ODYSSEAN ETHNOGRAPHY

C. DOUGHERTY: *The Raft of Odysseus. The Ethnographic Imagination of Homer's* Odyssey. Pp. viii + 243. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Cased, £32.50. ISBN: 0-19-513036-7.

The book studies travel in the context of cultural self definition. It argues that the raft of Odysseus serves as an emblem of the interconnection between narrative, travel, and trade. It aims to demonstrate how issues of foreign contact and commerce take part in the construction of Greek identity.

D. argues that the *Odyssey* can be read as an ethnographic text, and states that her investigation differs from the structuralist approach of Hartog and Vidal-Naquet since it does not work with synchronic categories. On the contrary, D. proposes a 'historizing' approach, and that allows her to read the relationship between literature and history within the background of the historical period contemporary to Odysseus' audience, which she considers to be the eighth century B.C.

The introduction of the book presents a good account of general issues on ethnography. The book is divided into three sections: Section 1 states general views about poetry, trade, and commerce in the light of colonization. Section 2 studies the rôle of the Phaeacians and other adventures in the light of exploration and commerce. Section 3 presents a very good study of Ithaca and its landscape, and argues that Odysseus is a post-colonial hero. The conclusion plays with ideas of mobility and fixity, trying to integrate the experience of travel of Odysseus with the world at home in Ithaca.

For D., poetry was one of the goods or merchandise that travelled on ships. Chapter 1 considers that allusions to ships and their construction can be seen as metaphors for the poetic process of the *Odyssey*. Chapter 2 argues that Odysseus trades his songs as merchandise and considers that 'a poetic performance is represented as a commercial transaction' (p. 56). Chapter 3 searches for the truth which lies at the base of travel tales, and considers that truth exists in terms of the potential advantages and dangers to establish commercial relations. D. tries to find parallels between ships and songs also in Hesiod (*WD* 646–53), and argues that such comparison is mainly found in the Homeric *Catalogue of Ships*, extending the comparison further to Ibycus (fr. S 151).

Chapters 4–7 constitute the second section of the book, and offer a good and large interpretation of the rôle of the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey*. Chapter 4 pretends to set a theoretical frame about 'the other'. D. avoids the imperial view of interpreting 'the other' as inferior, and focuses on examples from Shakespeare and other Renaissance texts to illustrate her idea about ethnography. However, those examples does not give us a clear argumentation about the general issue of ethnography which she will develop, which is the construction of the colonial identity through trade and commerce. Chapter 5 argues that the literary construction of the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey* interplays with that of the historical Phoenicians. Chapter 6 studies the Cyclopes and Laestrygonians in the light of the hostile and the peaceful experience of colonization. Chapter 7 studies the Euboeans as historical traders and shipbuilders, and aims to link the literary references of the *Odyssey* to historical facts of early Archaic Greece.

In this section D. refers to interesting issues of migrations and integration of cultures through marriage (pp. 130–34). Issues about narrative seems to be a pre-occupation of D. (p. 100); however, the book does not go into that problem in detail.

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Indeed, throughout the book, we are left with many interesting points which could have been developed with solid arguments and with a larger bibliography.

The third section of the book represents a new way of reading the return of Odysseus. It is a very good section, with a great interest for the rôle of landscape in colonial discourses. It argues that Odysseus represent the spirit of the colonial age, and re-founds Ithaca in the light of his experience of travel.

However, there is an important aspect which is absent from D's book; that is, the religious dimension of travel in relation to pilgrimage, knowledge, and sightseeing (see I. Rutherford, 'Theoria and *Darshan*', *CQ* 50 [2000], 133–46). The book focuses on the construction of colonial identity through relations of trade and commerce, but it seems to forget that songs and poets represent other kind of values to the society, especially on a cultural and moral level, and not only they should be regarded as a form of merchandise in the context of colonial trade. It is a book in which analogies and comparisons are drawn too far sometimes in order to make them fit with the relationship between ships and songs in the colonial context (pp. 68–78).

In spite of this, D.'s aim is a good one: she praises poetry. Also, the book situates Homer within the new trends of humanities of reading geography as discourses of identity. Although the book does not develop a theoretical frame related to ancient and modern geography, it does use elements from cultural geography, such as landscape, in order to construct the colonial experience. D. translated the passages she used, and that give a refreshing meaning to the episodes quoted. It is a book which proposes an original view of reading the return of Odysseus, and makes the reader aware of the commercial world which existed together with the themes which the *Odyssey* developed.

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HESIOD'S MYTHS

W. Blümer: *Interpretation archaischer Dichtung. Die mythologischen Partien der Erga Hesiods. Band I. Die Voraussetzungen: Autoren, Texte und homerische Fragen.* Pp. 285. *Band II. Wahrheit und Dichtung: Die Verse 1–105. Bibliographie.* Pp. 395. Münster: Aschendorff, 2001. Cased, DM 198. ISBN: 3-402-05420-5.

These two volumes, a revised *Habilitationsschrift*, are the first instalment of a study of Hesiod *Op*. 1–211. Volume I clears the ground for detailed interpretation. The principal question exercising the author is, did Hesiod know Homer? This takes us to the heart of the Homeric Question, especially as represented by the apparently popular 'evolutionary theory' of Gregory Nagy. Fifty-four pages are devoted to its refutation; the upshot is that the theory is 'a dangerous mixture of incomprehensible isolation of texts, violent distortions, unproven or false premises and overblown conclusions, one-sided comparisons and recherché combinations, mistaken reasoning and large-scale circular arguments' (I.87–8). We await Professor Nagy's reply with some interest. However, though I do not agree myself with Nagy's theory, I do not think B. has fixed on its weak point; he stakes everything on Nagy's supposed misunderstanding of *Il*. 9.413 (*κλέος ἄφθιτον*): Achilles has not yet made his decision to stay on and win immortal glory at the cost of death, says B., so all of Nagy's talk

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