

An unexpected benefit of the tardy submission of this review is that I had the opportunity to use the New Teubner *Iliad* in my Homer class. The advantages that its apparatus brings to the more demanding students are hard to overestimate. Instead of simply observing individual variants and conjectures, the students became exposed to the entire history of the transmission of the text, from the fourth-century quotations and the Ptolemaic papyri to the Roman papyri and the Byzantine grammatical tradition. The encounter with the new Teubner *Iliad* not only allowed them to acquire first-hand experience of what Homeric scholarship is about but also served as the most illuminating demonstration of the paramount importance of the Homeric poems in Graeco-Roman antiquity. So far as the present reviewer is concerned, this is what above all makes West's edition an absolute must for every student and teacher of Homer.

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Gunnel Ekroth, *The Sacrificial Rituals of Greek Hero-Cults in the Archaic to the Early Hellenistic Periods. Kernos Supplément 12*. Liège: Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique, 2002. 429 pp. ISSN 0776 3824.

As is well-known, the traditional view of Greek sacrifice insists on a strict dichotomy between sacrifice to gods and to heroes: besides observations regarding the type of altar used (*bomos* for gods, *eschara* for heroes), the color of the victims, and even the direction of the victim's head at the time of slaughter, tradition would have the victims completely destroyed in ordinary heroic sacrifice (should they be consumed, a ritual of *theoxenia* would be involved); in ordinary divine sacrifice the victims would, on the other hand, be consumed in a sacrificial meal. This view, though modified and questioned over the years, has never been systematically challenged. Ekroth's substantial and systematic study now does much to dispel many of the misconceptions the traditional view involves. In doing so, the author reaches what some may see as another extreme. She concludes that gods and heroes did not constitute ritually distinct categories: the ordinary sacrificial ritual for heroes was not different from the ordinary sacrificial ritual for gods. It did not consist in the destruction of the victim but rather, as in ordinary divine sacrifice, the consumption of the victim. Moreover, and here I suspect Ekroth might face substantial opposition, her work seriously calls into question, as a natural outcome of her conclusions, the connection, usually taken for granted, between hero cult and the cult of the dead.¹

¹ I regret very much that I could not make use of this work in my *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005 [2004] (henceforth *NGSL*). Ekroth discusses two of the documents included in my corpus: 1: The Calendar of Thorikos, *SEG* XXXIII 147 (*NGSL* no. 1; Ekroth reproduces the text as no. 1 in her Appendix); 2: The Law from Selinus, *SEG* XLIII 630 (*NGSL* no. 27). I allow myself two comments: 1) The Calendar of Thorikos: regarding the puzzling ΕΠΑΥΤΟΜΕΝΑΣ in lines 14 and 47, I note with satisfaction that Ekroth (218-19) favors the reading ἐπ' Αὐτομένως, *Automenai* being a place name (the original author of this reading is 'un ami' in G. Daux, 'Le calendrier de Thorikos au musée J. Paul Getty', *AntCl* 52, 1983, 150-74 at 172). As for the provision of an *ariston* to the attendant by the priest (lines 15-16), Ekroth's emphasis (*ibid.*) on the need for a meal in the uneaten sacrifice supersedes my very tentative association of the *ariston* with a possible trip (cf. the calendar of Eleusis, *LSCG* 7.3-7) to the place of sacrifice. As she notes, finances are operative here: the priest, not the deme, is responsible for the *ariston*. 2) The law from Selinus: in respect of Ekroth's discussion of the burning of one of the nine parts in a sacrifice to the polluted Tritopatores 'as to heroes' (A 9-13; Ekroth 235-8), I note a point that may support her main argument regarding heroic sacrifice and the destruction of meat. The three attestations of the verb *εἰατεῖν*, which document this practice in credible contexts, *LSCG* 96, *LSCG Suppl.* 63, and *IG* XII Suppl. 353 (J. Pouilloux, *Recherches sur l'histoire et les cultes de Thasos I*, Paris, 1954, 82-5 no. 10a seems too dubious to me to add anything) do not explicitly mention burning of the ninth part, as Ekroth (220)

The book is divided into an introduction and four chapters. The period covered is 700-300 B.C.E. and the author deals mainly with written sources. She relegates the discussion of the archaeological evidence to a future work. Chapter I is concerned with terminology pertaining, or thought to pertain, to heroic sacrifice. The author systematically studies the terms *eschara*, *bothros*, and *enagizein* and its cognates. She discusses the epigraphic and the literary sources separately, going far beyond the time limits of her own study down to the Byzantine lexicographers. Chapter II reviews the epigraphical and literary evidence for heroic sacrifice down to 300 B.C.E. An individual section treats the Attic sacrificial calendars of Thorikos (*SEG* XXXIII 145), Marathon (*LSCG* 20 column B), Erchia (*LSCG* 18), and the *genos* Salaminioi (*LSCG Suppl.* 19). The author discusses destruction sacrifices, blood rituals, *theoxenia*, eaten *thysia*-type sacrifices, which she suggests were common to both gods and heroes, and finally the designation '(sacrifice) as to a hero'. She favors the interpretation of the latter that explains it as referring to the status of the recipient of the sacrifice rather than to the type of ritual. The four types of sacrifices (destruction, blood rituals, *theoxenia*, eaten *thysia*) are further discussed in Chapter III, where the author studies the use and meaning of the rituals and challenges the common view that traces the origin of hero cults to the cult of the dead. Cult foundations, above all perhaps the foundation of Epicteta of Thera, *IG* XII 3, 330 (partially reproduced as *LSCG* 135), are among the clearest cases where a connection between cult of the dead and hero cult is manifest in the evidence. They fall, however, outside of the period with which the author is concerned, and she notes in this regard that the rituals for the heroized dead were modeled upon heroic rituals (232 n. 89).

The last chapter studies ritual patterns. It opens with a discussion of the sacrificial rituals of Greek hero cults (the four types of sacrifices are treated again). A discussion of the notorious Olympian-Chthonian distinction follows. Ekroth emphasizes the problems that these terms entail and questions their validity. This section includes a fresh discussion of the requirement to consume sacrificial meat on the spot, or rather the prohibition on taking the meat away. There follows a discussion of *thysia* and the so-called 'powerful actions' (heilige Handlungen), a discussion of gods, heroes, the dead, mortality and immortality, and a short section on the heterogeneity of heroes, arguing that they are akin to gods. The author concludes that heroes and gods were not perceived as ritually distinct groups; eaten *thysia*-type sacrifices were common to both; where modification occurs, one should inspect the context. According to Ekroth, the mortality of heroes had little effect upon the sacrificial rituals performed for them: 'Ritually speaking, heroes belonged with the gods' (431).

The volume is fully illustrated. It includes an exhaustive bibliography and useful indices. It also includes an appendix, which reproduces the texts of the four sacrificial calendars (*SEG* XXXIII 145, *LSCG* 20 column B, *LSCG* 18, and *LSCG Suppl.* 19) discussed in Chapter II. Given the realities of present-day book production procedures and timetables, a work of this kind cannot be expected to be mistake-proof. Fortunately, misprints are negligible here and are by and large confined to slips in the Greek that do not affect or detract from the quality of the work. This is a substantial work, thought-provoking, densely-packed, and forcefully argued in a bold and confident style. While not everyone may subscribe to the author's main thesis or to all of the views

notes. Deposited on the cult table (or altar, though not burnt), it might go to cult officials (cf. F. Sokolowski *LSCG Suppl.* 121). Burning one of the nine portions at Selinus may be stipulated to ensure correct performance or, conversely, because it was extraordinary: the obvious is prescribed in cult regulations but infrequently.

expressed here, many are likely to benefit from consulting this book. It is an original and important contribution to the study of Greek religion.

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Deborah Levine Gera, *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language and Civilization*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003. xii + 252 pp. ISBN 0 19 925616 0.

This is a book that requires its rather bald title. It is not a work of linguistics, or a history of the Greek language, still less a discussion of the origin of language itself (a topic notoriously banned by the Linguistic Society of Paris): rather an exposition of Greek ideas of language. It is, nonetheless, enormously wide-ranging (as wide ranging as Greek ideas themselves), not only in terms of chronological scope (from Homer's Polyphemus through to Late Antiquity), but more importantly in terms of the themes covered: the nature of the language of a golden age, or the discovery of language or writing by Palamedes, Theuth, or Prometheus; the affinity between primitive language and savage diet (so Thucydides' Eurytians, raw-meat-eaters with 'the most incomprehensible language'); the characterisation of language as a mere 'dollop of names' (in the fine phrase of Denyer); the phenomenon of namelessness (from Alcinous' assertion in the *Odyssey* that 'there is nobody, good or bad ..., without a name' to Herodotus' discovery of the Atarantes, a people with no names); speaking animals, deaf and feral children, sign language — and much more.

Though many of the discrete topics tackled within this vast canvas (most famously the story of Psammetichus' language test) have already been widely discussed, what Gera achieves by her synthesis of so much material is little less than to carve out a new area of study. Most impressively, she is careful never to impose a false uniformity on the material she surveys. For example, she traces a tension between two different models of development, which often intertwine: one of decay from a golden age, the other of progress from savagery. Though the construction of language as merely a collection of names for things is dominant (so, for example, the story of Aesop's waking to discover that he is no longer deaf and naming all the objects around him in turn), there are hints, as she shows, of an understanding of language as a more complex phenomenon: in the Eleatic Stranger's claim in the *Sophist*, for example, that words need to be woven together.

The book's scope, significantly, also extends to include the theories of other periods, particularly modern and early modern. This is occasionally problematic. What does it mean to interpret Psammetichus' children's first word ('bekos', the Phrygian for bread) in the light of modern ideas of children's development? or to compare the objects of Psammetichus' language test with historically attested 'feral children'? When, in the context of that language test, the reader is told that the 'world's first language came out of Africa, not Phrygia', we seem to make a move from describing the merits of ancient ideas to testing them. But the juxtaposition of ancient and modern material — ancient ideas of the golden age with early modern theories of a universal language, for example — is often enlightening for our understanding of the ancient material, allowing us to 'read backwards' in Gera's words. It also has the effect of heightening our appreciation for ancient attempts at understanding language. After exposure to some of the more eccentric of modern theses — the sixteenth-century Jan van Gorp's suggestion that the first language was in fact Flemish (because of the similarity of bekos and the Flemish word for baker), or the recent theory of Eric Gans that 'speech developed from the cries which accompanied the collective ritual sacrifice of a marginal member of society' — it is hard not to return to the ancient world with a more sympathetic understanding. What emerges above all, indeed, from Gera's treatment is the extraordinarily rich inventiveness of Greek writers. This includes writers whose 'interest' in language is little more than playful: though one may be hard pressed to squeeze much significance from the speaking animals