

BOOK REVIEW

Homer, Odyssey I. Edited with an Introduction, Translation, Commentary, and Glossary. By SIMON PULLEYN. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. xviii+298. Paperback, \$24.95. ISBN: 978-0-19-882420-6.

This edition of *Odyssey I* includes introduction, text, translation, commentary, glossary, appendix on technical linguistic and philological terms and two indices. The book is noteworthy for the manner in which the author addresses the needs and interests of various readers, from the beginner to the advanced scholar. A work of consummate scholarship, the book is a success.

In the first part of his introduction Pulleyn comments on the remarkable conceptual differences between the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*: the former may serve as a precursor to the European novel, while the latter may serve as a meditation on the tragedy of the human condition. Thereafter he turns to the epic's architecture: the *Odyssey* may be read profitably in relation to its individual books, in relation to its four-book sequences and in relation to its halves. With regard to the poem's structure Pulleyn, given the purview of his commentary on Book 1, focuses discussion on the Telemachy. And he shows that much is to be gained from considering the artistry of the formulaic style. Brief sections on imagery, speech-style, vocabulary and versification follow. All these materials, handled judiciously, will be valuable for the introductory reader.

In the second part of the introduction Pulleyn turns to discuss the material and social worlds of the *Odyssey*. He comments adeptly on politics and slavery, and his thoughts on women and goddesses in the poem are well developed. Addressing the poem's geography he observes, "it is a work of imagination that blends the imaginary with the real in ways that are satisfying for the audience but less so for the geographer" (31), but many geographers are not as unsatisfied with imaginative geographies as Pulleyn suggests. A section on Homeric physiology and psychology and on the ways in which these differ from our contemporary understanding of the human body and of its processes is well handled, as is a section on the divine.

In the third part of the introduction Pulleyn focuses on the *Odyssey* as material text. He judiciously ranges over thorny questions of text and authorship in relation to Homer, archetype, literacy and oral tradition. With regard to the famed Homeric question Pulleyn believes that “there came in the latter half of the eighth century BC an artistic genius, a monumental composer whom we may call Homer, who . . . fashioned the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as we have them” (38). A section on transmission includes comments as to how a modern editor produces a text; this should be of particular interest to the introductory readers for whom Pulleyn partially writes. Brief introductions to meter, prosody, dialect and grammar are thoughtfully developed.

The text is based on consultation of the editions of Allen, von der Muehll, Van Thiel and West, and the translation is intended to aid the reader in understanding Pulleyn’s interpretation of the Greek. Pulleyn does due diligence in defending his decision to include translation (viii-ix), but I wonder whether one still need defend the decision to provide translation with text; as Pulleyn notes, with translation provided, the commentary is then available for discussing things other than tricky passages of Greek—and the student can simply put a piece of paper over it during in-class translation. The translation is generally excellent. I offer a few notes thereon: Pulleyn does not translate *esthlon* in line 115; “adornments” for *anathēmata* (l. 152) is unattractive; *philon posin* is left untranslated in line 363; “boaster” is unappealing for *hypsagorēn* in line 385: Telemachus has not boasted.

The commentary, covering a wide range of materials, is generally well done. Pulleyn focuses attention on comparative linguistics and historical syntax, and he is strong in all matters of philology. He is sensitive to bardic innovations and their relation to Greek dialects (96). He points out forms that may cause snags for beginning readers (e.g. the relative possessive adjective and its similarity to the relative pronoun in some forms [98]). He references the errors of other scholars tactfully (93, 99). He explains, for the beginning reader, rhetorical terms in the commentary (109) or in the appendix. He has a strong command of the historical development of the Greek language (109). He is particularly good at discussing matters of accentuation (91-2, 122). He puts forth, in a judicious manner, the various interpretive positions for a given problem; admirably, however, he generally supports a particular interpretation therewith (see, for example, his thoughts on *glaukōpis* [120]); similarly, he skillfully introduces, and at times critiques, relevant comments of the scholiasts (121). But Pulleyn, like many of us, can be too sure of his own interpretations (e.g. on S. West on *gaiēokhos*, 127). I appreciated Pulleyn’s comments on aspect and the participle (142, 201). On line 116 it should be noted

that Telemachus, at this point, can imagine a less grim end for the suitors than that which will come to them. It is peculiar that Pulleyn finds chattel slavery in the *Odyssey* shocking (231).

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