

BOOK REVIEW

Homer's Iliad and the Trojan War: Dialogues on Tradition. By JAN HEYWOOD and NAOÍSE MAC SWEENEY. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018. Pp. x + 240. Paperback, \$40.95. Hardcover, \$130.00. ISBN: 9781350012684.

Dialogue gives this book its form, guiding concept, boldness and value. Each chapter features two case studies, one from each author, juxtaposing disparate instances in the Trojan War tradition. The authors suggest three modes of dialogue between the *Iliad* and its receptions: details (mode 1), themes (mode 2) and engagement with the *Iliad*'s centrality in the Trojan War tradition (mode 3). They find the *Iliad* central to each reception's refashioning of the Trojan War tradition, regardless of the *Iliad*'s status or even availability in the historical context.

Chapter 1 ('Navigating Tradition') examines metapoetic consciousness in Homeric epic (Heywood) and the Akkadian *Erra and Ishum* (Mac Sweeney) -- i.e., the poems as receptions of their own subject matter. In the latter, the god *Erra* is the protagonist, who also reveals the poem as a finished narrative vehicle for his praise to the poet-scribe. The *Erra* attributes its own objective, written existence to its protagonist and therefore frames its account as prior to and more authoritative than its poet-scribe. By contrast, Homeric narrative authorizes divinely inspired oral poetic performance (and performers) of heroic fame rather than specific poetic performances and particular poets.

Chapter 2 ('Visualizing Society') examines dialogue around gender roles sparked by iconographic ambiguities in, respectively, Euthymides' late Archaic 'Pioneer Group' red figure amphora (Mac Sweeney) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 1863 *Helen of Troy* (Heywood). Only eighteen of the Pioneer Group's 227 objects have a Trojan War image. While these indicate knowledge of the *Iliad*, they also deviate in detail (mode 1). The amphora, showing drunken revellers on one side and Hector arming in the presence of his parents on the other, is the only one in the Group with both sympotic and Trojan war images. How do the

two sides relate? Does drunkenness subvert aristocratic masculine performance? Or are duty and revelry complementary moments in the male aristocrat's life?

Rossetti's portrait differs from contemporary depictions of Helen as manifestations of a passive, sexually desirable and therefore dangerous female archetype (mode 2). A vacant facial expression, seemingly devoid of the empathy for Troy burning behind her, evokes the tradition of Helen's culpability. The counter-tradition of her innocence seems to supply the locket that she holds, which depicts a torch and therefore recalls the Euripidean analogy of Paris to a firebrand consuming Troy. Heywood also explores the (usually suppressed) agential voice of Helen in Rossetti's own sonnet 'Death's Songsters' and detects an allusion to it in the arresting redness of the painted Helen's lips.

Chapter 3 ('Staging Conflict') examines how the theme of the instability of words (mode 2) produces alternative *Iliads* in Euripides' *Trojan Women* (Heywood) and Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (Mac Sweeney). Euripides' Cassandra memorializes the destroyed Trojans as paradoxically more fortunate than their destroyers, for whom victory means only transition from extended suffering to various waiting dooms. In *Troilus*, words of reputation and trust prove devastatingly false. Odysseus causes Achilles to fear lest Ajax surpass him in reputation with the result that he and his Myrmidons murder an unarmed Hector after battle and represent it as Achilles' combat victory. Meanwhile, Trojan Cressida replays Helen's abandonment of Menelaus for Paris by betraying Troilus' trust, preferring instead the enemy Greek Diomedes.

Chapter 4 ('Seeking Truth') juxtaposes two assessments of Homeric accuracy (mode 1): Herodotus on Helen (Heywood) and Heinrich Schliemann on artefacts uncovered at Troy (Mac Sweeney). Herodotus and Schliemann each test Homeric veracity by their respective methods, the authority of which they seek to establish through narrative exposition. Finding that its accuracy can fall short, Herodotus and Schliemann seek to supplement Homeric epic with their own contributions of detail. Thus, rather than diminish Iliadic centrality (mode 3), they reaffirm it.

Chapter 5 ('Claiming Identities') looks at the modern and medieval, considering heritage affiliation in Godfrey of Viterbo's late 12th-century *Speculum Regum* (Mac Sweeney) and Wolfgang Petersen's 2004 film *Troy* (Heywood). The *Speculum* is a world history connecting Godfrey's patron, Frederick the Great, genealogically to Trojan royalty, thereby positioning him relative to other European royal claimants to the same origin. Though Homeric texts are culturally marginal (and unavailable) in Godfrey's historical context, he nonetheless bases the

authority of his account (mode 1) on a claim to knowledge of Homeric content, affirming its centrality (mode 3).

Heywood looks to *Troy's* post-9/11 production process and Petersen's perception of Iliadic power politics playing out globally in the Bush presidency's Agamemnon-like foreign policy. His own historical context clarified for Petersen the *Iliad's* meaning and its centrality (mode 3) for his cinematic reception, despite the many Homeric details (mode 1) that his film alters or omits. The U.S. affinity for a Hellenic heritage, figured as defence of pro-social 'western values' against an undemocratic 'East' (*Troy* in this movie), allows the film to indirectly critique those claims. Moreover, Iliadic Achilles' relationship to Agamemnon enables *Troy* to explore dissent among President Bush's allies abroad, for whom resistance to his foreign policy entailed withhold violence in its service.

Everyone interested in Homeric reception should read this book. Mac Sweeney and Heywood demonstrate the feasibility and reward of treating Iliadic reception across the range and diversity of its media and chronology. Each chapter is the beginning of a fascinating and compelling conversation that readers are encouraged to continue.

SEÁN EASTON

Gustavus Adolphus College, seaston@gustavus.edu