



perspective (e.g. on 300–2, Hector’s speech) or the narrator’s text (cf. p. 104 on 182–3, or p. 132 on 247: ‘the narrator’s quasi-X-ray vision’), are regularly emphasised, and the same is true of the characterisation (e.g. pp. 118–19, on Hector’s courage) and the descriptions of material objects (Ereuthalion’s arms, p. 89; Ajax’s shield, pp. 119–23). Users of the commentary will be enlightened not only about the characteristics of the Homeric world in general (e.g. divine epiphanies, pp. 48–9), but also about such features specific to *Iliad 7* as, for example, that the term *σῶμα* is ‘used of a *human* corpse elsewhere only at *Od.* 11.53, 24.187’ (on 79–80; W.’s emphasis); that ‘the notion of the *θυμός* descending to Hades is attested only here’ (on 130–1); that Hector is ‘the only Homeric warrior to compare himself to a woman’ (on 235–41); that ‘this [the Hector–Ajax duel] is the only scene in the *Iliad* where a warrior falls flat on his back without dying’ (on 271–2) and much more. This is a thorough and thoughtful commentary which offers fresh insight into the seventh book of the *Iliad*. Everyone reading *Iliad 7* with its assistance will be amply rewarded.

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METALEPSIS IN THE *ILIAD*

VON ALVENSLEBEN (L.) *Erzähler und Figur in Interaktion. Metalepsen in Homers Ilias.* (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 139.) Pp. viii + 289. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022. Cased, £91, €99.95, US\$114.99. ISBN: 978-3-11-079064-1.
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Shortly before Patroklos’ death-scene in *Iliad* 16 the Homeric narrator turns to address him directly, as if he existed not only in the narrated past, but also in the performative present: ‘then it was, Patroklos, that the end of your life appeared’ (*Il.* 16.787). Apostrophes such as this are the most striking and well-known examples in Homeric epic of metalepsis, the narrative phenomenon whereby the boundary between the extradiegetic realm and the intradiegetic realm is blurred or transgressed. In the book under review, a revision of the author’s 2021 Göttingen dissertation, v.A. argues that the narrator’s apostrophes are in fact only one form of the extensive metaleptic interactivity that pervades the epic. On her reading, metaleptic communication goes both ways in the *Iliad*: not only does the narrator ‘descend’ into the realm of the story by apostrophising characters and engaging in dialogue with them, characters also ‘ascend’ to the extradiegetic level, echoing the narrator’s wording, disputing his characterisations and calling attention to their status as intradiegetic characters.

The first chapter introduces the concept of metalepsis and traces the history of the term, first in ancient rhetorical criticism (where it was originally applied to the playful substitution of one word for a technically inappropriate but nevertheless comprehensible alternative), and then in modern narratology, from Gérard Genette’s appropriation of the term to more recent investigations of metalepsis in ancient Graeco-Roman narrative texts.

Chapter 2 examines metaleptic communication between Achilles and the narrator, arguing that their long-recognised affinity can be described in terms of their metaleptic interaction, a function of the ‘particularly high permeability’ (p. 118) between Achilles’

speeches and the narrator-text. Specifically, v.A. maintains that certain points of connection between Achilles' speeches and the narrator-text suggest that they enjoy a close metaleptic relationship throughout the epic: they respond to, play off and argue with one another across the narrative divide. For example, when Achilles declares his intention to leave Hektor's corpse 'for the dogs' (*Il.* 23.183), v.A. argues that the narrator's statement in the next line – 'So he threatened, but the dogs did not busy over him' (*Il.* 23.184) – can be read as a metaleptic retort whereby 'the narrator contradicts Achilles directly as if he were a person standing in front of him' (p. 95).

Chapter 3 examines three categories of metalepsis involving characters other than Achilles: metaleptic knowledge, whereby characters appear to refer to the narrator-text; metaleptic action, whereby character speeches seem to influence how the narrator tells the story; and metaleptic objection, whereby the narrator appears to contradict the words of a character. According to v.A., characters demonstrate metaleptic knowledge not only by echoing the words of the narrator, as for example when Hera repeats a phrase used by the narrator three lines earlier (συμφράσσατο βουλάς, *Il.* 1.537, 540), but also by playing off the images with which the narrator adorns the narrative. So, when the narrator states that Kebriones fell from his chariot 'like an acrobat' (*Il.* 16.742), v.A. argues that Patroklos' comparison of Kebriones to a man diving for oysters (*Il.* 16.745–50) suggests his metaleptic knowledge of the image coined by the narrator. The final section, on metaleptic objection, offers the most compelling readings of the chapter. Here, v.A. argues, for example, that Odysseus' statement that there should be only one 'commander' (κοίρανος, *Il.* 2.204), namely Agamemnon, is implicitly contradicted by the narrator, who characterises Odysseus immediately thereafter as 'commanding' (κοιρανέων, *Il.* 2.207) the army, thereby hinting at the ironic disconnect between Odysseus' words and his actions.

Chapter 4 considers four other possible forms of metalepsis in the *Iliad*. First, v.A. argues that the narrator occasionally reveals his role as the story's creator (rather than its mere reporter), a phenomenon known as authorial metalepsis. Section 2 reads Achilles' battle with the river as an attempt to emancipate himself from his fictional existence. Section 3 argues that characters occasionally show an awareness of their status as intradiegetic characters. For example, when Patroklos asks Achilles what good he will be to someone in the future if he refuses to help his allies (*Il.* 16.31–2), v.A. reads this not as a kind of metapoetic dramatic irony (whereby the poet and the audience are aware of a metapoetic significance of which the characters remain ignorant), but as Patroklos' conscious reference to 'the epic in which he is a character' (p. 233). The final section of the chapter argues for what v.A. labels 'metaleptic mirroring', whereby elements from the story are reproduced on the level of the narrative, such as when Achilles' astonishment at Priam's sudden appearance in his hut is reproduced on the narrative level by a simile that is, according to v.A., 'as astonishing for the addressee as the appearance of Priam was for Achilles' (p. 243).

The book's exclusive focus on metalepsis is on the one hand its greatest asset, but it is also the source of its principal weaknesses. In v.A.'s attempt to demonstrate the pervasiveness of metalepsis in the *Iliad*, the concept becomes so diluted as to become virtually indistinguishable from metafiction. Does Patroklos' reference to a future person with knowledge of Achilles constitute a genuine *transgression* of a diegetic boundary? Similar questions are provoked by the interpretation of *Il.* 18.170–82, where Iris, contrary to her typical practice, neglects to identify who sent her until Achilles explicitly prompts her to do so. V.A. argues that Achilles' response can be read not only as an implicit critique of *Iris*' omission, but also as a metaleptic critique of the *poet's* breach of convention. While I am attracted by the idea that the words of an intradiegetic character can prompt the extradiegetic audience to reflect

on the poet's compositional choices, I am not convinced that the intradiegetic character ought therefore to be seen as the *conscious agent* of that reflection.

Another unfortunate result of the book's exclusive focus on metalepsis is that non-metaleptic interpretations are not considered or too quickly dismissed. Many of v.A.'s arguments, for example, take verbal repetition as their point of departure, a phenomenon often easily explicable without recourse to metalepsis. For instance, Hera's use of the same phrase that the narrator had used to describe the content of her thoughts (συμφοράσσατο βουλᾶς, *Il.* 1.537, 540), which v.A. reads as a metaleptic echo, might instead be explained as a case of internal focalisation: the narrator grants insight into Hera's suspicions and then quotes the speech in which she verbalises them, thereby confirming the accuracy of his report. Alternatively, one might argue that the poet felt no need to reach for an alternative phrase when a suitable one lay ready at hand. Similarly, Zeus's use of three of the same lexemes that the narrator had used to convey the content of Zeus's thoughts (ἔρωξ, φιλότης and εὐνή) might best be understood not through the lens of metalepsis, but as another instance of internal focalisation: the narrator conveys the erotic thoughts that cross Zeus's mind when he looks upon Hera in her finery (*Il.* 14.294–6), thoughts that Zeus then expresses (*Il.* 14.313–28). Alternatively, one might note that the occurrence of words for 'desire', 'love' and 'bed' are not particularly marked in a long appeal for sexual intercourse, especially given their appearance in Paris' appeal for sex at *Il.* 3.441–6.

Even if specific metaleptic arguments fail to persuade, the book is nevertheless a valuable demonstration of the high degree of permeability between the narrator and the characters, a distinctive and pervasive feature of the epic. When characters repeat the language of the narrator, whether knowingly or not, audience members who hear the echo may, as v.A. shows, productively interpret one in light of the other, either to corroborative or ironic effect. In sum, v.A. shows that the narrator and the characters of the *Iliad* share language and knowledge that makes the apparent boundary between them feel, at times, uncannily porous.

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THEMES IN PINDAR AND AESCHYLUS

PARK (A.) *Reciprocity, Truth, and Gender in Pindar and Aeschylus*. Pp. xii + 241. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2023. Cased, US\$70. ISBN: 978-0-472-13342-0. Open access.

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P.'s subject is, first, the relationship between reciprocity, truth and gender in Pindar and Aeschylus (taken separately) and, secondly, the 'complementarity' that emerges from the comparison between them – how each poet's configuration of these interlocking themes is structurally distinct but evidence of their 'shared poetic culture' (p. 4). This is an original and ambitious approach that aims to combine the study of related themes in a single author or genre (such as V. Wohl, *Intimate Commerce: Exchange, Gender and Subjectivity in Greek Tragedy* [1998]) and the comparison of authors on a single theme (A. Uhlig, *Theatrical Reenactment in Pindar and Aeschylus* [2019]). The perspective