

(in Latin, iambic septenarii), and sequences of them seem to this reader to run very well, e.g. ll. 324–5 (in Agamemnon's instructions to the heralds)

Gibt er sie aber nicht heraus, möcht' ich sie selbst wohl holen,  
Gekommen mit noch grössrer Zahl: für ihn nur um so schlimmer!

L. is not, however, committed to a strictly regular length of line, and accepts expansion if there is more content to include. An interesting feature is that he preserves his own judgement to the extent of occasionally translating a different text from that printed on the opposite page, for example at ll. 5, 91, 97. The different readings are, of course, always to be found in the apparatus criticus to the Greek text, and in principle always discussed in the commentary, but the practice may confuse the inexperienced reader.

The commentary discusses issues consistently, conscientiously, and intelligently, taking full account of the views of predecessors. The division of material has been mentioned above. There is no room here to enter into discussion. There are 173 pages on Book 1, compared with sixty-four in Kirk's first volume.

The accuracy of printing is phenomenal. Later volumes (each in two parts—text/translation and commentary) will no longer contain just one book of the *Iliad*. The actual number is not yet decided, nor is the expected date of completion, although 2010 has been mentioned. Homerists can only feel the deepest gratitude, particularly to Latacz and his publisher, and anticipate what is to come.

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## ILIADIC BATTLE SCENES

O. HELLMANN: *Die Schlachtszenen der Ilias. Das Bild des Dichters vom Kampf in der Heroenzeit.* (Hermes Einzelschriften 83.) Pp. 218. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000. Paper, DM 86. ISBN: 3-515-07463-5.

In this new account of battle scenes in the *Iliad*, Oliver Hellmann steers a middle course between those who would see the hoplite phalanx already reflected in Homer (perhaps most prominently exemplified by Joachim Latacz) and those who (like Hans van Wees) see a mode of warfare preceding hoplite tactics, in which small groups of warriors fight in open formation. But unlike most other writers on Homeric battles, H. is not primarily interested in military history. Indeed, one of the strengths of this book is its healthy skepticism about the notion of reading actual historical practices or conditions directly out of the *Iliad*. Opposing armies march into battle, he says, in ranks that do resemble hoplite formation, but once the fighting starts the poetic descriptions take three forms: a massed battle involving much or all of both armies, fighting between smaller groups of warriors around prominent heroes (to whom they have personal relations but are subordinated), and individual duels between pairs of major heroes. Sometimes the duels and the small-group fighting are simply a microcosm for the battle raging between the whole armies (as Latacz argues), but more often they have independent importance and critically affect the outcome of the fighting. These different modes of description do not cohere into a unified account of

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battle tactics but are incongruent and even mutually contradictory. So are the different pictures we are given of the Akhaian army's composition: troops either seem to have been recruited on a regional basis or make up a leader's personal following. An explanation of these inconsistencies, H. argues, is to be sought not in the actual contemporary conditions of warfare but in the poet's 'intention'.

For H., battle descriptions show the structure of Homeric society in practice. They show the fundamental distinction between mass and élite, and if they emphasize the exploits of individual heroes, that is because these constitute an élite whose standing is based in the first place on achievement and then on the size of one's personal following. Other possible bases for rank, such as wealth, it is argued, are either the consequence of achievement or secondary to it, or both. Homeric battles give free play to individual self-assertion in a way that limits its potential threat to the community, although the *Iliad* clearly acknowledges a tension between individualism and the common good. The notion of a wider community and *polis* structures can be found in the poem, but they are in the background and take second place to the striving for honor by separate members of the élite. Readers will recognize the influence of Adkins here, and in fact there is nothing new in this account of Homeric society, which also several times invokes Dodds and the idea of a 'shame culture', now largely discarded from discussions of this society.

But the emphasis of the book is on the link between the structure of society and the battle descriptions, and on the question of why the *Iliad* constructs an idealizing picture of an élite that fully justifies its privileges by military exploits and whose claims to precedence are thus matched by its deeds. H. shows how much at odds this picture is with developments in Greek society contemporary with the poem and sees it as a response to them, in several ways. First, it is a response to social tensions and the élite's consequent need for self-definition and legitimation; secondly, it is a response to a new emphasis on wealth as a basis for social standing, so that the epic's valorization of achievement may have formed part of debates about value within the élite; thirdly, it is a response to military developments like the hoplite phalanx, which limited the importance of the individual warrior; and finally, it is a response to the emergence of the *polis*, which limited personal autonomy. In the expedition against Troy, the *Iliad* depicts a supra-regional cooperation among the élite that promotes the welfare of the community.

H. offers quite a plausible account of the battle scenes' significance, with important implications for our understanding of the rôle of the *Iliad* amid contemporary changes. It is, however, odd to find him, on the last page of his exposition (p. 195), setting limits on his findings by insisting that Greek audiences would have been clearly aware of the separation between their own age and that of the heroes—this at the end of a discussion of a heroic age as a construction of the past to serve the present! Moreover, by arguing for achievement as *the* determinant of social standing, and playing down the importance of other factors such as wealth or inherited position, he may oversimplify the more complex bases of social position as depicted in the *Iliad*. The focus on battle scenes entails a further reduction. H. several times mentions tensions within the *Iliad's* idealizing picture of the élite heroes but never explores them. The poem's representation of society and its rôle within the context of its production may thus have been more complex than he suggests, although he surely brings out a major aspect of that rôle. Battle scenes in the *Iliad* are hardly untouched territory, and although H. eventually gets around to taking a new perspective on them, his subject involves him in saying a great many obvious things for much of the book. He could have presented his ideas more concisely, and therefore more effectively, in an article.

Still, there is a good payoff in the interesting final chapter, and H.'s thesis deserves careful consideration.

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## HOMER AND MEMORY

E. MINCHIN: *Homer and the Resources of Memory: Some Applications of Cognitive Theory to the Iliad and the Odyssey*. Pp. viii + 247. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. Cased, £40. ISBN: 0-19-815257-4.

M.'s book furthers a recent approach to the Homeric poems that explains their oral or post-oral features in terms of 'choice' of the medium of quasi-spoken/conversational language and not in terms of the 'binding' tradition of an oral culture still unaware of writing. This approach developed from recent scholarly interest in performance as a vital aspect not only for formal features but also for the genesis of much Greek archaic and classical poetry. Thanks to the works of Egbert Bakker, and their use of a terminology made easy for classicists, M.'s book is informed theoretically by the powerful interpretative schemes of the linguists' psychology of spoken vs. written language, and promises to provide a more reliable idea of orality than the one proposed by Parry and Lord. Indeed, 'conversational' orality as a choice in function of performance may be synchronically coexistent with writing, and therefore ought to be immune from the doubts cast on the idea of a pre-writing orality both by the evident elements of advanced 'artistic' refinement in the Homeric poems and by the ambiguous evidence provided by the comparativism of Parry and Lord about the poems' supposed 'oral' origins. In any case, I personally believe that the synchronic and 'historical' interpretations of orality cannot be easily kept separate in archaic Greece, when culture either was oral or at least freshly post-oral: since, of course, 'in illiterate societies, the only grammar is that of spoken language' (S. R. Slings, *CPh* 87 [1992], 100), it is undeniable that for the author(s) of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* choosing the grammar of the spoken language—if they really felt this as a choice—was a much more historically conditioned 'choice' than it may be, for example, for a modern storyteller-in-performance.

Following Bakker's analyses of microstructural features of Homeric language in terms of oral speech (particles, appositional syntax, formulas as 'tracking devices' for the hearers' attention), and of Homeric perception of verbal tenses in the perspective of a verbal actualization of the past into the present time of the performance, M. investigates some larger units of the narration: typical scenes (Chapter 1), catalogues (2), descriptive pauses (3), similes (4), invocation of the Muses (5), ring composition (6). Her task is to explore the dynamics of the storytelling-in-performance according to the 'economy' of the memory systems investigated by cognitive psychology. She assumes that 'if memory guides the processes of comprehension, it guides also the processes of composition' (p. 11), and seeks to prove that for the birth of the Homeric texts the memorization of a traditional *technē* of singing and of traditional contents of songs played a smaller rôle than the achronic strategies and the economies of memory in the practice of storytelling: 'professional storytellers work not so much *from* memory, but *with* memory' (p. 29).

Instead of the comparative model of the Serbo-Croatian singers, or of