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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, we found ourselves with more articles than a single issue could accommodate; hence, two more issues of *Essays on Homeric Epic* appear this year. The June, 2002 (*Colby Quarterly* 38.2) issue includes six articles, as does the March, 2002 issue (*Colby Quarterly* 38.1). The March, 2002 issue presented the following articles:

Jenny Strauss Clay: "Dying is Hard To Do."

Derek Collins: "Reading the Birds: *Oiônomanteia* in Early Epic."

Donald Lateiner: "Pouring Bloody Drops (*Iliad* 16.459)."

Bruce Louden: "Eurybates, Odysseus, and the Duals in Book 9 of the *Iliad*."

Robert J. Rabel: "Interruption in the *Odyssey*."

Hans Van Wees: "Homer and Early Greece."

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

Egbert Bakker, in "Polyphemos" discusses the semantics of the Cyclops' name and its importance for the poetics of the *Odyssey*. On the basis of a detailed study of the use of *phêmê* and *phêmis* in Homer (which he shows to mean "unconscious prophecy" and "gossip," respectively), he argues that the name "Polyphemos," by partaking of either meaning, captures all the (meta)linguistic aspects of the complex encounter of its bearer with Odysseus. The name of the Cyclops thus appears to have a semantic depth in accordance with the poetic importance of the Cyclops episode in the *Odyssey*.

In "The Sources of *Iliad* 7," Margalit Finkelberg argues that the entire seventh book of the *Iliad* was created as a result of an adaptation and reshaping of a cluster of subjects associated in Greek tradition with the initial stages of the Trojan campaign. As has been shown by others, a similar treatment of traditional subjects known to us from the poems of the Epic Cycle is also characteristic of other parts of the poem. This asymmetrical relationship between the *Iliad* and the other Trojan epics leads Finkelberg to

the conclusion that, rather than presenting yet another variant of the epic tradition of the Trojan war, the *Iliad* seeks to transcend the tradition and to establish itself in the unique status of a metaepic.

Christopher Mackie's paper, "Homeric Phthia," explores the significance of references to Phthia in the *Iliad*. It follows the important work of P. Kretschmer and G. Nagy, who have examined in different ways the notion of death and descent inherent in the name of Achilles' homeland. The paper's central argument is that there is a significant change in the way the name Phthia operates from *Iliad* 18 on, when Achilles' fate becomes much clearer. There is also a brief discussion of classical Athenian references to Homeric Phthia, including the allusion made by Socrates in Plato's *Crito* (43c5-44b4) just before his own passage into the world beyond.

In "Homeric OPHAL (*Od.* 14.343) and OMEITAI (*Il.* 9.274): Two of a Kind?" Alan Nussbaum discusses the possibility of explaining two somewhat problematical Homeric verb forms as the result of a single inner-epic analogical process.

Hayden Pelliccia's paper "The Interpretation of *Iliad* 6.145-49 and the Symptotic Contribution to Rhetoric" argues that Glaucus' famous image of man and leaves is not, as is often assumed, a simile, but an *eikazein*—a well-defined genre of comparison native to the symposium, often humorous or witty in intent. The interpretative consequences of this identification are explored, and a proposal is made about the nonappearance of the opening line of Glaucus' comparison in the new Simonides.

"Lion Kings: Heroes in the Epic Mirror," by Donna Wilson, examines the diction and thematics of the lion-simile sequences describing Achilles and Odysseus, and compares their narrative placement in the withdrawal and return pattern that organizes each Homeric epic. She argues that the lion-simile sequences form a significant locus of reciprocal intertextual polemic relating to concepts of the hero as leader.

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Guest Editors