

**Andreas Luther (Hg.): Geschichte und Fiktion in der homerischen Odyssee (= Zetemata. Monographien zur klassischen Altertumswissenschaft; Heft 125), München: C.H.Beck 2006, 248 S., ISBN 3-406-54192-5, EUR 58,00**

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The publication of conference proceedings has become an increasingly common phenomenon in scholarly publishing. In rare cases, the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts, usually because each contributes to a unified focus and a clearly defined topic. The present volume does not meet that criterion, and a sign of its amorphous structure is the lack of an introduction that even attempts to link the various articles, some of which do not address the stated topic except in the most general terms, among them, Blössner's reiterated skepticism concerning the oral character of the Homeric epics; similarly, despite their intrinsic interest, the literary discussions of Schlange-Schöningen concerning Homer's knowledge of the Palamedes tradition or Schlesier on Odysseus as a new kind of hero who travels, survives, and narrates.

The first (very sketchy) essay by Pedro Barceló and the third by Martin Dreher see the *Odyssey* as representing a transitional stage in the development of the *polis*; Dreher argues that political asylum rather than personal supplication does not yet exist in the *Odyssey*. He does not, however, mention Cassandra's taking refuge at the temple of Athena during the sack of Troy.

Alexandra von Lieven casts her Egyptological eye on the *Odyssey*'s picture of Egypt and suggests that Homer may have adapted - directly or indirectly - genuine Egyptian sources in describing the Lotus Eaters, Proteus, or the pharmacopia the poet associates with Egypt.

Less convincingly, Andreas Luther argues that the Phaeacians, who constitute the audience for Odysseus' *apologoi* may represent Homer's historical Euboean audience, who are to be flattered by the comparison. But if his listeners were to make the equation, how would they react to the fate of the Phaeacians, who henceforth vanish from human ken?

In "Die Welt des Eumaios", Martin Schmidt usefully collects and analyzes the depiction of slavery within the *Odyssey*. Despite the heroic context, slavery is not idealized and resembles what we know of it in the historical period. While the poem shows that slaves can be loyal and pious, it does not, according to Schmidt, allow for freeing them. I would dispute his

interpretation of Odysseus' promise to Eumaios and Philoitios (21. 214-16) and wonder too at Homer's unique emphasis on the swineheard through frequent apostrophe.

Monika Schuol's survey of depictions of the Homeric *aoidos* and early representations of the lyre remains superficial and does not engage the question of the relation of the monumental composer to the singer of short epic lays depicted in the *Odyssey* or to the other genres of poetry in the historical period.

Peter Spahn's substantial (50 pp.) contribution combines a Snellian approach to the terminology of *philos*, *hetairos*, and *xenie* with a sociological investigation of social interaction in Homeric society. There is much of interest here, but I confess to always getting anxious when hearing that Homer does not yet (noch nicht) have a conception of a thing because he does not use a term the way it is used in later Greek. Nor am I quite sure that only *xenie*, but not *philos* or *hetairos* suggest reciprocal social relationships. Spahn himself admits that the relationship between Achilles and Patroklos does not correspond to the hierarchical relationship implied by the latter two terms; and I would have liked to see him engage in the passage (21. 214-16) discussed in Schmidt's essay on slavery.

Finally Jan Stenger argues sensibly that apparent digressions like the Song of Ares and Aphrodite or the Catalogue of Women in the Nekyia encourage the active participation of the poet's audience in the construction of meaning by inviting them to make multiple connections to the plot of the *Odyssey*.

This summary of the table of contents demonstrates at once that the collection contains some disparate but useful material, but that no effort has been made to coordinate or cross-reference or even to order articles that touch on similar areas or methods. Despite its title, then, scholars will come away frustrated in their expectation of a unified picture of "Geschichte und Fiktion in der homerischen *Odyssee*".

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