



Entering the Agon: Dissent and Authority in Homer, Historiography, and Tragedy

Elton T. E. Barker

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This book investigates one of the most characteristic and prominent features of ancient Greek literature - the scene of debate or agon, in which with varying degrees of formality characters square up to each other and engage in a contest of words. Drawing on six case studies of different kinds of narrative - epic, historiography and tragedy - and authors as diverse as Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Sophocles and Euripides, this wide-ranging study analyses each example of debate in its context according to a set of interrelated questions: who debates, when, why, and with what consequences? Based on the changing representations of debate across and within different genres, it shows the importance of debate to these key canonical genres and, in turn, the role of literature in the construction of a citizen body through the exploration, reproduction and management of dissent from authority.

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