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Introduction

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Introduction

IN THE FALL OF 1993 we edited an issue of the *Colby Quarterly* entitled *Essays on the Homeric Epic*. Following the positive response to that volume, we ventured upon another issue with the same theme. As it happened, however, we found ourselves with more articles than a single issue could accommodate; hence, two issues of *Essays on Homeric Epic* will appear this year. The March, 2002 (*Colby Quarterly* 38.1) issue contains six articles, and the June, 2002 issue (*Colby Quarterly* 38.2) will comprise six, as well. The June, 2002 issue will present the following articles:

Egbert J. Bakker: "Polyphemus."

Margalit Finkelberg: "The Sources of *Iliad* 7."

Christopher J. Mackie: "Homeric Phthia."

Alan J. Nussbaum: "Homeric OPHAI (ξ343) and OMEITAI (I274):
Two of a Kind?"

Hayden Pelliccia: "The Interpretation of *Iliad* 6.145-49 and the Symptotic
Contribution to Rhetoric."

Donna F. Wilson: "Lion Kings: Heroes in the Epic Mirror."

The articles in the present issue look at Homeric epic from a variety of aspects:

Jenny Strauss Clay's paper, "Dying is Hard To Do," discusses the death of Hector in *Iliad* 22, which constitutes the last duel and battlefield death in the poem and thus forms the culmination of all the deaths that have preceded it. For two hundred lines, through a series of speeches and actions on both the divine and the human levels, the poet dramatizes Hector's inexorable psychological progress toward his own death.

Derek Collins' article "Reading the Birds: *Oiōnomanteia* in Early Epic," explores the nature and ambiguities of oracular discourse, specifically through bird divination, as represented in Homer, Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns. It suggests that the accuracy of bird divination is constructed in performance, and that early epic self-consciously parallels its characters' interpretations of bird omens with external audience interpretation of its own narrative.

Donald Lateiner's paper, "Pouring Bloody Drops," discusses Sarpedon's approaching heroic death in *Iliad* 16, which induces Zeus to produce a miraculous bloody precipitation. This paper argues that the drops express Zeus'

anthropopathic state of grief, his mourning mood in relation to his only mortal warrior son at Troy, and constitute ritual libation acts that (pre-)echo later human, post-heroic age, honorific cult. The development of such ritual, while subsequent (of course) to the *Iliad*'s dramatic date, coincides with the later stages of Homeric composition (the "Monumental *Iliad*") in Lykian Sarpedon's eastern Aegean.

In his article "Eurybates, Odysseus, and the Duals in Book 9 of the *Iliad*," Bruce Loudon argues that the problematic duals in Book 9 of the *Iliad* become less puzzling when we realize that the embassy is a common type-scene in the poem. The parallel instances in Books 1 and 19 suggest that the duals refer to Odysseus and his herald, Eurybates.

Building on prior studies of interruption by Milman Parry and Bernard Fenik, Robert J. Rabel argues in his paper, "Interruption in the *Odyssey*," that the various suspensions of and intrusions upon stories within the *Odyssey* create a pattern whereby the emotional enchantment (*thelxis*) spun by a well-told tale is dispelled, and both inner and outer audiences are stimulated to adopt a rational and analytical approach to what they hear. Furthermore, the interruption technique serves an important reflexive function, reminding the audience that they are attending to a story being told and not watching reality being somehow magically conjured up. Finally, the article compares and contrasts Homer's interruption technique with the interruption technique in the modern epic theater of Bertolt Brecht.

Hans Van Wees, in "Homer and Early Greece," contends that the most widely accepted dates for the composition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, c. 750-700 BC, are based on little evidence and weak assumptions. A new interpretation of the history of transmission of the epics suggests that they were still undergoing major change after c. 730 BC and were written down in their monumental form not long before c. 650 BC. Additionally, essential elements of the Homeric world match archaeological evidence for the period 700-650 BC.

We wish to thank Karen J. Gillum for her invaluable assistance in preparing this issue.

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Guest Editors