Simon Pulleyn, *Homer, 'Odyssey I'*. Edited with an introduction, translation, commentary, and glossary, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, 320 pp., $24.95 (pb), ISBN 978-0-19-882420-6.

The importance of the first book of the *Odyssey* for the introduction, framing and development of the plot of the epic as a whole cannot be overstated. And yet the book has not recently received the attention it deserves by commentators, except from Heubeck *et al.*'s now classic commentary in 1988. Pulleyn's work aims to fill this gap by offering an edition, translation and commentary on *Odyssey* 1. The book is ambitious and offers a large introduction covering most of the topical issues in Homeric studies (e.g. problems of composition/dating, orality, metre, language etc.), followed by a new edition of the text with some well justified emendations, a new translation and finally a detailed commentary which focuses mostly on historical linguistic analysis, but also addresses some of the important narrative themes of the book.

In terms of the actual content, P.'s work surprises both positively and negatively. Already in page 3 of the introduction the reader is confronted by the statement that "the Cicones … ate six of his [Odysseus'] men" and further down we are informed that the Laestrygonians ate another one. These are serious factual errors that should be avoided in a work of such scope and importance and it is surprising that they found their way into the text. The Cicones of course do not eat anyone, being the last proper human beings Odysseus encounters before he is blown off course at Cape Malea to the realm of cannibalistic and supernatural beings (*Od.* 9.39-81), including the Laestrygonians who collect many of Odysseus' men for their dinner (*Od.* 10.122-4). The same misconception appears later on (p.97) where the Cicones feature in a list of non/super-human beings Odysseus encounters, whereas the Laestrygonians, who actually are giants and cannibals, are not present. Another similar issue can be found in the statement in pp.22-3 that the dogs at the doors of Alcinous' palace are "robotic" -it is by no means clear that this is the case, whereas one could also claim that the text alludes to life-like statues, a position supported by the scholiasts who make no connection with automata (cf. ΣV *ad Od.* 9.91, E. *ad Od.* 9.93 etc.) - for comparison see the robotic helpers of Hephaestus in *Iliad* 18 (417-20) where the text is unambiguous. Although not a misinterpretation *per se*, for the purposes of the commentary it would have been better if both interpretations were mentioned.

Despite these discrepancies, the introduction offers a wide survey of most of the important themes related to Homeric poetry, from a stylistic comparison of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, to problems of composition and transmission of the text. Some sections are significantly stronger than others, for example the part on Homeric dialect (pp.51-60) offers completeness while at the same time being written in clear style that makes it accessible both to the scholar and the

student of Classics. The same is true for the section on the origins of the Homeric epics and that on transmission, which both address, in an informative way, very topical but also difficult problems related to the study of Homer. Some sections could however be improved, for instance the one on oral poetry and the formulaic system is significantly simpler than the ones focusing on the text and its linguistic aspects, perhaps reflecting the general tendency of the commentary of prioritising language over literary interpretation. Finally, the section on the geography of the *Odyssey* verges on the problematic, nonetheless due to the fact that the argument is presented as common consensus, whereas most of it relies on Bittlestone's controversial *Odysseus Unbound,* a book that has caused quite a few reactions among scholars (see for instance Graziosi 2007, *JHS* 128: 178-80, for an overview of the problems in B's approach), mostly due to its speculative nature and controversial methodology. The identification of the places Odysseus visits with landmarks in the Western Mediterranean is indeed quite perilous and P. does not make it clear that it relies entirely on later folklore traditions that probably had very little to do with any historical geography behind the *Odyssey*, making the section somewhat misleading for the non-specialist or student.

The translation overall is excellent and demonstrates P.s equally outstanding knowledge and understanding of Homeric Greek. One point that needs mentioning in my view however, is the author's arbitrary translation of Hermes' obscure epithet *Argeiphontes* as "slayer of guard dogs" (p.67, l.84). P.'s support of this translation in his comment on the same line (pp.117-8) is as problematic as the translation offered: there simply are not enough grounds on which to support a meaning that is not within the knowledge of the scholiasts and ancient readers, even as a remote possibility. The connection with Hipponax (Fr. 3a *IEG*) is interesting but quite flimsy as evidence for a meaning "dog-slayer" for Hermes, which surely would have been more widespread, if traditional.

Moving on to the commentary, the reader can once again witness P.'s excellent and deep linguistic knowledge of Homeric Greek, which is evident in his thorough analysis of the *Kunstsprache's* various peculiarities. Most forms are analysed and explained through historical linguistics, making the commentary invaluable for the student of Homer but also highly informative for scholars working on the text. In terms of literary analysis however, P. at times takes some interpretational liberties, which can lead to arbitrary solutions of important and long-standing issues: one such example is the interpretation of *Argeiphontes* mentioned above, another the correlation of Poseidon with Enki (p.127), which relies mostly on speculation, and yet another the translation of *atrygetoio* as that "which cannot be dried out", the justification of which requires quite the argumentative stretch to be made. Further to that, the comment on *Doulichio* (p.174) takes again B.'s very problematic conclusion on Homeric geography as the truth behind a very complicated issue, an approach which I believe should be avoided in such sensitive topics.

Overall, P.'s commentary presents the reader with a serious controversy: excellent in terms of linguistic analysis, it can serve as an indispensable tool for the study of *Odyssey* 1; at the same time however, it is populated with some

interpretations which can be perceived as quite problematic. All in all, if these problems are addressed in a second edition, Homeric studies will have gained a very strong addition to their number of allies.

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