

BOOK REVIEWS

Wolfgang Kullmann, *Realität, Imagination und Theorie: Kleine Schriften zu Epos und Tragödie in der Antike*, Herausgegeben von Antonios Rengakos, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002. 320 pages. ISBN 3-515-08184-4.

This is the second collection of the *Kleine Schriften* of Wolfgang Kullmann, one of the founding fathers of the Neoanalytic School in Homeric scholarship. The first one, *Homerische Motive. Beiträge zur Entstehung, Eigenart und Wirkung von Iliad und Odyssee*, was published in 1992 and included articles that appeared between 1955 and 1992, most of them dedicated to various aspects of Neoanalysis. The present volume covers Kullmann's publications since 1993 and reflects a radical shift in the author's research interests that occurred in the early 1990's: the *Motivforschung*, the backbone of Neoanalysis, has withdrawn to the background, and the main theme of the articles dealing with epic poetry is the much-vexed issue of the historicity of Homer. Although the volume also features articles on other aspects of the Homeric poems (Homeric religion, the two Nekyiai in the *Odyssey*, the above-mentioned Neoanalysis), as well as on tragedy and on Callimachus' influence in Alexandria and Rome, I shall focus my attention on what seems to be its most important and least well known contribution, namely, a new and original assessment of the historical background of Homer.

The six articles that open the collection are all dedicated to different aspects of the issue of Homer's historicity. These are 'Festgehaltene Kenntnisse im Schiffskatalog und im Troerkatalog der Ilias' (9-26); 'Homers Zeit und das Bild des Dichters von den Menschen der mykenischen Kultur' (27-43); 'Homer and Historical Memory' (44-59); 'Homer und Kleinasien' (60-74); 'Historische Realität und poetische Imagination in den homerischen Epen' (75-96); and 'Homer und das Troia der späten Bronzezeit' (97-138). Kullmann's main thesis, which emerges anew in each one of these articles, is that, rather than the remote Mycenaean past, the historical period that the Homeric poems reflect is the period of their composition: all the elements that are usually identified as containing historical reminiscences of Mycenaean Greece should be ascribed to poetic imagination and to deliberate archaization on the part of the poet. Adopting the unorthodox position of the German archaeologists D. Hertel and C. Podzuweit, who revived Schliemann's view that the latest Bronze Age settlement at Troy (Troy VIIb) had actually lasted until the time of Aeolian colonization of the Troad, Kullmann suggests that 'the destruction of Troy may reflect the colonial experience of Aeolian settlers with their enemies' (51; see also 24, 133). It was above all the ruins of the fortification wall of Troy, observable up to the Byzantine period, which triggered the imagination of the Greek settlers and inspired their poets to create the idealized heroic world that is known to us from the Homeric poems.

The core of Kullmann's thesis is undoubtedly his discussion of the two great catalogues, the Achaeans and the Trojans, introduced in *Iliad* 2. While the argument that the Catalogue of Ships reflects a much later geopolitical situation than that of Mycenaean Greece has also been made by other scholars, including this reviewer, Kullmann's treatment of the catalogue of the Trojan allies is innovative and has much to recommend itself. His exemplary analysis of the allies' ethnic composition results in identification of two linguistically and culturally different population groups, the Thraco-Phrygian group in the north and the Anatolian ('Maeonian') group in the south. This neatly reflects the historical reality of the first millennium BCE. as created by the influx of new populations belonging to the Thraco-Phrygian group, whose arrival at the end of the Bronze Age pushed the remnants of the original Anatolian population (the historical Carians and Lydians) to the southern parts of Asia Minor (62-63). Further historical and philological considerations allow Kullmann to conclude that the composition of the Trojan Catalogue could not predate 700 BCE.

While many scholars would agree today with Kullmann's conclusions as to the considerable lateness of the historical information provided by Homer, his treatment of the residues of the Mycenaean past in the Homeric poems is somewhat less convincing. As already mentioned, nearly all historical information which finds no place in the Archaic Age is treated by Kullmann as the

work of imagination. As against Jan Assmann's concept of cultural memory, he adopts the concept of homeostatic transformation, introduced by Jack Goody and Ian Watt in 1968 and further developed by Goody in his later publications.¹ According to Goody, homeostatic transformation, or a spontaneous process of adjusting the tradition to the society's contemporary circumstances, is the characteristic feature of non-literate societies. However, this ought not to be taken to mean that, as Kullmann seems to imply, the transformation of memory was total or that the events of the past were invented anew each time they were told or enacted. To support his thesis, Kullmann often refers to the work of the anthropologist Jan Vansina (see e.g. 29, 45, 47, 128). It should not be forgotten, however, that Vansina was one of the most unrelenting critics of Goody's claim for total homeostasis. Thus, in his *Oral Tradition as History* we can find such remarks as 'In short, there is congruence, but there is no total congruence of content with the concerns of the present. Continuous selection of intentional historical accounts does not operate perfectly. The presence of archaisms in various traditions gives homeostasis the lie' or 'Selectivity implies discarding certain information one has about the past and from that pool of information keeping only what is still significant in the present. However, the information that is retained, still comes from the past'.² As far as the present reviewer is concerned, such retention of pieces of historical information from the past still supplies a much more economical explanation for the numerous archaisms characteristic of oral traditions all over the world, including the one that culminated in the Homeric poems as we know them.

This is not to deny the importance of Kullmann's analysis of the historical background of Homer. This analysis is especially significant in view of the recent tendency towards an 'Anatolization' of the Trojan War: so much so that nowadays it is often treated as an exclusively Anatolian affair having more to do with the Hittites and their western subjects than with the later Greeks. Yet, as Kullmann reminds us, the only perspective that makes sense of the narrative of the Trojan War is that of the Greek civilization of the first millennium BCE. His placing of the Trojan narrative within the context of the historical experience of the Aeolian settlers of the Troad, which fits remarkably well with the Aeolian stage in the development of the Homeric tradition as postulated by many scholars, is especially stimulating. All in all, in this series of articles Kullmann makes a lasting contribution towards a sound reconstruction of the historical background of the myth of the Trojan War as reflected in the Homeric poems.

Margalit Finkelberg

Tel Aviv University

John Miles Foley (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Epic* (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World), Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. xxiv, 664 pages. ISBN 978-1-4051-0542-8.

Just like the secret cedar box with the bronze lock containing the *lapis lazuli* tablet on which the heroic deeds of Gilgamesh were written (as mentioned in the opening lines of the epic), so is the present volume of *Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World*, comprising 42 articles on epic literature, a treasure trove for teachers, scholars and students interested in the study of ancient epics and myths.

The editor made a wise decision in dedicating about a third of this massive book, nearly 200 pages, to deliberations on methodological issues, for in these aspects lie the real difficulties in this genre. Part I (9-212), accordingly, covers much pertinent ground: epic as genre (R.P. Martin), epics vs. myths (L. Edmunds), the performance of epics (M.S. Jensen), the orality and aurality of epics (J.M. Foley), reception and transmission of epic texts in antiquity (R. Lamberton), various physical media through which epics were transmitted (M.W. Haslam), translations of epics (R.H.

¹ See e.g. J. Goody, *The Power of the Written Tradition*, Washington (2000), 42-6.

² J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, Madison (1985), 121, 191. See also M. Finkelberg, *Greeks and Pre-Greeks. Aegean Prehistory and Greek Heroic Tradition*, Cambridge (2005), 10-11.