practice' (p. 50). In these fifteen pages, P. tends to emphasize objects rather than institutions; one would, for instance, have liked to see something about *xenia* or the principles of reciprocity that govern both divine and human society.

For P., the form and character of the Homeric poems 'depend on the unique circumstances of the creation of the texts' (p. 30). In the 'reader's Homer', P. rightly stresses the difference between a modern reader's experience of the text and that of its original audience. He signals the repetition, leisurely description, and lack of suspense characteristic of oral style, epic similes, and Homeric plot construction.

Part Two offers a running summary/commentary on the main episodes of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Much useful background information is smuggled in (e.g. on *geras* and on neo-analysis), and there are some arresting observations, for instance: 'there is much humor in the *Iliad* (but almost none in the *Odyssey*)' (p. 70). Some readers will find the tone delightfully informal, while others may find it arch: 'Agamemnon makes mincemeat out of the Trojans in his splendid *aristeia* . . . Over 200 lines later Agamemnon is still chopping away' (p. 89). For P., the fact that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* 'are literary opposites' constitutes 'the best argument that both poems are the invention of one man' (p. 115, cf. pp. 155–8). 'Suggestions for Further Reading' as well as two maps and a chronological chart from 4000 B.C. to 925 A.D. add to the book's utility. P. has managed to pack a great deal of information into an accessible and attractive volume. My only worry is that students and laypersons may consider gospel P.'s somewhat controversial theories of Homeric textualization.

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ORACULAR?

G. NAGY: *Homeric Responses*. Pp. xii + 100. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003. Paper, US$16.95, £13 (Cased, US$40, £30.50). ISBN: 0-292-70554-9 (0-292-70553-0 hbk).

Aristarchus described his Homeric exegesis as 'clarification'; Panaetius described Aristarchus as a seer. So far, so good—but then, abruptly: 'Aristarchus is oracular, that is, mantic like a seer, in clarifying the meaning of Homer because Homer himself is oracular in clarifying his own meaning' (p. x). It never takes me long to lose the thread of one of N.'s arguments. Perhaps that's a shortcoming in me. Readers of this review should certainly bear the possibility in mind.

N. goes on to take the 'metaphor of clairvoyance . . . even further', noting that '*Homeric Responses* is, after all, a set of Homeric responses to questions, *Homeric* questions'. What have responses to do with clairvoyance? The idea is elaborated in Chapter 1, which begins from a claim about the semantics of ὑποκρίνεσθαι: 'The word means more than simply "respond to a question." It conveys the basic idea of *responding by way of performing*, and this idea links Homeric poetry with the clairvoyant language of seers' (p. 21). Well, sometimes the word is applied to seers, and sometimes it isn't—as N.'s first example, *Iliad* 7.402, shows. And even if we swallow the puzzlingly unmotivated claim that 'the Achaians respond by virtue of the fact that the words of their response have been performed by Diomedes' (p. 21), I am left wondering whether 'performs' here means anything more than 'speaks'. But what, then, is the point of 'responding by way of performing'? How else could a hero respond? (Obviously not in writing!)

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Chapter 2, on 'diachronic skewing', takes as its prize exhibit the contrast between the melodic, accompanied epic performances portrayed in the poems and the non-melodic, unaccompanied performances of rhapsodes in historical times. Though N. thinks this a 'paradox' (p. 42), it is no more paradoxical than an iron-age poet portraying heroes fighting with bronze weapons—that is, not paradoxical at all (unlike heroes fighting with bronze weapons and cooking with iron utensils). And the phenomenon is familiar: how does the label 'diachronic skewing' advance us?

Janko has used the presence of uncorrected mistakes in the Homeric poems as evidence that the text we have was fixed by dictation. N. objects that 'in terms of an evolutionary model, it becomes unnecessary to posit any "irreversible mistakes" in Homeric poetry. Any mistakes in one performance can be corrected on the occasion of the next performance' (p. 70). So Chapter 3 argues that apparent mistakes are really masterstrokes of artistic virtuosity (p. 50). That is odd, since N. has already cited evidence that, though mistakes *can* be corrected in subsequent performances, this does not necessarily happen. The chapter starts by mentioning a mistake in plot-construction preserved by one of Lord's singers across seventeen years. So mistakes persist in oral traditions: that in itself blocks Janko's inference.

N.'s very different response to Janko (a recipe, one might think, for special pleading) produces results that not everyone will find persuasive. N. sees Achilles' use of the dual in *Iliad* 9.197 as a deliberate snub to Odysseus (pp. 53, 55); but how does that make 9.182 a masterstroke of artistic virtuosity? Maybe a context which alerts the audience to an alternative two-envoy version makes them more sensitive to the point of Achilles' snub. But I am guessing: N.'s exposition is inexplicit.

N. assumes there actually was an older version with two envoys. Elsewhere, he objects to a rival interpretation that there is 'no need to posit an ad hoc invention' (p. 16). Let's turn the objection round: has N. shown a need to posit an earlier version? Audiences that have not heard a previous two-envoy version must understand the point of the duals without worrying whether there was an earlier version, or infer the earlier version; either way, the actual existence of such an earlier version is inconsequential. For those who find the scene problematic as it stands, an actual earlier version has explanatory power; it is not so clear why we should postulate an actual earlier version if the scene makes perfect artistic sense as it stands.

Despite the heading 'Four Questions', N. supplies only a single question mark in the nineteen-page introduction. Nit-picking, perhaps: but at the end of a section headed 'Question 1: About Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives', should we not have been told what the question actually is? You can name a question without understanding it, but then the answer may not make sense (as memorably illustrated in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*). Which brings us back to a familiar characteristic of N.'s writing. I was uncertain whether the preface was claiming metaphoric clairvoyance for N's own Homeric responses, but few readers will deny that they share one notorious characteristic with oracles. The frequent self-glossing perhaps attests N.'s recognition of this problem, but does not solve it:

> In terms of my argument, such a return to an earlier time frame is a matter of performance, not just composition. That is, the cross-reference represented in the story-within-a-story is performative as well as compositional. To put it yet another way, the blind singer is here being represented as *cross-referring by way of performance*. (p. 15)

N. is not good at explaining himself, though he is a dab hand at repeating himself—another familiar problem. Not for the first time, N. has produced a slender volume, largely a patchwork of material already published, and substantially

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overlapping with other publications (as the obsessive self-citation shows). N. claims (p. ix n. 3) to have 'rethought' his earlier books, but I failed to detect the significant advance that would have given this publication a satisfactory rationale.

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SOLON AND 'NEW CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY'

J. A. Almeida: *Justice as an Aspect of the Polis Idea in Solon's Political Poems. A Reading of the Fragments in Light of the Researches of New Classical Archaeology.* (*Mnemosyne* Supplementum 243.) Pp. xviii + 284. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003. Cased, €80, US$95. ISBN: 90-04-13002-0.

Solon has always given classicists trouble. He is a member of the small club of ancient Greeks who both were important political figures and left a significant literary *oeuvre*. As a result, a comprehensive assessment of Solon demands expertise in a large set of disciplines, including social, cultural, legal, and political history, literary criticism, and archaeology. In *Justice as an Aspect of the Polis Idea in Solon's Political Poems*, Joseph A. Almeida tries to address this difficulty. He draws on a range of disciplines in order to illuminate *dikē*, one of the key words in Solon's writings.

In particular, A. is concerned with bringing the achievements of what is often called 'new classical archaeology' (associated with Anthony Snodgrass and Ian Morris, among others) to bear on Solon's fragments. Over the past thirty years, 'new classical archaeologists' have been able to make a very strong case for the exceptionality of Athens in the seventh and early sixth centuries. The material record, in particular burial patterns and the absence of a major extra-urban sanctuary, suggests the obliteration in Athens (but hardly anywhere else) of many standard aspects of *polis* organization from the early seventh century until well into the sixth century. Power and political participation in Athens seem to have been more exclusively the domain of a few than in most other Greek communities. A. reads Solon's poetry, with its emphasis on the balancing of the interests of different social groupings, against this background. *Dikē*, the particular theme of the book, is 'Solon's poetic representation of the *polis* ideal as he understood it in the context of the real political troubles of his own Athens' (p. xvi). In other words, *dikē* terminology, which is relatively frequent in the surviving texts, is at the heart of Solon's attempt to bring Athenian political and social organization in line with the rest of Greece.

The meat of this argument is contained in Chapter 5, a reading of frr. 4 and 36 West (= 3 and 30 Gentili-Prato) with particular reference to *dikē*, drawing on the suggestions of the 'new classical archaeologists'. Chapter 4 is devoted to the lexicography of *dikē*. The preceding chapters serve to set the scene: consecutively, A. sets out previous scholarship on Solon as a historical figure (Chapter 1) and on Solon's poetry as literature (Chapter 2), as well as the relevant aspects of 'new classical archaeology' (Chapter 3). Together, these three chapters argue that historical and literary approaches alone will not yield a reliable interpretation of *dikē* in Solon, and that Solon scholars should, therefore, make more use of archaeology.

A.'s project is welcome. In recent years scholars focusing mostly on either texts or material culture have come to realize the mutual benefit of collaboration and exchange.

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