

NOTICES

H. MACKIE: *Talking Trojan: Speech and Community in the Iliad* (Greek Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches). Pp. xi + 197. Lanham, Boulder, New York, and London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996. \$52.50 (Paper, \$21.95). ISBN: 0-8476-8254-4 (0-8476-8255-2 pbk).

M. follows the aim of the series ('Interdisciplinary Approaches', General Editor: Gregory Nagy) by applying the science of sociolinguistics to the study of Homer. Quoting a number of recent authorities in that field who discuss the way that language is used differently and for different purposes in different situations, she argues that the language used by the Trojans in the *Iliad* differs from that used by the Greeks. We may easily agree. The Greeks are aggressive; the Trojans defensive. No Greek ever appeals for mercy; no Greek weeps as he addresses an enemy. Trojans do (Lykaon, the sons of Antimakhos).

So far, so good; but M. takes the distinction much further. Influenced by a bold chapter (pp. 222-64) of Nagy's book *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore, MD and London, 1979), which distinguishes between 'blame poetry' and 'praise poetry', she asserts that the Achaeans are addicted to the former, the Trojans to the latter. 'Blame poetry' is found in two areas: ritual abuse on the battlefield (she uses the Anglo-Saxon term 'flying') and public wrangles in council or assembly. These are shown to be characteristic of the Achaeans, and not of the Trojans, who do not speak out against Hektor in assembly (apart from Polydamas at 12.61 and 18.254), nor do they make intimidatory speeches on the battlefield. M. even draws political conclusions from this difference, arguing that public dispute shows a more open and advanced society, and leads, when the dispute is resolved, to greater order and discipline. As to the 'praise poetry' of the Trojans, her view is that they are more submissive. They would like to be friends with the Achaeans; they characteristically engage in 'lyric poetry, the wonder tale, genealogy, and prayers'. This is certainly interesting, but, like so much else in the book, is generalization based on only one or two examples: the lyric poetry refers to Glaukos' comparison of the generations of men to leaves; the wonder tale is that of Bellerophon, later in the same speech of Glaukos; genealogies are those of Glaukos again and Aineias; the prayers are those of Lykaon and the sons of Antimakhos. From all this and Sarpedon's famous speech in 12, she claims that the Trojans are more reflective and consequently talk more like poets, and even (because they take a relatively detached view) more like gods.

In the third and fourth chapters of the book M. deals with the 'languages' of Hektor and Achilles. In Hektor's case, she finds him the most complete example of Trojan praise poetry, his speeches perfectly composed and their content reflective and poetic. She says this several times, and quotes his special vocabulary, including the use of *oaristus* in his speech to the allies at 17.328 and in his soliloquy at 22.127-8. For Achilles she goes further. Though aware of previous treatments of Achilles' language by Adam Parry and others, she does not go into much verbal detail, but rather makes even broader and more surprising generalizations. She says that he is an exception to the Achaean habit of blame (though he is pretty good at it when he tries), and that his characteristic mode is that of 'Hesiodic wisdom poetry'. This is because of certain apophthegms in his great speech to the Embassy, and his unique use at 9.320 of the word *aērgos* (characteristic of the unsuccessful farmer in *Works and Days*). She enlarges on this and says that Achilles styles himself as 'metanastic', meaning 'separated from his society', 'not belonging', as (she argues) wisdom poets were and Hesiod was. (The idea is an extension of R. Martin in *Ramus* 21 [1992], 11-33, who was writing about Hesiod, and in passing characterized Phoinix and Patroklos as 'metanastic', but not Achilles.) M. quotes but seems to discount the fact that Achilles' biggest objection to Agamemnon in 9 and 16 is precisely that he has treated him as if he was a 'metanastes'. Weird statements about Achilles follow, including the assertion (p. 146) that others (Odysseus, Phoinix, Agamemnon) talk patronizingly to him, implying that he is fatherless and insecure.

Original approaches are to be welcomed, and the book is written with intelligence. It is truly a pity to have to report that the proof-reading has been inadequate. There are frequent uncorrected errors, mostly in the interpretation of Homer's Greek, in its presentation and accentuation, in

matters related to scansion and formulaic composition. We are told that it is M.'s first book, and allowances should perhaps be made; but could not one of the many people thanked in her preface, who include 'all those in the Classics Department at Princeton University', have helped with the elementary task of reading the proofs?

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G. NAGY: *Homeric Questions*. Pp. x + 180. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996. \$30 (Paper, \$12.95). ISBN: 0-292-75561-9 (0-292-75562-7 pbk).

This unnecessary book lightly repackages three loosely related papers, all recently published in accessible places. There is a substantial overlap with the same author's earlier publications (reflected in the almost obsessive self-citation: a quick count reveals that N. cites himself, on average, more than 1.6 times per page); a lot of the material also appears in N.'s more substantial *Poetry as Performance*, published in the same year. When library budgets are so desperately overstretched, such gratuitous duplication seems questionable.

N. can be stimulating, but there are problems in respect of clarity of communication, interpretation of evidence, and conduct of argument. Some miscellaneous observations may serve to illustrate my reservations.

p. 3: N. contrasts his vision of philology with 'the singular strain of a monotone edict emanating from the unquestioned authority of accepted scholarship to which some would assign the title of philology': this absurd caricature fails to describe anything I can discern in the diversity of contemporary classical scholarship.

pp. 6f.: N. is troubled by scholars who use the terms 'right' and 'wrong' (preferring 'I agree' and 'I disagree'), and disparages 'criticisms that seem intended to displace or exclude results and views'. Yet a few pages later he refers approvingly to a 'vigorous criticism of a wide variety of misunderstandings', which provides a 'valuable . . . refutation' of some common assumptions (p. 26). To claim that a view has been 'refuted' is not simply to express disagreement: it implies that it has been disproven (i.e. that it is wrong). And what is N. seeking to do with those 'misunderstandings', if not to displace or exclude them?

p. 17 n. 16: The concept of 'performance' is crucial to N.'s approach to Homer. It is a pity, therefore, that we are only alerted in passing to the possibility that the term is being used in a specialized sense ('My use of the term *performance* is not intended to convey any connotations of a stage presence, as it were, on the part of the performer'); still more so that the sense in which it is being used is given such a cursory and unilluminating explanation ('I have in mind rather the *performative* dimension of an utterance, as analysed from an anthropological perspective').

p. 103: N. suggests that the 'Peisistratean recension' is a myth—but one that goes back to the Peisistratids themselves, 'an instrument of propaganda for their dynasty'. This would be more convincing if there were any reason to believe that the myth is so old. Unfortunately, N.'s handling of the evidence fails to distinguish between traditions about (a) the introduction of the Homeric poems to Athens, (b) the establishment of rules for performance at the Panathenaea, (c) alterations to the text of the poems, and (d) the assembling (or re-assembling) of the poems from scattered parts. A 'Peisistratean recension' implies (c) and/or (d). But N. cites [Plato] *Hippiarchus*, which only refers to (a) and (b), and Cicero, the earliest surviving reference to (d), indiscriminately as if they were testimony for the same story (p. 95). As a consequence, N. is unable to see the force of the theory that the 'Peisistratean recension' is a Hellenistic scholarly conjecture, or to provide an adequate response to it.

pp. 103f.: Countering the view that 'the relative stability of the Homeric textual transmission . . . proves the archetypal existence of a written Homeric text', N. suggests that 'the alternative model of a relatively static phase in the evolution of the Homeric poems . . . can account for such textual stability'. But to speak of a relatively static phase in the poems' evolution does not 'account for' a period of textual stability; it just describes it in other terms. Tautology is not explanation.

p. 146: At the end of a chapter on exemplary myths in Homer—are they sometimes *ad hoc* invention (Willcock) or do they 'stem from a rich, complex, and . . . subtle tradition' (N.)?—there is a paragraph on the etymology of the Latin word *exemplum*. I cannot conceive how this could