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ILIAD I AND *ODYSSEY* VI–VII

P. A. Draper (ed.): *Homer:* Iliad*, Book 1*. Pp. vi + 193. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002. Paper, $22.95. ISBN: 0-472-06792-3.

J. Watson (ed.): *Homer:* Odyssey *VI and VII*. Pp. viii + 114, ills. London: Bristol Classical Press, 2002. Paper, £9.99. ISBN: 1-85399-489-8.

More and more students begin reading Homer in Greek after only a year or two of learning Greek, and both these commentaries are aimed at this market. In this they are rather like modern versions of older school editions, which aim at giving a lot of help on linguistic points to learners (in fact Watson's edition is an updated version of G. M. Edwards's 1915 edition of the same books). The approach of the two authors is different: Watson is more traditional in format, whereas Draper has tried to design a commentary as well adapted as possible to students coming to Homer with little Greek. She has copious notes on linguistic points, often giving some help with almost every word in the line. She assumes very little, often pointing out elision, as with the first note on l. 3, which says that δ' = δέ. She also points out on l. 5 that τε = 'and'. Taking this line as an example of her notes, we find the comments:

> οἰωνός, -οῦ, ὁ—'bird of prey'; οἰωνοῖσι—dat.plur.
>
> τε—and.
>
> Ζεύς, Διός, ὁ—Zeus, ruler of the gods.
>
> τελείω, τελέσσω, ἐτέλεσσα—accomplish, bring to completion.
>
> βουλή, -ῆς, ἡ—plan, purpose, 'the will'.
>
> Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή—'and the will of Zeus was being accomplished'.

D. also comments here on the importance of burial or the lack of it in the *Iliad*, and the meaning of the will of Zeus. So her notes range from simply giving the meaning of words to explaining a construction or commenting on the wider themes of the book. Her grammatical explanations are generally very clear and helpful, though some assume more grammatical understanding than others—students may not easily follow the explanation that ἵκωμαι in 139 is 'aorist subjunctive in a future-more-vivid

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conditional relative clause' (though D. does cover some of these terms in her grammatical appendix). D. also has scanning notes, which note any tricky points of scansion, especially where vowels are scanned long if this is not obvious. All the notes are sensibly placed on the same page as the Greek text—this is undoubtedly easiest with so many notes. For those who wish to pursue particular topics further, D. in Appendix 1 has references to the sources of many of her comments.

D. has an introduction which deals mainly with background issues, such as the composition and transmission of the *Iliad*, oral composition, and the *Iliad* and history. There is also an outline of the story of the poem, and of the Trojan war before and after its events. There is no discussion of the themes of Book 1, or its significance in the *Iliad*, but D. does deal with these topics in her notes, and at the end of the commentary she has a brief overview of the book and its place in the whole poem. At the end of the introduction she has an outline of some features of Homeric Greek, and of the scansion of the hexameter. There is a more detailed outline of Homeric forms and grammar in Appendix 2. D. also has a reasonable bibliography, which interestingly includes some novels about the Trojan war, and useful web sites.

W.'s commentary is, as I have said, more traditional in format. She does not comment on almost every word as D. does, but only points of interest or difficulty. Her notes on grammatical points are very clear, and she also covers many points of literary interest clearly and concisely. Since she has fewer notes than D., she is able to have longer notes on particular topics, and so her notes are often more interesting to read. She is very good at bringing out typical narrative patterns and how they are adpted to suit a context: for instance, when discussing Athene's visit to Nausikaa in a dream she discusses scenes of gods appearing to mortals and analyses the dream sequence as an adaptation of this. There are good notes on many things, among them Odysseus' famous speech to Nausikaa at 6.149–85, the importance of Arete at the Phaeacian court, and the importance of the theme of revealing/concealing identity in the *Odyssey.* W.'s introduction, like D.'s, naturally covers the background issues about the origins and transmission of the Homeric poems, and their relationship to history. I found W.'s account of these issues clearer and more perceptive, but both authors do a competent job of outlining them. W. also has a very good brief introduction to Books 6 and 7 and their place in the *Odyssey.* Like D., she has a sensible bibliography (in fact hers is more up to date and reliable), and a brief introduction to Homeric Greek and the hexameter. Her presentation of the grammar is slightly different: D., at least in her grammatical appendix, gives the full paradigms of Homeric forms, whereas W. only points out the forms that differ from Attic. She also covers some things that D. does not, e.g. mixed aorist forms, frequentative verbs and forms of the type *μητιόωσα*.

Either of these editions would provide a good introduction to Homer for students with a basic knowledge of Greek. D. gives more detailed linguistic help in her notes, and tries her best to assume no prior knowledge of Homeric Greek in her readers. She deserves praise for doing her best to devise a format that will make reading Homer as easy as possible for those new to it—in fact, some might find she provides almost too much help. W. has less copious grammatical notes, but is very clear in those she does have; and both her introduction and notes make a lot of interesting literary points. I was impressed with her ability to present what are often difficult issues clearly and concisely. I am sure both books will be very welcome to teachers looking to introduce their students to Homer in an accessible way.

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