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**Casey Dué, Achilles Unbound. Multiformity and Tradition in the Homeric Epics. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2019. Pp. 228 (ISBN 978-0-674-98736-4) \$27.50.**

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Casey Dué, *Achilles Unbound. Multiformity and Tradition in the Homeric Epics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2019. Pp. 228 (ISBN 978-0-674-98736-4) \$27.50.

The occasion of this book's publication, as the short Preface and Introduction indicate, is the completion of the Homer Multitext project's digital edition of the Venetus A manuscript of the *Iliad* (<http://www.homermultitext.org/>). The Homer Multitext project is an ongoing enterprise launched in 2000 under the auspices of Casey Dué and Mary Ebbott as main editors, and Douglas Frame, Leonard Muellner and Gregory Nagy as co-editors. The project's goal, as Dué explains, is not to produce another critical edition of the text of the *Iliad*. In fact, a good many pages of the book under review are devoted to highlighting the problems of critical editions and their *apparatus criticus*, and in particular the methodological inadequacies of classic textual criticism when applied to an orally composed text. Critical editions seek to recreate as much as possible the author's "original." Now, if we accept fully Milman Parry and Albert Lord's conclusions regarding Homer's *Iliad* as an orally composed, performed and transmitted poem, maintains Dué, then there can be no "original" to reconstruct, since the poem will be the same and yet different in any and all of its performances. The "authorial approach," on the other hand, "excludes an abundance of alternative instantiations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*" (81). These alternatives transmitted to us by various means are thus to be interpreted not as "variant readings," as traditional textual criticism would have it, but truly as "multiforms" (Dué's term), that is, as testimonies of as many different performances. Proceeding this way, the result will not be one single, printable, edition, but rather a "multitext." The final goal of the Homer Multitext project is to make all these multiforms available to readers, to produce "an accurate picture of the transmission in all its complexity" (53).

Dué devotes her first chapter ("Winged Words': How We Came to Have our *Iliad*?") to describing "how a performance tradition that was already well underway in Mycenaean Greece eventually crystallized into what we know as the *Iliad*" (17). This is already a contentious statement: many scholars place the origin of the Iliadic tradition much later, in the post-Mycenaean world at the earliest, and some even later. Although most scholars, as Dué affirms (18), would agree that there is an oral tradition behind the poem we have, not all would subscribe to the evolution that Dué defends and that has been developed by Nagy in different publications, especially in the last ten years (43). Dué explores in this rich chapter the evidence provided not only by the traditionality of Homeric language and the descriptions of poetic performances in the poems, but also the testimony of the plastic arts (especially Mycenaean and Minoan frescoes and archaic and classical pottery). These testimonies present alternative versions of the story of the *Iliad*,

sometimes truly incompatible and in competition with each other. Dué appropriately deals here with complex concepts such as authorship, “poetic authority,” or “truth”: is there a more authoritative version among the multiplicity? Which version can be considered to represent the “truth”? Put in another way: could the *Iliad* be told differently? Once again Dué follows Nagy when she writes that “Archaic Greek poetry refers to Panhellenic myth and poetry as ‘truth,’ while local versions of stories...are *pseudea* or ‘lies.’” (21-22). Furthermore, the *Iliad* subtly alludes to other versions, thereby asserting its own primacy. There are, though, some limits to this multiformity. If Achilles had chosen to leave the war and go home, there would be no *Iliad*. Achilles is “fated” to die in Troy and never conquer the city. “What is fated is the traditional and hence authoritative version of the story” (20). Dué continues to follow Nagy’s evolutionary model when she asserts that, even if written texts of the *Iliad* existed at least from the mid-sixth century B.C. on, the oral tradition would not have ceased all at once, but rather would have continued to coexist with the new, written form for centuries. This period of coexistence of oral and written versions would be active until the mid-second century B.C. The editorial work of Aristarchus and other Alexandrian scholars on the Homeric text at this time initiated the “relatively most rigid period, with texts as scripture” (43), and seems to have put an end to the great disparities exhibited in the earliest testimonies of Homer’s text: the first, so called “wild,” papyri and the citations of Homer by other ancient authors (Aeschylus, Aeschines, and Plato, to name a few). When our manuscript tradition begins in the tenth century A.D. with the Venetus A, it presents an impressive regularity in the text. Some of the oldest manuscripts are also rich in *scholia* that transmit to us the divergent readings attributed to Aristarchus and others, and that Dué understands to be not conjectures in the style of modern editors but rather “observations of multiformity culled from the wide array of texts available to them” (47). All these Homeric “multiforms” can be traced, then, in the quotations of Homer by other authors of antiquity, in papyri, scholia, and the medieval manuscripts, which Dué studies successively in detail in chapters 2 (“*Sunt Aliquid Manes*: Ancient Quotations of Homer”), 3 (“And then the Amazon Came: Homeric Papyri”), and 4 (“The Lost Verses of the *Iliad*: Medieval Manuscripts and the Poetics of a Multiform Epic Tradition”). A final Chapter 5 (“Conclusion: ‘In Appearance Like a God:’ Textual Criticism and the Quest for the One True Homer”) closes the book, followed by ample bibliography and indexes.

It is clear that such a project only could take shape when internet became available, and in fact the project was first thought of in the nineties when the new technology appeared. That so far, despite the dedication and enthusiasm of the editors, only the Venetus A has been digitized and made available to readers signals both the ambitious scope of the project and its difficulties. Casey Dué has achieved her goal of explaining carefully the understanding of the Homeric poems’ origin, composition and transmission that animates this enterprise and that she calls a true paradigm shift in Homeric studies (163). Dué writes very clearly,

her book is a pleasure to read, and many of the examples she chooses to make her case will cause the reader pause and reflect. There is a lot to be learned from the book even if not all of it will be persuasive, depending on the image that each reader has of “Homer” and the Homeric tradition. Dué’s views obviously clash frontally with the work of the late M.L. West, the most recent editor of both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Dué does not avoid discussing the differences between these approaches, which she does with respect and professionalism.

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Margarita Sánchez Romero and Rosa Cid López, eds. *Motherhood and Infancies in the Mediterranean in Antiquity*. Oxford and Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2018. Pp. 296. Paper (ISBN 978-1-78925-038-1) \$59.99.

This book was inspired by a 2016 conference, “Maternities and Childhood: Historical and Archaeological Perspectives,” in Granada, Spain. It is the seventh volume in the *Childhood in the Past* monograph series published by Oxbow Books. The twenty-one essays cover a wide chronological range, with discussion of representations of women and children from the Bronze Age to the modern day. Geographically, the essays focus on evidence from Mesopotamia, Spain, Italy, and Greece and address an array of issues, including constructions of maternity and childhood, legal perspectives on motherhood and on mother-child relationships, funerary commemoration of children, and current pedagogical approaches. In what follows, I offer an overview of several chapters to provide prospective readers with a sense of the variety of the contributions.

In Chapter 1, “Motherhood and infancies: archaeological and historical approaches,” Margarita Sánchez Romero and Rosa Cid López cite recent debates in archaeology and social history that have inspired the volume and have underscored the need for further work that challenges naturalized views of motherhood and childhood. Taking this as a point of departure, they state that their aims in the project are “to discover in greater detail the true social, economic, and technical dimension of maternal practices and to reflect on childhood from a gender perspective” and “to investigate the emergence of mother-daughter ties and their development” (p.7). This introduction to the volume provides a useful overview of scholarship on women and children, and it includes an admirably up-to-date set of references to current research.

In “Beyond biology: the constructed nature of motherhood(s) in ancient Near Eastern sources and studies” (Chapter 4), Agnes Garcia-Ventura sets out to demonstrate how the concept of motherhood was established in the ancient Near East, focusing on a set of