



Homeric Epic and its Reception: Interpretive Essays

By Seth L. Schein

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Homeric Epic and its Reception, comprising twelve chapters—some previously published but revised for this collection, and others appearing here in print for the first time—offers literary interpretations of the Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite. While some chapters closely study the diction, meter, style, and thematic resonance of particular passages and episodes in the Iliad and the Odyssey, others follow diverse pathways into the interpretation of the epics, including mythological allusion, intertextuality, the metrics of the Homeric hexameter, and the fundamental contrast between divinity and humanity. Also included are two chapters which focus on the work of Milman Parry and Ioannis Kakridis, founders of the two most fruitful twentieth-century scholarly approaches to Homeric scholarship: the study of the Iliad and the Odyssey as traditional oral formulaic poetry (Parry), and the study of the poems' adaptations and transformations of traditional mythology, folktales, and poetic motifs in accordance with their distinctive themes and poetic purposes (Kakridis). The volume draws to a close with three chapters which discuss some of the most compelling poetic and critical receptions of the Iliad and the Odyssey since the late nineteenth century, and the institutional reception of the epics in colleges and universities in the United States over the past two centuries. Written over a period of 45 years, this collection reflects the author's long-standing interest in, and scholarly and critical approaches to, the literary interpretation of Homeric poetry.

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Editorial Review

Review

The essays are remarkable for the consistency of the authors views despite the variousness of themes and topics...The readings themselves are sensitive and rewarding, neatly organized, and are at their best when they bring out interesting textures in the Homeric corpus primarily through techniques of close reading.
James I. Porter, Exemplaria Classica

About the Author

Seth L. Schein taught Classics and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, Purchase College of the State University of New York, the University of California, Santa Cruz, Queens College and The Graduate School of the City University of New York, and the University of California, Davis from 1968 until he retired in 2012.

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