

SUBJECT REVIEWS

(* denotes that a book is specially recommended for school libraries; ** that it is suitable for advanced students only; ^B that a bibliography is included.)

Greek Literature

Five books out of thirteen in this half-year's batch are devoted to Homer. First: three commentaries. Two more volumes have now come out in the major six-volume commentary on the *Iliad* with Professor G. S. Kirk as General Editor. Kirk himself edited Vols. I and II (Books 1–8). Now we have ^{B*} Vol. IV: Books 13–16, by Richard Janko,¹ and ^{B*} Vol. V: Books 17–20, by Mark Edwards.² These are two rich and valuable books. In each case, as before, the commentary is preceded by first-rate introductory essays on central Homeric topics. Janko gives us 'The gods in Homer: further considerations', 'The origins and evolution of the epic diction', and 'The text and transmission of the *Iliad*'; he concludes that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were taken down by dictation from the lips of a single, no doubt illiterate, eighth-century poet, and supports this conclusion in his commentary. From Edwards we have 'The narrator and his audience', 'Composition by theme', 'Similes', and 'Style', all brilliantly illuminating, with love and enthusiasm for the *Iliad* shining through (Edwards states in his Preface that his aim is 'the fullest possible appreciation of Homer's genius'; this he achieves). Inevitably, with two new editors, there are changes evident in the commentaries. For instance more use is made of continental scholarship, and more references are given to secondary literature, both welcome amplifications. But the greatest change lies in the commentaries' scope. Kirk was criticized by reviewers for his (intentional) concentration on 'language and hard fact', as he himself put it, to the neglect of more general literary appreciation. Peter Jones, for instance (while, I must stress, giving full due to the commentary's undoubted strengths), wrote of Vol. I: 'It is an evasion of editorial responsibility to exegeticise on the assumption that the poet composed with nothing other in view than the line he was working on (and possibly the next one). . . . long-term issues remain, by and large, unexplored. The consequence is a depressing myopia' (*CR* 36 [1986], 2). He went on to hope that later editors might take up the flag that Kirk refused to wave. Such, now, is the case, for both editors thoroughly and sensitively define the place of each book and its major themes within the design of the poem as a whole, as well as commenting fully on linguistic and factual matters, so that we get a clear idea of the *Iliad* as a great artistic unity, and are made to see wood and trees alike. So this extension of editorial policy must also be very welcome. Yes, it is true that we all read the *Iliad* with our own strong feelings about the poetry and its effects (Kirk, Vol. I, p. xvii), but we must still gain much from the insights of a fine critic who has studied the poem in close detail over a long period: we are made to hear resonances, recognize links, understand more fully the design of the whole, all more clearly than we might otherwise have done. And, yes, indeed we must have Facts; but ('Thomas Gradgrind, sir!') we need Fancy too. I open Mark Edwards's commentary at random, and am delighted to read on pp. 104–5 (and these are only a few of the perceptive comments on a short passage) that, when Achilles' horses grieve for Patroklos, the use of

ἠνιόχοιο (16.427), instead of Patroklos's name, movingly suggests their own thoughts; that this grief is expressed again when they later stay out of the chariot race (23.279–84) and is linked with their sorrow for Achilles at 19.408 ff; that their grief here 'reminds us again of the absent hero, continues to build up our expectation of his own grief when he hears the news, and introduces once more, in a new form, the ever-present contrast between mortals and immortals'; and that perhaps this scene is an echo of other epics where these immortal horses mourned thus for Achilles himself. This richness of comment lights the mind; my appreciation, my *sensibility*, has been enlarged. In short, these are two fine books, in which both editors have fulfilled their editorial task brilliantly, not only in providing much (necessary indeed) information, but also in expanding the reader's perceptions in a most vivid and exciting way. The third Homeric commentary is the third and final volume in the Oxford translation of the *Odyssey* edition by six different editors, which appeared originally in Italian: in ^{B**} *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey, Volume III Books xvii–xxiv*,³ Books 17–20 are dealt with by Joseph Russo, Books 21–22 by Manuel Fernández-Galiano, and Books 23–24 by Alfred Heubeck. A difference in scale is evident here: Russo gives on average thirty one pages of comment per book, Fernández-Galiano ninety, and Heubeck fifty three. Other differences are also apparent: Russo and Heubeck are convinced unitarians, Fernández-Galiano a thorough-going analyst, and this inevitably affects their style of commentary. Russo, for instance, can write, 'the *Odyssey* . . . is above all else a work of literary art . . . its overall cohesiveness has been created by a master storyteller who was usually in full control of his technique' (p. 14); while typical comments from Fernández-Galiano are (on book 22), 'The more ancient passages of the book are not lacking in literary quality, but its overall structure is unsatisfactory' (p. 207), and 'In 205–40, the author of the later reworking of the poem shows himself to have been a fluent but somewhat incoherent storyteller' (p. 209). This violent contrast of approach can be distinctly disconcerting, and much of the comment is highly technical, so this is not an edition for the uninitiated. Certainly it is an important work of high-powered scholarship which must always be consulted, but it will not have the same kind of wide-ranging application, for professionals and non-professionals alike, as the Cambridge *Iliad* commentaries. A collection of twenty essays on Homeric topics, the fruit of a colloquium held in 1989 and now published under the title ^{B**} *Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung: Rückblick und Ausblick*,⁴ has been edited by Joachim Latacz. The scale of this volume is massive, both conceptually and physically. A list of topics and contributors will give some idea of scope and quality: Homer and archaeology (Hans-Günter Buchholz, Peter Blome, Stefan Hiller, Manfred Korfmann), Homer and ancient history (Gustav Adolf Lehmann, Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy, Walter Burkert, Fritz Gschnitzer, Kurt Raaflaub), Homer and philology (Bernhard Forssman, Antonín Bartoněk, Günter Neumann), myth and religion (Fritz Graf), the biographical question (Ernst Vogt), the structure of the *Iliad* (Joachim Latacz) and the *Odyssey* (Uvo Hölscher), and methods of interpretation: neoanalysis (Wolfgang Kullmann), oral poetry theory (James Holoka), narratology (Ernst-Richard Schwinge), and art history (Karl Schefold). Most writers take into account a great range of international scholarship, and so the result is not only a valuable overview of the current state of play in Homeric studies, but also a useful perspective on the way ahead. Marilyn Katz's ^{B**} *Penelope's Renown*⁵ focuses on the figure of Penelope in the *Odyssey*, and on her contradictory words and actions which make problematic a clear reading of her character and intentions. Traditionally her *kleos* arises from her capacity for endurance and her faithfulness to Odysseus, but really, Katz claims, Penelope is a far more ambiguous figure than tradition allows; there is a dissonance in the text between what is said and what is