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Review of Homer in Print: A Catalogue of the Bibliotheca Homerica Langiana at the University of Chicago Library, edited by Glenn W. Most and Alice Schreyer

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Glenn W. Most, Alice D. Schreyer (ed.), *Homer in Print: A Catalogue of the Bibliotheca Homerica Langiana at the University of Chicago Library*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Pp. viii, 339. ISBN 9780943056418. \$55.00.

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M.C. Lang devoted much of his life to assembling a marvelous collection of Homeric, which he then donated to the University of Chicago Library; this is a catalogue of his collection. A rather charming introduction by Lang describes his motives and interests as a collector, as well as the nature of the Bibliotheca Homerica Langiana. The catalogue proper follows, with sections devoted to Greek editions (A); English translations (B); translations into other languages (C); scholarly works (D); and illustrations, facsimiles, and manuscripts (E). Essays by Glenn Most and David Wray on aspects of the history of the reception of Homer conclude the volume. There are many excellent illustrations scattered throughout the book.

Section A includes 33 editions of the Greek, chosen based on their significance. These range from Chalcondylas' *editio princeps* (1488) to Eduard Schwartz (1924). Annotations highlight the history and importance of each edition, with emphasis on its importance for the transmission and editing of the text, printing and publishing history, and the reception of Homer. They do not include the full title-page transcriptions, collations, and references to standard bibliographies that are typical of such catalogues, although there are occasional notes on special features of individual copies.¹ Each annotation includes a brief bibliography; these are generally useful although they sometimes have surprising omissions (noted at the end of the review).

Section B (English translations) is subdivided into complete works, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, partial translations, and retellings for children. Lang aimed at completeness in full translations of the epics into English; those few missing from the collection are listed on p. 16. Annotations discuss the accuracy, literary qualities, and critical reception of each, along with any significance for the history of printing and publishing. The bibliographies often include contemporary reviews as well as biographical references on translators. One especially useful feature is the inclusion of the first two lines of Homer from each English translation, so that readers can get a quick taste of each and readily compare one to another. Section C covers translations into other languages in much the same fashion, albeit much more selectively.

Most readers will find Section D (scholarship) the least satisfying. It is by far the most

selective, including only fifteen works that focus on the Homeric Question; these extend from the earliest printed edition of the scholia (1521) to Robinson Smith's *The Original Iliad* (1930). While Lang is certainly entitled to claim collector's privilege in this, many will miss their own favorite landmarks of Homeric scholarship. The most notable omission, Wolf's *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795) is pointed out, but not explained, in both the preface and introduction (vii, 12). Many other notable works of scholarship do make their appearance in the annotations throughout the catalogue, which together provide an opportunity to follow the development of scholarship over time. For example, Bentley's rediscovery of the digamma and its adoption in editions of Homer can be traced through the notes of A19, A23, A25, and A28. Section E completes the catalogue with two facsimiles, a collection of illustrations, and an eighteenth-century manuscript Latin translation of the *Iliad*.

Following the catalogue is Glenn Most's essay "A Shaggy-Dog Story: The Life, Death, and Afterlives of Odysseus's Trusty Dog Argus." After a modern reading of the story, Most traces references and interpretations from ancient times to the Renaissance. He concludes by looking at how several translations included in the Bibliotheca Homerica Langiana present the story: Chapman (B1), Ogilby (B47), Hobbes (B48), Pope (B49), and Voss (C13).

Last is an essay by David Wray, "Quarreling over Homer in France and England, 1711-1715." Wray examines the Homer Quarrel of those years, essentially an outgrowth of the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* (or Battle of the Books, as often styled in English, following Swift). Throughout he discusses the translations of the *Iliad* published in those years by Dacier (C5), Ozell (B8), de la Motte (C6), and Pope (B9).

There are some lapses, mostly bibliographical in nature. It is surprising that Philip H. Young's *The Printed Homer: A 3,000 Year Publishing and Translation History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003) is nowhere to be seen in the bibliographies. In general, the bibliographies include a generous sampling of standard reference works, although there are occasional oddities. As for histories of scholarship, Sandys is cited often, Wilamowitz rarely, Pfeiffer not at all. The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* is frequently cited for British scholars and translators, but the *American National Biography* is not, although it has relevant entries on such figures as Milman Parry (D14) and Richmond Lattimore (B37/B77). Some examples of works that might profitably have been consulted and other issues in individual entries follow. These are minor flaws in a very good book; I note them solely to direct interested readers to additional resources that they might otherwise miss.

A1 (Chalcondylas) Howard Jones, *Printing the Classical Text* ('t Goy-Houten: Hes & de Graaf, 2004) has much on early Greek printing and on this specific edition. While strictly speaking this is, indeed, "the first printed Homer," as claimed in the annotation (p. 19), it was preceded by an edition of the pseudo-Homeric *Batrachomyomachia* (Brescia, 1474), the first printed Greek text.

A2 (Aldus) Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979) is still the best general treatment of Aldus. Also, Nicolas Barker, *Aldus Manutius and the Development of Greek Type & Scripts in the Fifteenth Century*

(2nd ed., New York: Fordham University Press, 1992) represents a significant advance on the venerable works of Proctor and Scholderer that are cited in the entry.

B37/B77 (Lattimore) Hugh Lloyd Jones, “Welcome Homer,” *New York Review of Books* 38.4 (February 14, 1991) has many perceptive comments on Lattimore’s translations. [2](#)

B41/B74 (Fitzgerald) omits two notable interviews: Peter Geller, “What Appears to Be Impossible Is Always Tantalising,” *Harvard Magazine* 76.10 (June 1974): 40- 50, and Edwin Frank and Andrew McCord, “Robert Fitzgerald: The Art of Translation I,” *Paris Review* 26 (1984): 39-65.

B44/B83 (Fagles) omits a valuable interview: Patricia Storage, “Robert Fagles: The Art of Translation II” *Paris Review* 41 (1999): 142-164.

B69 (Lawrence) quotes several less than favorable reviews on Lawrence’s *Odyssey*, but might more effectively have mentioned some of the many misgivings Lawrence himself expressed about it in his letters, such as: “I have grave doubts about that book. The translation is too unfaithful, too deliberately unfaithful.”[3](#)

It has often been noted that the history of classical philology is largely coextensive with the history of the editing and reception of the Homeric epics.[4](#) Classicists will find that *Homer in Print* offers an inviting and enlightening excursion into the history and reception of Homeric epics and, by extension, into the broader history of their discipline. Bibliographers and book collectors will also find much of interest in its pages. Nor should either neglect the excellent associated online exhibit [Homer in Print](#).

Notes:

[1.](#) For an example of the more common approach, see Craig W. Kallendorf, *A Catalogue of the Junius Spencer Morgan Collection of Virgil in the Princeton University Library* (New Castle, DE.: Oak Knoll Press, 2009).

[2.](#) Reprinted as “Translating Homer” in Hugh Lloyd Jones, *Greek in a Cold Climate* (Savage, MD: Barnes and Noble, 1991), 1-17. The review is cited in the annotations to B45 (Reck) and B80 (Mandelbaum).

[3.](#) Malcolm Brown, ed., *T.E. Lawrence: The Selected Letters* (New York: Norton, 1989): 532-533. David Garnett’s *The Letters of T.E. Lawrence* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), the only edition cited in the bibliography of B69 lacks a number of relevant letters about Lawrence’s translation of the *Odyssey* that are found in later collections.

[4.](#) See most recently James I. Porter, “Homer, Skepticism, and the History of Philology,” in *Modernity’s Classics*, edited by Sarah G. Humphreys and Rudolf G. Wagner (Berlin: Springer, 2013), 261-292.

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