in the second chapter, how the battlefield's 'framing spaces' are 'highly thematized' in ways that take us to the heart of the *Iliad*'s main issues.

The second section, on 'embedded story space', seems to me less successful. Tsagalis does well to draw attention to how non-Trojan spaces exert their pressure on events at Troy through the heroes' selective constructions of their pasts, which are linked to their places of origin. And there are some excellent discussions. But for most of these chapters, explicit links to space and cognition get lost behind attempts to uncover non-Iliadic traditions, exercises in neo-analysis that are often based on pure speculation or tenuous reasoning. These traditions, if they existed, are not irrelevant, but this section is too long and the argument drifts.

Space and cognition make a triumphal re-entry in section 3, on similes, where a chapter applying the method to similes in the poem is followed by a more theoretical one on their 'cognitive aspect'. This seems to me the finest part of the book. Although Tsagalis follows Minchin in some ways, he successfully 'spatializes' the simile. The centerpiece of his discussion in chapter 5 is his demonstration in regard to battle similes that as long as the fighting is located in the same place the spaces envisioned in the similes will be similar to each other or homologous, and when the space of battle shifts so does the simile space. Here he comes at the notion of simile sequences or clusters from a new perspective: the spatial association is primary, thematic connections secondary. Without trying to do justice to the richness of these chapters here, I would point to the discussion of 'hypertextual space' that ends chapter 6 as particularly suggestive and, as far as I know, new in treatments of the Homeric simile.

The last section, on descriptions of objects, again falters somewhat in the first chapter (7), despite some very useful material, in large part because Tsagalis defines several of his key terms confusingly. The last chapter, however, on 'ecphrastic space', shows the full strengths of Tsagalis' approach, especially in the discussion of the shield of Achilles. Tsagalis shows that it is misguided to seek a key theme that unifies the various scenes on the shield. Instead, the poet visualizes each scene through smaller visual units and then draws on these for subsequent scenes, so that the ecphrasis grows organically through an associative technique that does without a predetermined plan: not a linear development, but 'an iconic chain-reaction in the story-teller's mind, facilitated by spatial links'.

If the book has some flaws, these seem mainly due to a need for some further editing and to its richness and ambition. They should not detract from its many excellent achievements. The same can be said of occasional mistranslations of Greek (ἀναιδής does not mean 'unwilling') and some questionable statements: what basis is there for saying that the assembly of book 1 takes place in Agamemnon's 'headquarters' or in his hut? Or that it is the same sceptre that is described in books 1 and 2? Or that the hill of Kallikalone was the location of the judgment of Paris in the *Iliad*? Or that in 1.29–31, Agamemnon promotes Chryseis to high status? These instances stand out – and I noted only a handful – because the argumentation is generally so meticulous.

Homer's *enargeia* was a topos of ancient criticism. In showing convincingly the springs of that vividness in the human mind, this book brings us a little closer to the mystery of the *Iliad*'s creation and to an understanding of the poem's profound influence in antiquity and of why it continues to stir us today.

WILLIAM THALMANN
University of Southern California
thalmann@usc.edu

ELMER (D.F.) **The Poetics of Consent: Collective Decision Making and the *Iliad*.** Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013. Pp. x + 313. $55. 9781421408262.

To do this complex book justice, it makes good sense to start with the presuppositions on which Elmer's entire argument is based. The basic assumption is that there is an oral tradition of great 'diachronic depth'; its central themes are presumed to reach back to Indo-European times. This tradition is shaped from formulae that permit oral performances, by which it is handed down from generation to generation. From this derives an 'ongoing process of reception'. Nevertheless, the tradition is generally conservative and tends to preserve the 'original' meaning of the formulae. To identify the specific of the *Iliad* within the stream of tradition, Elmer makes the attempt to bring out its 'grammar of reception'. Characteristic of such a grammar are the formulae selected from the reservoir of the tradition. Thus, 'formulaic expressions provide the key to unlocking the meaning of the Homeric verse' (15). According to Elmer, the formula *epainos*, central to the *Iliad*'s message, transmits the theme of consensus.

In Elmer's reading, the *Iliad* begins with a 'state of exception'. Agamemnon is forced to give Chryseis back to her father, but in return claims Briseis, part of the booty promised to Achilles. In making this 'unilateral decision', Agamemnon veers off the customary path of consensus by imposing his will on the Achaeans as a whole. In consequence, the Achaeans react to his speech not with the consensus-denoting formula *epainesthai*, but with silence. From this point of the story on, the narrative aims to restore consensus as the norm. This tendency can be observed among the Achaeans and the gods as well. The Trojans are different, as manifested by Hector's decision to act against the assembly, whose will is finally formulated by Polydamas. Hector is not able to understand the social power of the 'consensus' principle and the Trojans must consequently fail. Yet, the Achaeans, too, are not able to put a complete end to the societal dysfunction. This is expressed, among other means, by the formula *epiachein*, which means only collective cheering, not decision making.

In Elmer's view, the poem does not fully restore the posited consensus; he draws a connection between this hypothesis and G. Nagy's assumption of ongoing performances of tradition, from which he derives a deliberate connection between the text and the various audiences. Hence these audiences, representing the 'national community', are presumed to be the forum where the thread of the *Iliad*'s story was followed to its intended end, again to enact the norm of consensus.

The argument is logically developed through the nine chapters of the book, arranged in three parts. The introduction sets out the methodological premises. To circumscribe the term 'consensus', Elmer picks up on Egon Flaig's definition ('Das Konsensprinzip im homerischen Olymp. Überlegungen zum göttlichen Entscheidungsprozess Ilias 4, 1-72', *Hermes* 122 (1994) 13–31) and circumscribes the term 'consensus' as 'disposition to yield'. To define the term 'conflict', he falls back on Carl Schmitt's simplistic differentiation of friend and foe (*Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, Chicago 2005; *The Concept of the Political*, Chicago 2007). By necessity, he then gives only an exemplary interpretation of the *Iliad*. Part one deals with the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles and between Thersites and Odysseus. Part two describes the different understanding of consensus by the political communities of the Achaeans and the Trojans and then the relationships between the Olympian gods. Part three serves to connect the audiences within the *Iliad* and outside it in the 'real', historical world.

This book is full of excellent observations, for instance the reading of the simile of the waves beaten by the wind in its slightly different use for the Achaean and the Trojan armies. As for his main argument that the theme of consensus is central to the story of the *Iliad*, the question remains whether the *Iliad*'s message is directed at the audiences in the real world not to restore traditional conditions, but to prompt them to organize their political life anew along the thread developed in the story – a possibility Elmer is aware of, but does not follow to its end. This might also be a reflection of the fact that neither studies critical of his far-reaching notion of formula, nor the many philological and historical examinations of the topic's strife, community and consensus, nor those that take a narratological perspective of the Homeric epics or deal with ethnogenesis and Hellenicity, the function of the gift and the role of agon, nor those that analyse the archaeological record and give evidence of the 'real' world, nor, least of all, those that argue for an impact of 'oriental' texts on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are given their due consideration. This is regrettable, as only a multi-perspective reading can help us come as close as possible to the world(s) of the Homeric epics.

CHRISTOPH ULF
University of Innsbruck
christoph.ulf@uibk.ac.at

This richly-detailed and erudite study traces the love life of the *Iliad*'s hero throughout the Graeco-Roman literary tradition and into late antiquity. Reconstructing the varied traditions of Achilles' relations with Deidamia, Briseis, Patroclus and Penthesileia, Fantuzzi illuminates an important chapter in the ancient reception of Homer, one in which later readers and rewriters respond to what is absent rather than present in the original source. Achilles does not appear as a lover to any significant degree in the *Iliad*: his entanglement with Deidamia on Scyros and his captivation by Penthesileia at the instant of her death occur