

storytelling-in-performance provide a structural frame that *can* explain some aspects of the narrative style of Homer with which the 'traditional' orality of Parry and Lord could hardly cope, and which in recent times had been more and more often analysed in terms of narratology of written poetry. Whether the oral Homer(s) relied mainly on the strategies of conversation-in-performance or mainly on the 'artificial' techniques and themes of a tradition of oral poetry is an issue which perhaps will be still open—but as far as I know, a similar uncertainty exists about the nature of poetic language in general: *écart* from the rules (anti-prose) or rediscovery of the truest origins of language against the arbitrariness of linguistic signs?

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PITY IN THE *ILIAD*

J. KIM: *The Pity of Achilles: Oral Style and the Unity of the Iliad*. Greek Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches. Pp. x + 203. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000. Paper, \$22.95. ISBN: 0-8476-8621-3.

J. Kim argues that the *Iliad* possesses a central unifying focus emphasized by formulae; more provocatively, this unifying theme is not Achilles' *μῆνις* but his pity. Pity and its cognates and opposites, including both pitilessness and wrath, link together the disparate themes commonly proposed of the poem by critics.

Following a brief introduction, K. begins her analysis with Book 24, and the argument that the burial of Hektor and reconciliation with Priam are made possible because 'Achilles *pities* Priam' (p. 12). Neither this pity nor Book 24 is foreign to heroism, to Achilles, or to the *Iliad* as a whole, for Achilles' pity towards Priam is intimately 'connected to the theme of Achilles' *mēnis*' (p. 33). This leads in Chapter 2 to a detailed study of the meaning and context of pity and its cognates and opposites in the *Iliad*. K. argues that pity in general, both in Achilles' case and that of other warriors and even gods, is not just a simple emotion, for it manifests itself in a variety of ways and can be seen to instigate specific actions: helping, healing, saving, avenging, and giving burial. As such, it is a feeling or action directed, almost by definition, towards mortals (pp. 66–7).

Chapter 3 is concerned with the *Iliad's* structure. K. agrees that the poem is tripartite in structure, but claims some originality in locating Book 9 within Part Two rather than Part One (p. 69 n. 1). Thematically, the poem's divisions centre around pity, with the first section (Books 1–8) dominated by Achilles' pity for and subsequent pitilessness against the Achaians, the second section (Books 9–16) exploring the conflict between that pitilessness and his pity towards his friends, and the third (Books 17–24) focusing on Achilles' pitilessness against the Trojans, and ultimate reconciliation with and pity for Priam. In this sense, the sufferings of the Achaians are a direct consequence of Achilles' withdrawing his pity, just as Patroklos' return to the fray in Achilles' armour is not only 'The pivotal event of the poem', but also the 'thematic resolution of the series of pleas for pity directed to Achilles' throughout Books 9–16 (p. 103). K. argues further that Achilles in his wrath reassesses who his friends are and accepts that some of those friends are now Trojans (pp. 98ff).

Chapter 4 reiterates much that has gone before, notably the connexion between Achilles' *μῆνις* and pity (and pitilessness), but adds that the focus of that *μῆνις* subsequent to the reconciliation with Agamemnon is not Hektor but death. Connected

to this is the notion that ‘Achilles’ *mēnis* [is] occasioned by his own mortality’ (p. 166). There is also a conclusion and an appendix on the duals in the Embassy scene.

Most of this is well argued, though one might object that Achilles’ wrath and pity are but aspects of his heroism, and that heroism—and its nature and cost (which is not the same thing as criticism)—is the poem’s central theme. Further, K.’s support for the argument that Achilles’ rejection of the Embassy is a rejection and criticism of heroism (pp. 84–90; cf. pp. 158–9) is hard to reconcile with Achilles’ obvious longing for battle at 1.488–92 and 9.189 (both of which she cites). Achilles’ two fates make him keenly aware of the fragility of life, and his words to the Embassy do not so much say that death nullifies heroism as reiterate the importance of *κλέος* and *τιμῆ* by insisting that Agamemnon—and even the gods, if we can believe 1.352–4—owe him some honour in exchange for his risking of his life. And why should he fight for Agamemnon if that honour is not forthcoming?

Nor is Achilles guilty of some tragic error and of Patroklos’ death (as K. claims, e.g. on pp. 24, 105, 124, 169–70). As 16.751–3 makes clear, Patroklos, like Hektor (12.41–6), is destroyed by his own courage (see too 16.686–7—quoted by K. on p. 169!). This, combined with Sarpedon’s famous words on the heroic ethos (12.322–8), and Achilles’ awareness of the fragility of life and the tragic nature of both life and heroism (evident in 21.99–113 and 24.525ff.), suggest a closer connexion between the heroic and tragic than K. allows. Rather better is her observation that ‘Throughout the poem . . . the thematic developments of Achilles’ *mēnis*, his mortality, his *φιλότις* and his pity parallel and imply each other’ (p. 170; cf. p. 143).

Such disagreements notwithstanding, K.’s central thesis, that the *Iliad* possesses a central unity and that formulae connected to Achilles and key points in the narrative can help elucidate the poem’s unifying theme, is a sound one. The notion that this theme is Achilles’ pity is, in the final analysis, thought-provoking.

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THE FRAGMENTS OF THE EARLY GREEK MYTHOGRAPHERS

R. L. FOWLER: *Early Greek Mythography. Vol. I: Text and Introduction*. Pp. xlvii + 459. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Cased, £55. ISBN: 0-19-814740-6.

Using Jacoby’s formidable *FGrHist* can be a frustrating experience. As the material is not chronologically arranged, those interested in specific topics or periods will have to wander around a maze of cross-references with the result that, as F. justly complains, they will often wind up ‘with half the collection open on [their] desk’ (p. xxx). F. has undertaken, and carried out admirably, the task of alleviating the frustration by producing a manageable edition of the fragments of the early Greek mythographers from Akousilaos and Hekataios down to the early fourth century.

The edition, which is to be supplemented by a second volume containing a philological and mythological commentary, consists of an introduction (pp. xxvii–xlvii) explaining F.’s criteria for the selection of the authors and the *ratio edendi*; a handsomely produced critical text of twenty-nine mythographers (pp. 1–374), conveniently accompanied by brief headings summarizing the content of each fragment; an *auxiliary lectionum* pertaining to the text of the Homeric ‘D’-scholia

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