

BOOK REVIEWS

Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung. Rückblick und Ausblick, herausgegeben von Joachim Latacz. Stuttgart und Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1991 (*Colloquium Rauricum* Bd. 2), pp. 552.

The publication of the *Prolegomena ad Homerum* by Friedrich August Wolf in 1795 has every right to be considered a landmark in the history of classical scholarship. By posing the question of the historical genesis of the Homeric poems Wolf's work stimulated the critical approach to the text of Homer and thus laid the foundations for classical philology as a scholarly discipline. Since his time the Homeric studies have undergone such a wide expansion that more often than not they overstep the bounds of the discipline of which they are traditionally considered to be a part. As the editor of the *Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung*, Joachim Latacz, points out in his introduction (pp. 5-6), side by side with its traditional pursuits Homeric scholarship verges today on scholarly disciplines which do not belong to classical philology in the strict sense of the word: historical linguistics, archaeology, ancient history, the history of ideas, comparative religion, comparative literature, and so on. To give an up-to-date synthesis of diversified approaches to Homer two hundred years after the appearance of Wolf's *Prolegomena* is the purpose of the present volume.

The topics are divided into seven sections, in which the twenty distinguished participants in the 1989 Colloquium Rauricum discuss various aspects of the Homeric poems, in each case paying special attention to the history of the question, the present state of inquiry, and its future perspectives: (i) 'Homer und die archäologische Forschung' (H.-G. Buchholz, P. Blome, S. Hiller, M. Korfmann); (ii) 'Homer und die althistorische Forschung' (G.A. Lehmann, S. Deger-Jalkotzy, W. Burkert, F. Gschnitzer, K.A. Raaflaub); (iii) 'Homer und die Sprachwissenschaft' (B. Forssman, A. Bartonek, G. Neumann); (iv) 'Mythenforschung und Religionswissenschaft im Zusammenhang mit Homer' (F. Graf); (v) 'Biographische Forschung zu Homer' (E. Vogt); (vi) 'Die beiden homerischen Epen: Forschungen zu ihrer Struktur' (J. Latacz, U. Hölscher); (vii) 'Die beiden homerischen Epen: Methoden ihrer Interpretation' (W. Kullmann, J.P. Holoka, E.-R. Schwinge, K. Schefold). Since it is hardly possible to pay equal attention to each individual contribution in so rich and diversified a book, I shall concentrate my discussion on what seems to be the most important contribution of the present volume to the contemporary understanding of Homer, namely, its assessment of the historical background of the Homeric poems.

For everyone who still has recourse to the famous *Companion to Homer* by A.J.B. Wace and F.H. Stubbings, which first appeared in 1962, has often been reprinted and is still widely consulted today, the reading of the historical chapters of the present volume is essential. A simple comparison of the respective tables of contents allows the most illuminating results. While all the historical chapters of the *Companion* discuss various aspects of the issue 'Homer and Mycenae', only one

contribution to the present volume, 'Die "politisch-historischen" Beziehungen der Ägäis-Welt des 15.-13. Jh.s v. Chr. zu Ägypten und Vorderasien' by G.A. Lehmann (pp. 105-126), deals with the Bronze Age topics. This difference reflects the radical shift in evaluation of the historical background of Homer that has taken place within the last decades: today, one hundred years after Schliemann's discovery of Troy, the issue 'Homer and Mycenae' is no longer considered relevant by the majority of scholars.

The factors that have brought about this dramatic development of course cannot be discussed at length in this review. I shall refer only to the main points: (a) the picture of Mycenaean society that emerged after the decipherment of Linear B has led to the increasing understanding that the Homeric poems cannot be interpreted as a direct reflection of that society; (b) the study of the Homeric formulae has shown that, contrary to what was believed in the 1950s, the traditional language is characterized by an extremely high degree of flexibility and adaptation, so that it is absolutely out of the question that everything we find in Homer could have arrived untouched from the Bronze Age; (c) it has been shown that the picture of the society arising from the Homeric poems belongs to a later historical period than the Bronze Age. This last conclusion is almost exclusively due to the studies of M.I. Finley, whose articles of the 1950s and especially the book *The World of Odysseus* (1954), not yet taken into account in the *Companion*, opened a new era in the historical study of Homer. As a result, a new consensus has arisen, which locates the historical background suitable for Homer in the 1st rather than in the 2nd millennium BC. The majority of the historical contributions to the volume under review proceed from this consensus.

The two historical periods studied today in connection with Homer are the so-called 'Dark Ages' (1100-800 BC) and the 8th century BC. The keen interest in the Dark Ages in modern scholarship is due first of all to the new light thrown on this period by archaeological discoveries of the last twenty years; these discoveries, and first and foremost the famous Lefkandi tomb, showed that, contrary to what historians used to believe, there was no abrupt break between the Mycenaean epoch and the subsequent period. As a result, a new picture of the Greek Dark Ages has emerged, which no longer sees this period as a time of thorough impoverishment and general decay. To quote Peter Blome ('Die dunklen Jahrhunderte - aufgehellt', p. 58): 'Die Epoche zwischen 1100 und 800 v. Chr. muss und kann heute differenzierter dargestellt werden als in den fünfziger, sechziger und frühen siebziger Jahren unseres Jahrhunderts, zur Zeit also der grossen englischsprachlichen Zusammenfassungen: A.M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece* (1971) und V.R. Desborough, *The Greek Dark Ages* (1972)'. According to Sigrid Deger-Jalkotzy, ('Die Erforschung des Zusammenbruchs der sogenannten mykenischen Kultur und der sogenannten dunklen Jahrhunderte', p. 137), 'Die wichtigste Erkenntnis aus dem neuesten Stand von Materialien und Forschung liegt darin, dass die Katastrophe der mykenischen Paläste um 1200 v. Chr. nicht zugleich das Ende der mykenischen Kultur bedeutete' (Deger-Jalkotzy's italics). The new discoveries made it possible to treat as post-palatial many of the objects mentioned by Homer which were formerly thought to belong to the Mycenaean or even an earlier period (Deger-Jalkotzy, pp. 147-48). Similarly, these discoveries added plausibility to the arguments of those who follow Finley in placing the society which can be reconstructed on the basis of the Homeric poems in the 10th-9th

centuries B.C. (see Kurt A. Raaflaub, 'Homer und die Geschichte des 8. Jh.s v.Chr.', pp. 211-12).

This is not to say, however, that contemporary historians unanimously accept Finley's placing of the formative stage of the Greek epic tradition in the Dark Ages. As a matter of fact, the contrary would rather be true. As Raaflaub puts it, 'Finleys Argumente sind aus historischen Gründen nicht zwingend, und seine Datierung ist schlecht mit den Charakteristika von *oral tradition* im allgemeinen und *oral poetry* im speziellen zu vereinbaren' (p. 212). Indeed, the same argument of the changeability of oral tradition that made it impossible to see in the Homeric poems a direct representative of Mycenaean epic poetry also holds good as regards Finley's hypothesis that the poet who presumably lived in the 8th century B.C. described a society which preceded him by two hundred years: if the Homeric epics do allow for reconstruction of a consistent social picture, this picture would rather belong to the time of the poet himself. This is why contemporary scholarly opinion tends to see the 8th century BC as providing the most suitable historical background for Homer.

According to this tendency, the Homeric poems should be regarded as an integral part of the so-called 'Eighth-Century Renaissance', a period whose historical importance has been assessed anew in recent studies. This would go well with the new historical, archaeological and philological conclusions concerning the relevance for Homer of such signal characteristics of archaic Greece as the polis, the open-air temple, hoplite tactics, and so on. The case of hoplite tactics as discussed by Raaflaub (pp. 226-27) provides a good example. According to the traditional view which was still current in the 1950s and 1960s, hoplite tactics, which were thought to have emerged only in the 7th century BC, could not have been known to Homer; accordingly, all the cases where these tactics were ostensibly referred to in the epics were treated as later interpolations. However, recent studies have undermined this old orthodoxy. As was demonstrated in 1964 by A. Snodgrass on the basis of new archaeological evidence, hoplite tactics had already been well developed by 650 B.C., whereas in 1977 J. Latacz showed on the basis of philological analysis of the *Iliad* text that this was in fact the prevalent military tactics addressed by Homer in his poems. This newly achieved synchronization allows us to locate hoplite tactics in the age of Homer, and the same seems to be true of other aspects of the social organization reflected in the Homeric poems. According to F. Gschnitzer ('Zur homerischen Staats- und Gesellschaftsordnung', pp. 182-204), the tendency, stimulated by Finley's work, to regard Homer's as a primitive tribal society bearing no resemblance whatever to any form of society known to us from Greek history, gradually becomes outdated, and the time has arrived to return to the classical syntheses of G. Busolt and G. Clotz who placed Homeric society at the beginning of the archaic period of the history of Greece.

Among contributions to the sections dealing with Homeric composition, 'Die Erforschung der Ilias-Struktur' by Joachim Latacz (pp. 381-414) and 'Zur Erforschung der Strukturen in der Odyssee' by Uvo Hölscher (pp. 415-422) are without doubt the central ones. Wolfgang Kullmann ('Ergebnisse der motivgeschichtlichen Forschung zu Homer (Neoanalyse)', pp. 425-455) proposes a renewed synthesis of the Neoanalytical approach, whereas James P. Holoka ('Homer, oral poetry theory, and comparative literature: major trends and controversies in twentieth-century criticism', pp. 456-481) gives an excellent survey of the development of the oral formulaic theory

from Milman Parry to the present. It is rather disappointing that in a book celebrating two hundred years of Wolf's *Prolegomena* no special attention is paid to the history of the Homeric Question. This deficiency, probably due to the fact that the contributors to this part of the *Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung* are as a rule uncompromising Unitarians, is only partly compensated by criticism of Wolf in Latacz's contribution; consequently J.A. Davison's chapters on the Homeric Question in the *Companion to Homer* still remain an indispensable guide on the issue. Likewise, I do not feel that 'The Language of Homer' by L.R. Palmer has been superseded by the linguistic section of the present volume. In a word, as far as composition and language are concerned, *A Companion to Homer* by A.J.B. Wace and F.H. Stubbings still merits consultation.

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Carl A. Huffman. *Philolaos of Croton, Pythagorean and Presocratic. A Commentary on the Fragments and Testimonia with Interpretive Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp. xviii + 444.

In his fundamental study *Weisheit und Wissenschaft: Studien zu Pythagoras, Philolaos und Platon*, published in 1962, Walter Burkert justly complained that 'in spite of the mountainous bibliography, there does not yet exist a full interpretative study of the Philolaos fragments' (quoted after the English translation by E. L. Minar, Jr., *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Harvard University Press, 1972, 221). The work of Carl A. Huffman, being as it is the first inclusive book on Philolaos after August Boeckh's *Philolaos des Pythagoreers Lehren nebst den Bruchstücken seines Werkes*, published in Berlin in 1819, comes to compensate for the lack. The book is a thorough study: two introductory essays devoted to the discussion of the doxographical tradition and the fundamentals of Philolaos' philosophy respectively (Parts i and ii) are followed by a critical edition of the fragments supplemented with relevant testimonia (Parts iii and iv); the Greek is accompanied by an English translation and a comprehensive, detailed and sensitive commentary covering the whole range of issues involved and particularly attentive to their Presocratic background; the book is equipped with three indices and a functional bibliography.

The central issue of the book is the question of the authenticity of the fragments and doctrines attributed to Philolaos by ancient sources. The question is addressed for each individual piece of evidence with the ensuing division of fragments and testimonia into genuine (Part iii) and spurious or doubtful (Part iv). The problem is indeed complicated and controversial. A. Boeckh's assessment of the whole body of the Philolaos fragments as genuine was adopted by Zeller and Diels (with the exception of fr. 21) but was disputed already in 1854 by V. Rose and then by I. Bywater, J. Burnet, P. Tannery, E. Frank and many others; the prevalent scholarly attitude became sceptical, hovering between a decided dismissal and tempered doubt. In 1962 W. Burkert proposed a revision: drawing a sharp distinction between Aristotle's account of the Pythagorean doctrines and their Platonizing version which dominated the later tradition, he argued the genuineness of fr. 1 - 7, 13, and 17 on the grounds that they display no characteristically Platonic traits and fundamentally agree with the picture