

## THE HOMERIC EPICS AND OTHER TEXTS

CURRIE (B.) *Homer's Allusive Art*. Pp. xiv + 343. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Cased, £70, US\$110. ISBN: 978-0-19-876882-1. doi:10.1017/S0009840X17002323

Are close similarities between different narratives in early Greek hexameter poetry instances of ‘a traditional scene or a series of specific reprises?’ (p. 190). Favouring the latter, C. addresses the possibility of allusion from a neo-analytic perspective.

Chapter 1 juxtaposes Foley’s ‘traditional referentiality’ with ‘allusion’, noting that ‘individual poems may be fixed enough to serve as an object of allusion’ (p. 12). ‘Transference of motifs’ is a technique neo-analysts have used to study allusion. They argue the *Iliad* transfers motifs from a pre-Iliadic Antilochus to Patroclus. Intratextually, the *Iliad* employs allusion between different episodes, in paired speeches, for example. C. distinguishes degrees of allusion, *interaction* in general, ‘a spectrum from non-verbatim to verbatim quotation’, where *evocation* indicates ‘less strongly marked relations than quotation’ (p. 35). ‘A claimed allusion should increase our understanding of a passage or help it to make sense in a larger interpretive framework’ (pp. 33–4).

Chapter 2 argues the *Odyssey* alludes to the *Iliad*, to lost epics on Odysseus’ homecoming, to an *Argonautica* and to an account of Heracles’ labours. The *Iliad* alludes to an *Aethiopsis* and a conjectured \**Memnonis*. Since a hero is twice translated from battlefield to be immortalised by his mother in the *Aethiopsis*, the *Iliad* evokes an instance with Eos and Zeus at 16.431–61, but inverts the motif: now ‘Zeus is the parent concerned for his son [Sarpedon] and it is the goddess who must be prevailed on’ (p. 67). C. posits an earlier version of the Book 9 Embassy, from which ‘the role formerly played by Patroklos has been transferred [in the *Il.*] to Achilles’ old tutor’ (p. 74). He distinguishes between Cyclic and Homeric epic: the latter instantiates active creation of the gifted *αἰοιδός*; the former embodies passive reproductive tendencies of the *ῥαψωδός*.

Chapter 3 considers whether the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* alludes to other narratives. The Berlin papyrus (P. Berol.) has fragments of a *Hymn to Demeter* ascribed to Orpheus distinct enough from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, C. argues, to demonstrate separate derivation (p. 84). *Iliad* 16 displays tension between a ‘surface’ insistence that Sarpedon not be immortalised and a version in which he was, an example of ‘allusion to a traditional version highlighted by inconsistency between “surface” and “deep” layers of narrative’ (p. 89). Amphimedon claiming Penelope’s complicity in the suitors’ destruction (p. 93) displays inconsistency between narrator-text and character-text. When Persephone’s character-text in *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* diverges from the narrator-text, the Berlin papyrus provides a ‘basis for the idea that early Greek hexameter poetry might use a character-text to “quote” a traditional version’ (p. 95). Lastly, Chapter 3 notes that ‘a poem’s awareness of its own individual standing within a tradition ... has been linked ... with the question of allusion in early Greek hexameter poetry’ (p. 97).

Chapter 4 explores when characters ‘weep ostensibly for one thing, but really for another’ (p. 106), or ‘pregnant tears’. Characters’ tears link them with other characters; Homer exploits ‘characters’ ... tears, as a means of drawing attention to the use that he is making of the mythological tradition’ (p. 105). Examples demonstrate ‘such tears may also indicate a blurring of the world of the character and the world of the audience’ (p. 106). When Andromache ‘mourns Hector as if he were already dead’ (*Il.* 6.369–502), ‘The helmeted Hector in the Iliadic scene is visually indistinguishable from the hostile Greek warrior who dashes Astyanax to his death’ (pp. 112–13).

Patroclus' death responds to an earlier depiction of Antilochus' death, evidencing 'the audience's ability to perceive the similarity between Patroklos' situation in the *Iliad's* narrative and Antilochos' situation in extra-Iliadic tradition' (p. 128); 'In *Iliad* XVII ... As Achilles weeping for Patroklos is also weeping for himself, so Antilochos weeping for Patroklos ... weeps for himself' (p. 129). *Od.* 19.467–79, where Eurycleia, not Penelope, recognises Odysseus, and 16.11–22, where Telemachus recognises Eumaeus, not Odysseus, are further linked by water spilling from vessels, reflecting Eurycleia's and Eumaeus' surprise.

Pregnant tears often employ transferred motifs, '[T]heir value lies in suggesting the way in which Homer uses earlier poetry' (p. 137). C. suggests that 'tears can express a character's "recollection" of experiences that properly are not available for that character to recall ... but accrue to them only as a character within a "literary" tradition' (*ibid.*).

Chapter 5 argues Homeric epic knew Near Eastern epic 'in some detail as stable narratives'. Exploring toilette-and-seduction scenes (*Il.* 14, *Od.* 8, *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*), C. prioritises Aphrodite's involvement (p. 152), 'the pointed inclusion of Aphrodite in the *Dios apate* ... a signal that this motif has been transferred from Aphrodite to Hera'. The scenes evolve from 'the Near Eastern motif of a sexual union between the love goddess and a royal personage securing the kingship for the goddess's favourite' (p. 154). Aphrodite's seduction of Anchises instantiates the assumed archetype; her quasi-seduction of Paris inverts the sequence: he will *lose* the kingdom.

Inanna's 'sexual rendezvous with Dumuzi' (p. 161) is the archetype, both for her liaisons with kings in the Royal Hymns and for Aphrodite's corresponding function in Greek myth. *Gilgamesh* spins variations on it; the 'bathing-and-dressing motif is attached not to ... Ishtar, but to the hero-king' (p. 169). Dumuzi is first in *Gilgamesh's* catalogue of Ishtar's lovers (6.46–7), whereas 'Ishullanu is punished by Ishtar for *refusing* her after *she* has propositioned him' (p. 171). *Gilgamesh's* catalogue of Ishtar's lovers 'inscribes within the poem its own relationship with earlier poetry, signalling its dependence on Dumuzi–Inanna poetry ... it illustrates ... the same subversion of a poetic model that is effected by the main narrative' (p. 179). C. finds interconnections between the *Gilgamesh* catalogue and Diomedes' wounding Aphrodite (*Il.* 5.334–430), her interaction with Paris and Helen (3.382–447), the *Dios apate*, Calypso's catalogue in *Od.* 5 and *Hymn to Aphrodite* 202–40. *Iliad* (5.337–430, 5.859–901, 21.479–514) interact with earlier Near Eastern examples.

Greek epic engages 'personages' of Near Eastern mythology through transliteration (Bῆλος from ba'al), translation and 'refiguration'. In the latter, Achilles 'is constructed as ... an "equivalent" of Gilgamesh'. Homeric epic learned its techniques of allusion from near eastern poems, possibly *Gilgamesh* itself (pp. 216–17). This may have happened 'by one or more gifted immigrant bilingual poets' (p. 219).

Chapter 6, the epilogue, summarises, 'This book has found early Greek hexameter poetry ... to be vitally dialogic' (p. 223). Six appendices complete the book.

C. is required reading on allusion in Homeric epic. It has always been evident that Homeric epic alludes to Argonautic myth and a Heracles saga. Theoretical positions and assumptions have unnecessarily problematised such evident interactions.

It is problematic, however, to limit consideration to C.'s two perspectives, 'a typologically generated repetition or a specific reprise?' (p. 250). There are other possibilities. For instance, when C. argues that the three gods casting lots (*Il.* 15.187–93) is a 'resettling' of the famous *Atrahasis* passage, a third passage, Deut. 32:8–9, employs a similar conception, but does not seem linked to them. Together they suggest there was a *genre* of myth depicting gods receiving lots. A narrative may neutrally employ structural elements from another without intending allusion. As to a goddess' seduction of a lover, it seems reductive to argue that all toilette-and-seduction scenes descend from one depicting Aphrodite (or Inanna).

C.'s engagement with Near Eastern materials is the most intriguing part. Whether he resolves the specific claims for one narrative specifically interacting with another will remain up to individual readers. For some his argument will be too centred on texts. For his arguments to work, we have to assume no other epics existed, save those we have. Might an earlier *Argonautica* or Heracles saga have had, for example, toilette-and-seduction scenes? Is it safe to assume there were no Phoenician epics? His demonstration of 'motif transference' is captivating. We can adduce *Paradise Lost*. Milton, aware of this traditional interplay, alluding to Andromache and Hector, has Adam drop the wedding garland (*PL* 9.892).

Some claims, where the *Odyssey* allegedly comments on the *Iliad*, violate the former's central themes. When C. conjectures that in an earlier version Penelope recognises Odysseus before he slays the suitors, he passes over the poem's thematic use of postponed recognition. Since the *Odyssey* thematically depicts the suitors as profoundly mistaken about most matters, it seems unwise to think Amphimedon's remarks in 24 are anything more than another instance of this. C.'s assertion (p. 46), 'throughout the *Odyssey*, we are invited to measure Odysseus' heroism against Achilles', betrays an overly *Iliad*-centred view of Homeric epic.

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## THE STRUCTURE OF THE *ILIAD*

KOZAK (L.) *Experiencing Hektor. Character in the Iliad*. Pp. xvi + 307. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. Cased, £95. ISBN: 978-1-4742-4544-9.

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The narrative structure of the *Iliad*, K. argues, is remarkably similar to that of the television serial. For the purpose of the argument, it is important to recognise the distinction between a *serial* and a *series*. A series may run indefinitely. On the television serial, K. quotes media critic P. Holland, who describes it as 'usually fixed to a limited number of episodes' and so 'an expansion of the creative coherence of the single play' (p. 237). Like the *Iliad*, a serial unfolds and reaches consummation only gradually and over a long period of time. The serial, again like the *Iliad*, 'is reliant on audience memory' (p. 4). K. cheerfully admits to being an avid watcher of television (p. 1). No reviewer or reader of the book can possibly question this claim. References to an extraordinarily large number of television serials, seen as analogous to the *Iliad* in one way or another, dot the book throughout. Examples include *Daredevil*, *Alias*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Game of Thrones* and many, many others. Those lacking her extensive knowledge of the large body of television serials may still follow the book's argument with pleasure and profit.

K. analyses the *Iliad* using terminology developed in criticism of the television serial. She sees the plot of the poem unfolding through a sequence of *beats*, *episodes* and *arcs* (p. 4). A beat is the smallest unit of a television serial. It focuses on characters or events and most often corresponds to a change in scene (p. 7). Beats are found in the *Iliad*, for example, in the exchange between Calchas and Achilles (*Il.* 1.69–100 [p. 7]) or in the first appearance of Hector in the poem (*Il.* 2.786–810 [p. 30]). In both the television serial and the *Iliad*, sequential beats build into episodes (p. 10). While a television serial usually