akademischen Stils (z.B. schwadronieren 41) gar nicht recht passen will. Kurzum, man wird gelegentlich an Senecas Kritik an Maecenas erinnert.
Trotz einzelner Bedenken im Detail und trotz der Breite, die wie gesagt auch ihr Gutes an sich hat, wird M.s Arbeit für lange Zeit das letzte Wort zu diesem Thema bleiben.

Cleveland

Martin Helzle


I once attended a conference at which one scholar argued that Odysseus’ attack on the suitors with his bow came as a total surprise to the listeners, another that it was a traditional element for which the audience had been waiting all the time. It is exactly this problem which Scodel discusses in her study. Those who expect a clear answer will be disappointed, both because S. argues that the question of tradition versus originality, of what Homer found readymade and what he invented himself, was less relevant for an ancient audience than for modern scholars, and because her argument though thoughtprovoking and interesting is not always easy to follow.

In chapter 1 S. gives a much needed analysis of the word tradition, which is used so often in Homeric scholarship but by which so many different things are meant. Even more problematic is to decide what is traditional in Homer and what new. Here S. argues that we should start from the audience rather than (as do the Neo-Analysts) from the poet, and more radically, that an ancient audience was not interested at all in whether a detail was traditional or new but only in its relevance for the context at hand. Following up an earlier observation of Andrew Ford about Homer’s suppression of his own tradition, she also draws attention to the fact that the Homeric narrator nowhere advertises his own inventions, in the way Pindar is later to do. Both poet and audience therefore share a rhetoric of traditionality: the whole story is taken to be traditional (and hence true), whether it actually is or not.

S.’s interpretation of the function of Achilles’ account of the quarrel in Iliad 1. 365–92 (pp. 39–40) did not strike me as very convincing: she argues that the beginning of the Iliad is extremely demanding and that the audience was perhaps not attentive right from the beginning and hence that this early recapitulation, «setting events in chronological order», helped anyone who was confused. The point is, however, that Achilles’ recapitulation does not set events in chronological order but gives a highly subjective and at times distorted version of them. Pace S. (p. 39), I therefore maintain that it serves to paint Achilles’ emotions.

In chapter 2 S. tries to define more closely the Homeric audience. She opts for a Panhellenic audience, and from this again comes up with quite a radical claim: such a broad audience cannot be expected to have a detailed knowledge of the whole story, and when they are confronted with gaps in the tale, they are not supposed to fill them up, but rather understand it as best as possible with the knowledge they have.
At p. 62 S. introduces Rabinowitz’ highly relevant distinction of narrative audience (the audience that accepts the story as if it were true) versus authorial audience (the audience that recognizes the story as a construct), and rightly claims that scholars too easily assume the two to coincide in the case of the Homeric epics. Unfortunately, she then goes on to illustrate her point by analysing character-narrative, in casu Odysseus’ lying tales. These are full of small, odd gaps, and from this she draws the conclusion that ‘the competent listener’ pays more attention to the speaker’s purposes and less to the story itself. Who is this competent listener, does he belong to the narrative or to the authorial audience? What about Odysseus’ listeners inside the story, are they not likely to have influenced the form of his tales more than Homer’s listeners; and are these manifestly fictional tales (though they rehearse some of Odysseus’ own adventures) really a good test-case for determining the strategies of Homer’s audience when dealing with traditional material?

In chapter 3 S. first works out more fully what she calls the rhetoric of traditionality, the shared pretense of Homeric poet and audience that everything told is traditional. She draws attention to such well-known authenticating strategies as the ‘if not’ situations, through which Homer emphasizes his fidelity to tradition, and the places where characters foresee that once they will become the subject of song.

S.’s line of argument is not always easy to follow. Thus on pp. 66–7 she argues: noun-epithet phrases are among the more traditional elements of epic; speech-introductions often incorporate such noun-epithet phrases; speeches themselves however are more innovative than narrative; «Tradition, as generic rule, makes speeches less ‘traditional’. Hence, the poet introduces speeches by first emphasizing a character’s traditionality». Apart from whether this is a convincing argument, it is rather hard to understand. Having first analysed so well the different ways in which the term tradition is used, S. insists on using it herself in various ways, the result being not always very helpful.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to what S. calls the «rhetoric of disinterestedness»: the Homeric poems – are supposed to – derive from the Muse, are aimed not at a local but at a Panhellenic audience, and therefore tell stories that serve no immediate end. In this respect bardic narrative (told by Homer and the professional singers Demodocus and Phemius) differs from the stories told by characters, who all are aimed at achieving certain goals. I am not sure that all Homerists will agree with this claim of disinterestedness of the Homeric epics, and the gain of this chapter seems to lie more on the side of the analysis of the goal directedness of the characters’ stories.

Putting Phemius and Demodocus in one box with Homer himself (and hence within the disinterested genre of bardic narrative) rather than with other character-narrators forces S. to deny their songs all goal directedness, thus discarding much interesting recent work on the argument function of Phemius’ song in Odyssey 1 and Demodocus’ songs in Odyssey 8. On p. 82 S. even seems to consider the singing Achilles of Iliad 9 a disinterested bard, a position which, despite the epic content of his song (the θέαν τοῦδ’ αἰδών), is immediately gainsaid by the lyre on which he is playing (which recalls his martial efforts and hence suggests his longing to return to battle, cf. Iliad 1. 492), and which leads to the curious suggestion that «apparently, Achilles sings only for his own pleasure…; Patroclus waits in silence for him to finish but is not said to be listening».

Chapter 4 deals with the question mentioned at the opening of this review: the audience’s prior knowledge. This is a vexed problem, also in tragedy (for which see A. M. van Erp Taalman Kip, Readers and spectators, Amsterdam 1990), and we may be thankful to S. for discussing it in such detail. She first introduces the
notion of the rhetoric of inclusion, whereby she means that it is nowhere openly admitted in the Homeric epics that anyone in the audience might lack knowledge.

Once again, S.’s reasoning is sometimes hard to follow. Take the following argument on pp. 91–2: «It is a sustaining fiction that before the performance starts, the poet and audience are in the same position of having heard the tradition … but lacking precise knowledge … The poet’s rhetoric of inclusion, by pretending to know that everyone knows the inherited stories thoroughly, is an essential aspect of his rhetoric of traditionality … he actually takes for granted only a basic familiarity with the background of his story and his characters». Having read this, I still do not know how detailed a knowledge is assumed. I would also have liked S. to have specified which audience, authorial or narrative, she is talking about.

Next, she discusses a number of strategies which the narrator has for informing his audience, while upholding the pretense that no one needs to be informed. A particularly nice one is when the narrator makes one of his characters remember something, as is the case in Odyssey 1, where Zeus remembers Aegisthus. Another one is to have a setting focalized by the arriving character and hence introduced in a natural way. His habit of marking significant moments in his narrative through digressions allows the narrator to slip in introductions of characters, who are about to do or say something important.

S. actually goes even further: since character-introductions usually are found when a character speaks to or interacts with another character, and since that other character knows or should know the information provided in that introduction, it can be said to be quasi-focalized (and hence naturalized). I myself still prefer the analysis given by Samuel Bassett in The Poetry of Homer, 1938, 130–40, which argues exactly the other way around: characters know all kind of information about other characters, because the poet has just given that information to his listeners.

The reminder of this chapter is devoted to a very practical analysis of the opening of the Iliad and sections from the Odyssey in terms of how much prior knowledge is assumed. The outcome, not surprising given S.’s whole argument so far, is that no extensive, detailed prior knowledge is required, and that even where well-known facts or persons are concerned the narrator has devices in order to inform relatively inexperienced listeners in an unobtrusive and natural way. This conclusion coincides with that of Van Erp Taalman Kip for tragedy and seems an a priori plausible one: no author can take the risk of assuming too much prior knowledge and thereby loosing the attention of those listeners who lack such knowledge.

S. pays a great deal of attention to the audience’s prior knowledge of characters. Despite her ingenuity in analysing the way characters are introduced, I must admit that her results (the audience knows Agamemnon, Menelaus, Helen, Paris, and Priam, but no prior knowledge is required in the case of Nestor and Achilles) strike me as somewhat arbitrary. We may also ask what the practical use is of this kind of conclusions, particularly so when, as S. has argued so forcefully in her book so far, the whole question of tradition vs. invention was largely an irrelevant one.

In chapter 5, on abbreviated narrative, S. returns to the question already broached in her second chapter: the gaps in narratives, which in Homer are mainly found in character-narrative. Many of these narratives are so compressed that they are hardly understandable. Whereas scholarship so far had assumed that
the listeners would bring in their prior knowledge to fill in the gaps, S. claims that the message is more important than the details and that listeners simply were not expected to mind the obscurities. S.’s stress on the message is clearly right and her observation (p. 139) that a compressed version of a tale can be more efficient than a full one is a significant one.

S.’s sixth chapter discusses narrative teases, the poet’s habit of not revealing the outcome of his story all at once or introducing his characters fully at their first mention. In other words, Homer is able to create genuine surprises. This suggestion goes against the conceived opinion of Homerists, but was argued already by T. Schmitz,¹ and in my view is both defensible and fruitful.

S. devotes most of her chapter to the characters Eumaeus and Phoenix, whereby I found her analysis of the delayed introduction of Eumaeus more convincing than that of Phoenix. She argues that the vexed duals of Iliad 9 are no inadvertently left relic of an other version but conscious signals to puzzle the audience: what is the role of Phoenix going to be? Only after he has introduced himself, in the naturalized form of reminding Achilles of his role as his tutor in the past, can the listeners understand why Nestor chose Phoenix as the embassy’s third man: his intimacy with Achilles must guarantee that the ambassadors are going to be received by this hero and get a fair hearing. This is certainly an original suggestion, which is worth considering. I am less convinced, however, by S.’s interpretation of Achilles’ use of the dual when greeting the (five) ambassadors (9. 197–8): since Phoenix’ arrival is no surprise, he does not need a special greeting; the dual refers to Odysseus and Ajax, whom Achilles had not expected to see, and «by using the duals, Achilles temporarily avoids facing the obviously official nature of the visit and addresses himself to his friends as friends» (p. 170). If S.’s first suggestion concerning Phoenix is right, I would have expected the duals rather to suggest the official nature of the visit.

In her final chapter S. returns to the question of Homer’s audience, which she now argues was not merely Panhellenic but also socially broad, including elite and nonelite members. This is of course – together with the question of the exact moment and occasion of the creation of the Iliad and Odyssey – one of the large debates in Homeric scholarship, and S.’s suggestion is one among many. She has more firm ground under her feet when discussing the audiences within the text.

These audiences have been discussed many times before, e.g. by C. Macleod in his Collected Essays, Oxford 1983 or by L. E. Doherty, Siren Songs, 1995, but S. somewhat changes the perspective by taking the notion of audience very broadly, including the watching of events or reacting to speeches, not only the listening to tales, and by concentrating on ideological rather than esthetic aspects.

I conclude that this is an important book, putting the receiving rather than the sending side of the performance of the Homeric epics centre stage. S.’s radical position concerning the prior knowledge of the authorial audience, which she takes to be much smaller than generally assumed (while the narrative audience is constructed by the narrator as omniscient), is unlikely to convince all, but the many observations on narrative technique which she bases on this position are often new and worthwhile.

Amsterdam

Irene J. F. de Jong