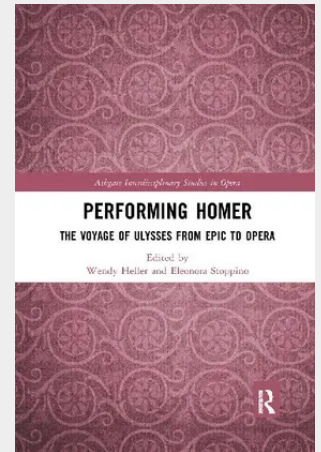


Performing Homer

The Voyage of Ulysses from Epic to Opera

The epic poems the Iliad and the Odyssey, attributed to Homer, are among the oldest surviving works of literature derived from oral performance. Deeply embedded in these works is the notion that they were intended to be heard: there is something musical about Homer's use of language and a vivid quality to his images that transcends the written page to create a theatrical experience for the listener. Indeed, it is precisely the theatrical quality of the poems that would inspire later interpreters to cast the Odyssey and the Iliad in a host of other media—novels, plays, poems, paintings, and even that most elaborate of all art forms, opera, exemplified by no less a work than Monteverdi's *Il ritorno di Ulisse in patria*. In *Performing Homer: The Voyage of Ulysses from Epic to Opera*, scholars in classics, drama, Italian literature, art history, and musicology explore the journey of Homer's Odyssey from ancient to modern times. The book traces the reception of the Odyssey through the Italian humanist sources—from Dante, Petrarch, and Ariosto—to the treatment of the tale not only by Monteverdi but also such composers as Elizabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, Gluck, and Alessandro Scarlatti, and the dramatic and poetic traditions thereafter by such modern writers as Derek Walcott and Margaret Atwood.

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