

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:FS 2014

Department:Classical Studies

Degree:PhD

Title:Homeric Constructions: The Reception of Homeric Authority

The purpose of this dissertation is to document the authority of the poems of Homer through the ancient Greek world, with a focus on understanding the changes that authority undergoes as Greek culture moves from being a primarily oral/aural culture to a literary culture. I divide this project into three chapters, Homer Preconstructed, Homer Constructed, and Homer Reconstructed. These sections follow the diachronic development of Homeric poetry and its reception by various stages of Greek culture. The first chapter, Homer Preconstructed, looks at the background upon which the poems of Homer were created. The second chapter, Homer Constructed, looks at the way the character of the oral poet is depicted in recorded Greek literature, starting with Homer and also referencing other early poetry such as Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, and the epic cycle. The third chapter follows this thread of tracing the influence of orality and specifically Homeric poetry throughout the recorded literature of ancient Greece, with a brief survey of the archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods.