, Fiona McHardy here reveals a more complex picture of how the Athenian people viewed revenge.

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Editorial Review

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