discussion of much excellent work in this volume, which demonstrates how progress in a number of disciplines contributes to our understanding of the poems.

The Queen's University of Belfast MAUREEN ALDEN

ESSAYS ON HOMER

H. M. ROISMAN, J. ROISMAN (edd.): *Essays on Homeric Epic*. (*Colby Quarterly*, Volume 38, Numbers 1–2.) Pp. 263 (1–128 and 129–263). Waterville, ME: Colby College, 2002. Paper, US$5 for each number. ISSN: 1050-5873.

The two volumes under review comprise twelve independent articles about Homeric poetry, contributed by E. J. Bakker, J. S. Clay, D. Collins, M. Finkelberg, D. Lateiner, B. Louden, C. J. Mackie, A. J. Nussbaum, H. Pelliccia, R. J. Rabel, H. Van Wees, and D. Wilson. Nussbaum's contribution concerns morphology (not my field), Van Wees's the material and social circumstances in which the Homeric epics were composed. The remainder display certain family resemblances, in particular a preoccupation with genre. Bakker, Collins, and Rabel each argue that the Homeric narratives reflexively signal their own pragmatics as performance. Lateiner, Louden (on the duals in *Iliad* 9; cf. my remarks on the duals in F. Montanari [ed.], *Omero tremila anni dopo* [Rome, 2002], pp. 441–4), and Pelliccia (on Glaukos' comparison of human generations to leaves) elucidate specific passages by setting them in broader generic and/or ritual contexts; Wilson does likewise for similes comparing Achilles and Odysseus to lions. Finkelberg's investigation of *Iliad* 7 and the *Cypria* yields support for an unfashionably textual view of Homeric composition. Only Clay's article on *Iliad* 22 analyzes the artistry of a unique passage, and only Lateiner's accords due attention to the Homeric gods. The following comments are necessarily very selective.

Bakker's essay on Polyphemus' name strikes rich paydirt. Examining the *phê-* root, he finds that in the *Odyssey* its associations include two quite different types of speech. *phêmis*, public talk, implies 'unwanted openness', while *phêmê*, 'an utterance with prophetic properties of which the speaker is unaware', involves a 'sense of . . . revelation of something unsaid . . .'. Bakker posits that the *Odyssey* explores 'the link between poetry and gossip, *kleos* and *phêmis*', but his discussion, for all its insights, leaves *phêmê* under-analyzed. Here is a kind of speech whose utterance is openly audible, and whose meaning seems equally open, but is not. More poetic than *kleos*, *phêmê* (I suggest) acquires meaning from particular agents; for example, the effectiveness of Polyphemus' prayer/*phêmê* is in the heeding of it by Poseidon, Polyphemus' father. The Cyclopes-in-the-street who thought that *outis* meant 'nobody' were simply speaking the impersonal Greek *langue*, i.e. *phêmis*; Odysseus—a hero never caught dead professing linguistics—in making *outis* his name gave this definitively impersonal lexeme an improvised, definitively personal sense. Bakker credits Odysseus' reutterance of Polyphemus' prayer/*phêmê* with effecting his *nostos* and its epic; like Alcinous, Bakker forgets Poseidon's warning against conveying strangers indiscriminately. The teller of the ill-omened tale was lucky to get home at all.

The Classical Review vol. 54 no. 2 © The Classical Association 2004; all rights reserved

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/54.2.281 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Collins's study of bird-divination in the *Iliad* brushes with the personal dimension of discourse in discussing Xenophon's analysis of divination, where 'stress is laid . . . on the communication between the gods and the inquirer, while the vehicle itself is considered less important'. But Collins casually dismisses Xenophon's expert testimony to focus upon 'the rhetorical uses to which bird divination is put', i.e. the public vehicle and its conditions of efficacy. This move disables Collins's generally sharp observations about the interpretability of omens and their relationship to the 'performance mode' of the *Iliad*, because it minimizes factors other than immediate emotional impact (e.g. 'heightened sense of community'). The disagreements between Poulydamas and Hektor concern Trojan lives and deaths, and Hektor's responses are more affected by Poulydamas' content than by his performance style.

Rabel's Brecht-inspired 'Interruption in the *Odyssey*' offers a more thoughtful engagement with performance, but one still too preoccupied with the medium itself. Penelope's interruption of Phemius, Odysseus' weeping while hearing Demodocus, and Odysseus' self-interruption during the *apologoi* all show that 'interruption . . . often [dispels] emotional enchantment . . . and the internal audience [is] thereby stimulated to adopt a(n) . . . analytical approach . . .' Critical comment indeed follows interruption; but the situations belie Rabel's explanatory paradigm of mechanical stimulus and response. Penelope was already disenchanted with Phemius' singing when she interrupted him, because his subject matter touched her personally; Demodocus moved Odysseus to tears for the same reason. Alcinous, completely enchanted by the *apologoi*, hardly welcomed Odysseus' interruption as an opportunity for analytic reflection. He really thought his articulate guest was not deceptive or thievish? Our poet realized that technique alone could not provoke thought; his epics needed listeners who were already thoughtful.

Lateiner, thankfully more awed by Homer than by authorities, finds in Zeus' bloody drops and Sarpedon's burial 'non-natural' phenomena indicating the Olympian's humanity: 'Zeus is *the* god of pity in the *Iliad*'. Ever-flippant Lateiner merits serious praise for avoiding conventional determinist assumptions. He could have gone further: Zeus' deliberation leaves nothing to nature. Zeus makes choices, heeding his wife, suppressing paternal inclination, immortalizing Sarpedon without immortalizing his nature.

Wilson, however, serves structuralism half-cooked. The idea that lions represent 'natural force' is promising, but violence is not the same as disorder. And 'culture', Wilson's solution to putative natural disorder, turns out to be nature after all, a community led by 'natural *aristos*' Achilles. Yes, in the *Iliad* 'displacement' averts violence; but the solution is not systemic. Bronze armor for gold? *Iove volente*. Displacement succeeds because it permits improvisation.

Pelliccia convinced me that Glaucus' famous simile sounds notes of sympotic poetry. Surprisingly, he does not mention that in so doing it inaugurates the friendship of Glaucus and Diomedes *avant la lettre* . Finkelberg argues very precisely that *Iliad* 7 alludes to a preexisting ensemble of scenes about the landing at Troy. Clay's analysis of *Iliad* 22 spotlights the drama achieved by focalizing the narration through Hektor's subjectivity. Van Wees's declaration that 'literature is necessarily a product of its time' left me wishing the historian could become a philosopher just long enough to elucidate what a 'time' is and how it makes a 'product'.

Ohio State University BRUCE HEIDEN

https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/54.2.281 Published online by Cambridge University Press