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CARLO M. LUCARINI, *La genesi dei poemi omerici*, Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 376, Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2019, xi+434 pp., € 129,95, ISBN 978-3-11-065004-4.

The study encapsulates the author's most recent activities in teaching and research and provides a new monograph dedicated to the vexed question of the genesis of the Homeric poems. The work presents itself as a comprehensive and thorough close reading of the two epics that came down to us under the name of Homer. With this scope, the book offers a double benefit from the very beginning. By reuniting at one place the issues raised by both Homeric poems, the author assesses a tremendously large amount of studies on a notoriously complex research question. However, by dividing the outline of his work into two parts and dedicating each of them to one of the poems, he also highlights the important differences that exist between them. Indeed, the two epics diverge substantially in their narrative strategy, their poetic mood, their principle of composition, and finally with regard to the often quite different philological traditions that developed around the two masterpieces. Most effectively this contrast is represented in the very instructive schema at the end of the book (p. 416).

The core of the study is dedicated to the delimitation, in a pure analytic tradition, of individual narrative strands that compose each of the two poems. From the methodological point of view, the author conducts his investigation by relying on the many contradictions that exist in the poems and he uses these inconsistencies as markers that indicate the junction of more independent pieces that were conflated over time into one narrative. Through this detailed scrutinizing of the wording, he manages to identify, for each of the two poems, a long list of narrative unities believed to have circulated independently for some time before being incorporated into the poems in a long process that finally led to the form of the text which we still read today. While analysing these different layers of the text he also delineates several successive stages in this process some of which have been attributed to more individualised poets.

In the author's opinion, and as fundamental principle of his analysis, all the stages of this creation process presuppose a written form of the poems and this is certainly the most controversial aspect of his study. On the one hand, he endorses the position of the analysts and revives this influential tradition of Homeric scholarship. Yet, it is perhaps somewhat regrettable that he gives so little room to other directions the debate on the genesis of the Homeric poems took since the heydays of the analytic tradition in

the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nonetheless, this clear-cut choice of the author to follow the analytic principles to tackle the question of the formation of the Homeric epics, has the great advantage to provide good guidance for the reader so that he or she understands from the first pages of the book to which aspects of this ongoing and complex debate on the Homeric poems the author makes a contribution.

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