

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910258754403321
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Titolo	Performing interpersonal violence [[electronic resource]] : court, curse, and comedy in fourth-century BCE Athens / / Werner Riess
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Berlin, : De Gruyter, 2012
ISBN	1-280-59724-0 9786613627070 3-11-024560-4
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (492 p.)
Collana	MythosEikonPoiesis, , 1868-5080 ; ; Bd. 4
Classificazione	NH 5850
Disciplina	880.9/3552
Soggetti	Theater - Greece - History - To 500 Violence in the theater Violence - Greece - Athens - History
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Acknowledgments -- Contents -- I. Introduction -- II. Forensic Speeches -- III. Curse Tablets -- IV. Old and New Comedy -- V. Conclusions -- VI. References -- Index Locorum -- General Index
Sommario/riassunto	This book offers the first attempt at understanding interpersonal violence in ancient Athens. While the archaic desire for revenge persisted into the classical period, it was channeled by the civil discourse of the democracy. Forensic speeches, curse tablets, and comedy display a remarkable openness regarding the definition of violence. But in daily life, Athenians had to draw the line between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. They did so by enacting a discourse on violence in the performance of these genres, during which complex negotiations about the legitimacy of violence took place. Performances such as the staging of trials and comedies ritually defined the meaning of violence and its appropriate application. Speeches and curse tablets not only spoke about violence, but also exacted it in a mediated form, deriving its legitimate use from a democratic principle, the communal decision of the human jurors in the first case and the underworld gods in the second. Since discourse and reality were intertwined and the discourse was ritualized, actual

violence might also have been partly ritualized. By still respecting the on-going desire to harm one's enemy, this partial ritualization of violence helped restrain violence and thus contributed to Athens' relative stability.
