

## BOOK REVIEW

*Homer's Versicolored Fabric: The Evocative Power of Ancient Greek Epic Word-Making.* By ANNA BONIFAZI. Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2012. Distributed by Harvard University Press. Pp. x + 350. Paper, \$24.95/£18.95. ISBN 978-0-674-06062-3.

The “versicolored fabric” of the title of Anna Bonifazi’s book refers to the way certain objects change color when viewed from different perspectives, which means they can truthfully be said to be one color for one viewer and one color for another. The situationally dependent status of such an object is an analogue for the aspects of Homeric language Bonifazi examines in her book. Using the tools of the field of linguistics known as pragmatics, she focusses on third-person pronouns and adverbs/particles with the element *αὐ-*. Although Bonifazi sidesteps the issue, simply defining pragmatics can be controversial. (See Mira Ariel, *Defining Pragmatics* (Cambridge, 2010).) But, essentially, pragmatics can be thought of as the study of the role context plays in generating meaning. All language, as actually used, is spoken (or written) by someone to someone in some setting.

In her first chapter, Bonifazi brings her pragmatic approach to anaphora. Following linguists Catherine Emmott and Francis Cornish, Bonifazi calls for a “radical change” (19) in how anaphora is understood. She calls this the “referent in the mind” model (20). Anaphors do not refer to words but to “mental representations.” Regarding the much-discussed first word of the poem, *ἄνδρα*, she finds it is not “vague,” though it has no verbal antecedent; rather, “the referent of *ἄνδρα* is in the mind” of both the poem’s narrator and audience “as a relevant shared knowledge” (66). This example is programmatic for Bonifazi. Just as Odysseus is on the mind of the poem’s external audience, whose sympathies lie with him right from the proem, so also is Odysseus on the mind of the internal characters and “emotionally near” them. In the first four books of the poem, Homer thematizes the anaphoric/deictic pronoun (*ἐ*)*κεῖνος* as a signal of Odysseus’ emotional and (imagined) visual significance as a “cognitive presence,” despite his physical absence.

In her second chapter, Bonifazi reads Odysseus' visit to Eumaeus' hut in Book 14 as a "layered" scene, in which multiple dramatic situations co-exist and are communicated by the same text. The traditional interpretation of the scene sees dramatic irony at work: the audience knows Odysseus' identity and Eumaeus does not. Some interpreters, however, have seen Eumaeus as, on some level, aware of his guest's identity. Though contradictory, these interpretations are not incompatible, according to Bonifazi. Both realities (plus a third ritual layer) are present in our text. They are "multiple readings that the performer deliberately enables for the multiple pleasures of the audience" (83). Bonifazi's third chapter offers further layered readings of Odysseus' encounters with allies and foes on Ithaca. In this context, she introduces a pragmatic analysis of Homeric αὐτός. It can act as an intensifier, marking out a center (the referent of αὐτός) distinguished from a periphery; it can also act as a demonstrative of identity. Bonifazi sees a dialectic between αὐτός and (ἐ)κεῖνος, which culminates in Odysseus' self-revelation to Laertes at 24.321: κείνος μὲν δὴ ὄδ' αὐτὸς ἐγώ, "That one is here, it is myself, here I am ..." (Bonifazi's translation). This coincidence of pronouns "summarizes a fundamental fact, which is personal and social, private and public, at the same time: Odysseus cannot be *either* κείνος *or* αὐτός; he is both" (180).

On Bonifazi's "layered" reading, each interaction between the disguised Odysseus and his Ithacan subjects exhibits an unresolved ambiguity: they both recognize and do not recognize him. Although some of her readings are clever, I cannot accept Bonifazi's argument in its entirety. Her insistence on the multiple status of these scenes depends on a slippage between the idea that, e.g., Philoetius could be imagined "*as if*" he "really had recognized his master" (162, emphasis mine) and that he *actually* had. The poem we have does allude to alternative narrative paths in which characters become aware of Odysseus' identity at different points, but these remain hypothetical and unrealized alternatives. To be sure, Bonifazi would find my critique too literalistic and "unitary" (see 169–70). Despite my sympathy with her approach, I remain unpersuaded on this point, as I expect some other readers will as well.

In the final two chapters, Bonifazi gives pragmatic accounts for adverbs beginning with αὐ-. Eschewing the term "particle" (properly, in my view), she classifies αὐ, αὐτε, and αὐτάρ as discourse markers. They do not affect the propositional content of language, but function at two other levels: the "presentational" level, relating an utterance to what comes before or after and the "interactional" level, relating speakers and interlocutors. At the presentational level, these words "pri-

marily mark a shift from what is ‘on the one side’ to what is ‘on the other side’” in the addressee’s “visual framework” (218). This applies especially to characters in different locations (e.g., across a battlefield), but can also apply to different threads of narrative (e.g., in transitions from one scene to another). At the interactional level, these words can indicate the emotional force of an utterance. The other adverbs beginning with *αὖ-* are more likely to have propositional functions, but they can still function at the presentational or interactional level: e.g., *αὐτίκα* can propel the action of a narrative.

In the end, Bonifazi succeeds at providing a richer account of how, why, and to what effect speakers of the Homeric texts use these pronouns and adverbs/particles. As a result, now anyone interested in the Homeric usages of these words will want to consult this book closely. Bonifazi has advanced our appreciation of the nuanced pragmatics of Homeric diction.

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