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The Language of Homer *Die Homerische Kunstsprache*. Karl Von Meister. Preisschriften gekrönt und herausgegeben von der fürstlich Jablonowskischen Gesellschaft. Quarto. Pp. 3 + 262. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1921. M. 180.

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REVIEWS

THE LANGUAGE OF HOMER.

Die Homerische Kunstsprache. Von KARL MEISTER. Preisschriften gekrönt und herausgegeben von der fürstlich Jablonowskischen Gesellschaft. Quarto. Pp. 3 + 262. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1921. M. 180.

THE above work forms a handsome volume that reflects great credit upon the distinguished Society responsible for its publication, as also upon its printers and producers. In Germany, at any rate, classical learning is not altogether on the wane even in these days of widespread stress and difficulty, the aftermath of the war. Professor Karl Meister of Heidelberg University is an accomplished scholar and an enthusiastic exponent of the view he has adopted of the language of the Homeric poems. Undoubtedly a closer study of the text is a matter of the first necessity, and is of far more real value than many high-soaring speculations into origins and folk-lore. Accordingly, I heartily welcome this very interesting statement of the result of a searching analysis of the early epic language. The author calls it an art- or technical-language, and in a certain sense the term is applicable to the work of every great poet that ever existed. But he means, as the reader will soon discover, much more than this. He believes that Homer's language is to a large extent an artificial speech containing novel forms forced upon him to meet the requirements of a difficult metre. I do not by any means rate Homer's capacity so low, but the view is not altogether novel, and is fundamental to this treatise, which accordingly opens with an elaborate examination and analysis of the Homeric hexameter covering Part I. pp. 3-58. The rest of the volume, Part II. p. 61 onwards, contains the investigation and discussion of archaic and modern forms, with two indices (1) of the words and (2) of the subject-matter.

We are all familiar with the statement that the language of Homer is composite and could never have been a spoken dialect, mainly, as I have seen it

stated, because it contains a superabundance of pronouns. Why any sensible poet or poets should have taken the trouble to compose two long epics in largely unintelligible language is a mystery no one is ever likely to solve. Even blindness would not have protected the bard who attempted to play off such a trick upon an assembly of nobles such as met in the hall of Odysseus or, in less disorderly form, in that of Alcinous. He would very soon have been called to order in such terms as another Alcinous used in a less exasperating case:

Ἔσθε ἔκκλητος, ξείνε, καθήμενος, ἢ ἀπὶ θ' ἄλλη,
μή σε νέοι διὰ δῶμα ἐρύσσωσ', οἳ ἀγορεύεις,
ἢ ποδὸς ἢ καὶ χειρὸς, ἀποδρῦψοσι δὲ πάντα.

ἔσθε (Bentley), not, as the tradition reads, ἔσθι', or the protester might himself have fared, at the hands of his compeers, no better than the offending bard. I do not charge Professor Meister with going to such an extreme as does the statement on which I have commented, but he goes no little distance in the same direction when he contends that Homer introduced arbitrary forms to fit the scansion particularly, but by no means exclusively, in the fourth foot—e.g. ἐλώρια for ἔλωρα, διώκετο for δῖωκε, ἐνήρατο (ἐναίρω), ἀθελμίστιος for ἀθέμιστος, πανδήμιος for πάνδημος, and very many others. Some of these he is not quite sure about; but he has no misgivings regarding πτολιπόρθιος for πτολίπορθος. The elongated form occurs twice only:

ι 504 φάσθαι Ὀδυσσῆα πτολιπόρθιον ἐξαλαῶσαι
ι 530 δὲς μὴ Ὀδυσσῆα πτολιπόρθιον οἰκαδ' ἰκέσθαι.

On the other hand, πτολίπορθος occurs eighteen times, and always at the end of the line. Who can doubt that the two quoted passages would be more truly read thus?

φάσθαι σ' ἐξαλαῶσαι Ὀδυσσῆα πτολίπορθον
δὲς μὴ οἰκαδ' ἰκέσθαι Ὀδυσσῆα πτολίπορθον.

Herr Meister says, rightly enough, on p. 103 that in Homer words and forms must be held to belong to the living speech until the opposite is proved, and yet the main object of this highly important contribution to our know-

ledge is to brand as poetical inventions, not in the living speech, a vast number of words against which he is practically the first to raise any objection. What possible proof can be adduced that *ἀνόστιμος* was not in the living speech as well as *ἄνοστος*, in view of the frequency of *νόστιμος*? It seems to me that duplicate forms are far more likely to be found in a primitive language than in a literary one, in the early epic than in the refined Attic. Still we must fix reasonable limits: *ἐπιδίφρια* (o 51.75) may represent an original *ἐπὶ διφροο*, cf. ξ222 *δήμοο φήμης*: the curious forms *προσώπατα* and *προσώπασιν* are certainly unacceptable. In H 212 I would adopt *βλοσυρήσιν ὑπ' ὀφρύσιν* from O 608, cf. *Hymn. Dem.* 357-8. I have discussed σ 192 in *Homeric* pp. 318-21.

All scholars admit that the tradition contains many modifications, which the rhapsodists have adopted in order that both public and private recitations might, by a closer approximation to the familiar speech of the day, become more readily intelligible. This gradual infiltration of change was inevitable: it was bound to occur as an accompaniment to the change in the language that was made between the time of Homer and that, let us say, of Euripides. So we find *θάρσει*, 'Cheer up,' which everybody said, for *θάρσσει* which everybody had ceased to say. All that is in Homer is not Homeric: still less is all that is in Hesiod Hesiodic, for Hesiod never possessed the popularity or excited the enthusiastic admiration and reverence that attended the Homeric poems wherever Hellenic culture had a foothold. The great defect of this volume is that the author has never recognised this, as Wackernagel and others have done. It is mere paradox to say, as he does in his final sentence, that the chief alterations of the language of the epos were introduced before and not after Homer. If he has a copy of a pre-Homeric Homer in his pocket or in his head, he ought to produce it, but the result would be even more calamitous, I fear, than Fick's Aeolic attempt which he himself rejects.

To Bentley's discovery of the presence of the digamma, the most brilliant and progressive step ever taken in the criticism of the Homeric poems he

pays little heed. The chapter on *Vau* is quite perfunctory. *Vau*, he says, is a dead sound, and then again 'although it was sounded it was never written.' How does he know this? Good scholars, Cobet, Nauck, van Leeuwen, to say nothing of his own countrymen, have thought otherwise.

The audacity with which tradition occasionally maltreats good hexameter lines may be seen in the one (p. 42) quoted as Homer's on the authority of Athenaeus:

καλὴ Κασσιέπεια θεοῖς δέμας εἰκνύα.

Whether this be written by Homer or not, it should read thus:

καλὴ Κασσιέπεια δέμας εἰκνύα θεοῖσιν (-ῆσιν).

This is obvious *per se*, and even if there were a doubt, it would be removed by Θ 305. Similarly, transposition has affected θ 355 *ὑπὸ χρεῖος ἀλύξας, ἡ 270 ἦ ῥ' ἔτ' ἐμελλον οἰζυῖ ξυνέσεσθαι* v. p. 181. But Hesiod has fared worse in this respect—e.g. *Op.* 443:

ὅς κ' ἔργου μελετῶν θείαν ἀσλακ' ἐλαύνει.

This is an absolute outrage, violating grammar, meaning, and metre. It is made worse rather than better by moving *κ'* into an impossible position after *ἴθεταν* (Cod. I. Rzach):

ὅς κ' ἴθιν ἔργοιο μεληθεῖς ἀσλακ' ἐλαύνει

would serve every purpose. In Hes. *Catal.* 94, 33 read *εἶδος ἐς οὔτι ἰδὼν* sc. *εἰσιδὼν*. Similarly T 92 *ἐπ' οὔδας* | *πίλναται* sc. *ἐπιπίλναται*. In ξ 289 *ἀνθρώποισιν ἐώργει* grammar demands *ἀνθρώπους ἐώργει* as also μ 412 *κυβερνήτην*. ε 7 *πλησίσαι ἀλλήλησι* cf. β 149. Ψ 226 *ἦμος δ' ἀστὴρ εἰσι*, omitting the gloss. Ω 158 *ἀλλ' ἰκέταο μάλ' ἐνδυκέως*. I 319 *ἐν δέ τ' ἰῆ τιμῇ*, Hesiod *Theog.* 732 *Κρονίων*. What is Poseidon doing *dans cette galère*? B 475 For *μιγέωσι* write *μίγ' ἔωσι*, or omitting *κε*, *ἄμμιγ' ἔωσι*.

My space is now exhausted. I conclude by submitting what I will venture to call the solution of the perennial crux in Δ 146:

τοῖοι τοι, Μενέλαε, μᾶνθην αἵματι μηροῖ
εὐφύεες κνήμαί τε . . .

μᾶνθην is not, as the author here supposes (p. 36), a venture of the poet, because he was placed in a difficulty by *μῖανθεν*. Read:

τοῖόν τοι, Μενέλαε, μᾶνθης αἵματι μηρῷ
εὐφύεε κνήμα τε . . .

T. L. AGAR.