

Lawrence Kim, *Homer between History and Fiction in Imperial Greek Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xi, 246. ISBN 978-0-521-19449-5. \$95.00.

This excellent book explores conceptions of Homer in the Second Sophistic. It actually does much more than that. Though there are three major chapters on Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, and Philostratus, these are preceded by a compelling introduction, as well as insightful analyses of the use of Homer by Herodotus and Thucydides (Chapter 2) and Strabo (Chapter 3). Second Sophistic treatment of Homer is thereby informatively contextualized within a long tradition of Homeric responses. The main chapters are primarily dedicated to a close reading of certain works, like Lucian's *True Stories*, Dio's *Trojan Oration*, and Philostratus' *Heroicus*, but much else (e.g., Ptolemy the Quail, Dares and Dictys) is employed as Kim weaves a multi-faceted interpretative web. In the end the reader is rewarded with not only an explanation of the place of Homer in the Second Sophistic, but with a general overview of the reception of Homer in antiquity.

The introduction previews Kim's approach in the later chapters, with the necessary establishment of certain parameters. The first chapter then launches into an analysis of Herodotus' claim that Helen did not go to Troy, and Thucydides' account of the Trojan War. These early authors assume that Homer must be central to their discussion, whether they are contradicting the epic poet (Herodotus) or revising him (Thucydides). Here Kim persistently pursues complex issues, such as the basis of Homeric revision (Egyptian sources for Herodotus; rationalistic modeling for Thucydides). Kim also interestingly establishes that these authors are loathe, in different ways, to deny Homer authentic historical knowledge. The arguments of both historians thus can become strained or even convoluted. There is a tendency in these authors, as well as others discussed later in the book, to assume that Homer knows the truth but somehow chooses to suppress or pervert it. How and why is not always clear (one could think of interesting parallels to neo-analyst attitudes towards Homer).

The third chapter takes up Strabo, the author who is most pro-Homer of those covered. The points established in the previous chapter are effectively used here to explain Strabo's motives. In Kim's analysis, Strabo is not really as antithetical to Eratosthenes in his approach to the wanderings of Odysseus as is often claimed. Both conceive of the *Apologoi* as a mixture of poetic fiction and geography. What Strabo does is emphasize and defend the real-world basis of the wanderings, though readily conceding the addition of the fantastic. As with Herodotus and Thucydides, then, Strabo's Homer is withholding or modifying a reality that he well knows. The Homer of Eratosthenes, on the other hand, either does not know this reality or does not care—the priority is on poetry. In the end, Kim demonstrates, Strabo's argument fails to transcend its own internal inconsistencies.

In Chapter 4 Kim discusses Dio Chrysostom, notably his claims that Hector actually killed Achilles and Troy really won the Trojan War. Here we are obviously in the midst of the rhetorical and literary games of the Second Sophistic. Kim returns again to the

question of what such argumentation would imply about the knowledge and motives of Homer. As for Dio's motives, after surveying the various arguments of scholars, Kim suggests that Dio is parodying longstanding debates about Homer. Chapter 5, on Lucian's *True Stories*, follows naturally from Kim's insights about Dio. It is argued that Lucian, despite all the bluster about liars in the prologue, and though well-informed about academic controversy regarding Homer's veracity, is most interested in celebrating the Homeric creation of a self-contained fictional world. For Kim, this is perhaps the most radical of the imperial responses to Homer; one might also say this chapter is the most intense and fascinating of the book.

But there is more: a final chapter explores the *Heroicus* of Philostratus. Here Kim nicely guides us through this work's narratological house of mirrors: an anti-Homeric account of the Trojan War by the shade of Protesilaus (an eyewitness—though only briefly as a living one!), as reported by a local Thracian vine-dresser to an independent-minded Phoenician merchant. For Kim, this polyphonic exploration of the "real" Trojan War combines the prosecutorial zeal of Dio with the playful curiosity of Lucian. Central to Kim's analysis is the claim by the vine-dresser that Homer received first-hand information about the past from the shade of Odysseus, yet agreed to alter it in favor of the Ithacan hero. Kim portrays this anecdote as emblematic of Philostratus' clever attempts to destabilize traditional discussions of Homer's sources and bias. This chapter's scope of topics contrasts with recent scholarship that focuses on the *Heroicus* as a reliable source of traditional hero cult.

Though the work seems aimed primarily at scholars of the Second Sophistic, all classicists and Homerists in particular will find it informative and thought-provoking. Though there is some evidence of haste in its final stages, and though the conclusion is rather brief, this is a well-organized book that sustains an incrementally progressive analysis through its very wide-ranging chapters. Kim explores how both anti-Homeric authors and Homer defenders engage in Homeric debates that continuously re-configure an ever-changing Homeric persona. Important issues concerning myth, history, and literary fiction are explored with authority and verve. Homer's prominent yet highly contentious role throughout antiquity in controversy over truth and fiction is thereby thoroughly elucidated.

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