

Fowler, Robert, ed. **The Cambridge Companion to Homer**. Cambridge, 2004. 419p bibl indexes ISBN 0-521-81302-6, \$75.00; ISBN 0-521-01246-5 pbk, \$29.99. Reviewed in 2005may CHOICE.

This fine installment in the "Cambridge Companions to Literature" series comprises 22 terse, original essays by recognized scholars and critics. The essays range over five areas of special concern in modern Homeric studies. Part 1, "The Poems and Their Narrator," is devoted to plot, subject matter, and story-telling tactics (the last gently informed by current narratological theory). Part 2, "The Characters," treats major figures, both human and divine, with special attention to the heroic ethos and gender dynamics. Part 3, "The Poet's Craft," concentrates on Homer's metrical artistry (some knowledge of Greek needed here), his hallmark penchant for formulaic construction, and distinctive traits of his similes and speeches and their deployment. Part 4, "Text and Context," includes two essays on generic issues—the nature and transmission of oral compositions and the Greek epic tradition—and two that delineate the society on display in the epics and trace the modern history of the "the Homeric question" regarding the authorship, evolution, and internal coherence of the epics. Part 5, "Homeric Receptions" (eight chapters, more than a third of the volume), discusses the influence of Homer's poetry on writers and artists from the Attic tragedians right up to Derek Walcott and Michael Longley.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty.

— J. P. Holoka, *Eastern Michigan University*