between Psellos and Kydones themselves, both similarities and differences. Presumably this is where the chapter on Theodore the Studite should have been; it's very disappointing it's not here, for the critical ninth century deserves more representation.

Part 3 has a whopping ten chapters, each on a discrete aspect of epistolography: rhetoric (Sofia Kotzabassi), diplomatics (Alexander Beihammer), didacticism (Leonte again), philosophy (Divna Manolova), friendship (Emmanuel C. Bourbouhakis), rituals and codes (Bernard again), the self (Stratis Papaioannou), the *theatron* (Niels Gaul), letters and letter exchange in art (Cecily J. Hilsdale, focusing on the Madrid Skylitzes, the Alexander Romance in Venice and the Vatican *Epithalamion*) and letters in narrative literature (Carolina Cupane, focusing on Byzantine romances but providing a useful summary of letters within historiography too, although chronicles get short shrift). All of these make thoughtful and engaging contributions, and as the volume progresses there are rewarding overlaps and echoes. Once again the volume is most illuminating when specific examples are brought into play, such as Anna Komnene on the letter of Alexios I Komnenos to Henry IV of Germany (214), Nikephoreos Gregoras' letter to Helena Kantakouzene Pailaiologina (265–66), Psellos on the public reading of the letter of Pothos to the emperor (321–22, 361–62) and Manuel II Palaiologos on the reading of a letter at a *theatron* (353). Especially arresting is John Mauropous comparing the black ink and white paper of a letter to the contrasting colours of a swallow (186, 317). More on erotic discourse (345) would have been welcome.

Part 4 consists of two chapters. Johannes Preiser-Kapeller demonstrates the value of quantitative network analysis through the case of the letters of Theophylact of Ohrid. The final chapter by Riehle proves to be the most radical in the volume, essentially challenging some of what has gone before. Via reflection on editorial practices, he comes to the question of the production of letter collections and, given the editing and revision of the letters that could occur, he suggests the abandonment of '"documentary" readings of individual letters in favor of interpretations of letter-*collections* as they survive in the manuscripts' (490).

Overall, the volume reveals how far we have come from older negative views about Byzantine literature (especially delightful are the observations of Bourbouhakis on Michael Italikos' playful engagement with the discourse of friendship, 300) but also how much remains to be done. Many of the contributions reference fundamental work on Byzantine letters already produced, such as by Peter Hatlie ('Redeeming Byzantine Epistolography', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 20 (1996), 213–48) and Margaret Mullett (*Theophylact of Ochrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (Aldershot 1997)), but acknowledge that further substantial studies are required. While not exhaustive this companion serves as a highly useful and stimulating staging post.

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RILEY (K.) **Imagining Ithaca: *Nostos* and Nostalgia since the Great War**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. xiii + 331. £30. 9780198852971.
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The classicist Richard Bentley famously called Pope's *Iliad* 'a pretty poem … but you must not call it Homer'. Similarly, *Imagining Ithaca* is charming and intelligent but rarely a book about the *Odyssey* or 'the ancient Greek idea of *nostos*' (1). Rather, Kathleen Riley is interested in different expressions of nostalgia across various case studies, *some* of which have a textual link to Homeric epic or classics more broadly. Riley's frequent use of the adjective

'Ithacan' is made to carry far too much weight and becomes ultimately meaningless, except as a synonym for 'nostalgic'. This is a very good thematic study; it is just not the book its title promises it to be.

Imagining Ithaca covers an array of literary mediums and some interesting choices have been made as to what to include. Obvious modern receptions of the *Odyssey* (*O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, etc.) are not directly discussed but I didn't particularly miss them. Running to 19 chapters plus introduction and afterword, Riley's book is expansive and precludes a chapter-by-chapter summary. She approaches one or two texts per chapter, adopting a case-study approach, though she usually enters each at a slant. So in Chapter 11, which looks at Carson McCullers' 'Look homeward, Americans' (1940), she brings in several other voices to elucidate her reading of the core text, among them F. Scott Fitzgerald, Georgia O'Keefe and Frank Sinatra. The book therefore discusses far more texts than expected. Given this, Riley has done an excellent job of making her work so readable.

Chapter 17, the longest and clearly most personal to its author, is devoted to Michael Portillo's *Great Railway Journeys*, though really, most of the chapter provides a biography of Michael's father, the Spanish poet Luis Portillo, loosely justified by painting Michael as a Telemachean figure. Its central argument is that Luis' 'Salamanca was his Ithaca, invaded by Barbarian suitors in the form of Franco's Falangists, its resilient beauty tenderly preserved … in his exilic verses, the *tristia*' (246). But Luis Portillo's life story has nothing to do with the *Odyssey*, and the younger Portillo is as far from an epic figure as one can really imagine. Riley's Odyssean metaphor is poignant, but unconvincing. The metaphors are not even consistent: is Luis Odysseus or Ovid writing exilic poetry?

Riley's tendency to reframe every *nostos* or nostalgia story as Odyssean becomes problematic in Chapter 12: 'Doris Pilkington Garimara's *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence* (1996)'. In the book, based closely on a true story, a band of mixed-race Indigenous Australian children have been separated from their families and isolated in the brutal conditions of a re-education camp. They escape and undertake a gruelling homecoming. It speaks to the enduring legacy of colonialism and racial injustice in Australia, a dark legacy that Riley outlines in uncompromising detail. Given this, however, it feels inappropriate to present *Rabbit-Proof Fence* as yet another reframing of the *Odyssey* without textual evidence. Surviving colonialism isn't just a discursive retelling of an ancient Western narrative. A real strength of Riley's book is the diverse range of case studies she has selected, but this one could have been handled more sensitively. Likewise, in Chapter 7, on Tamar Yellin's short story 'Return to Zion' (2006), Riley notes that there is a 'Jewish tradition of *nostos*' (100) but does not reflect upon what this means for her 'Ithacan' interpretation of Yellin's work.

Conversely, the stand-out chapter is Chapter 18, in which Riley explores the poetry of Seamus Heaney, demonstrating how the themes of nostalgia, *katabasis* and *pietas* ring out through his work like leitmotifs. Here, Riley is able to set aside Odyssean comparisons except where relevant. Rather, she notes, 'Heaney's late poetry … is permeated by the theme of nostalgic descent and expressive of a filial odyssey that has Aeneas rather than Telemachus as its direct paradigm' (253). Chapters where Riley is able to identify more than a thematic link to Homer are also strong: chapters 1, 3, 6 and 19 do this well.

Each of Riley's chapters is well presented, though the parts are definitely greater than the whole. There is no connection between individual chapters, and I found the six sections into which Riley breaks up her study to be fairly loose groupings. Riley makes minimalist use of scholarship, preferring to let the texts she is discussing speak for themselves. It works well for the kind of book she has written.

In *Imagining Ithaca*, Riley responds to her source texts sensitively and intelligently, and guides us through a dazzling number of intertexts. The book will be immensely useful to anyone studying any of the texts Riley has focussed on, or nostalgia more broadly. But because her discursive hook does not properly work to tie each case study together,

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Odysseus is somewhat lost at sea. That will, unfortunately, limit the book's usefulness to classicists and classical receptionists.

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SCHEIN (S.) **Homer: *Iliad*, Book I.** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. xiii + 242. £19.99. 9781108412964.
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This is an admirable addition to the 'Green and Yellow' series. The 60 introductory pages cover a range of 'Homeric Questions' with great breadth and yet economy. We get a clear discussion of the combination of Bronze and Iron Age features, the arguments for an eighth-century date (though not all those for the seventh are discussed), the relationships of the poem to *Gilgamesh* and of its structure to contemporary art. The centrality to the *Iliad* of the major themes of Book 1, mortality and honour, is made clear. The 'Plan of Zeus' is best understood as 'several complementary plans with overlapping goals' (13): fulfilling his promise to Thetis, relieving Earth of its excessive population and the destruction of Troy. Such ambiguity is a sensible reading, though one wonders about the destruction of Troy, given Zeus's reluctance about it (4.43, etc.). The main characters are neatly summarized: notable are the sensitive characterizations of Thetis, as one once with cosmic power but now almost human in her sadness, and of Briseis, who illustrates the realities of war for female captives through the slaughter of her family and the sympathy of Patroclus. The relationships between gods and humans are well handled, though more might have been said about the conflicts between deities announced in this book.

The section on metre is more taxing, but the positioning of words in the line and the significance of unusual positioning and enjambement are important features of the commentary. Also notable is the close relationship shown between colometry (the differing views well explained), language and style. The section on dialect is admirably clear, and the list of morphological features and syntax is crisp and digestible. Good too is the section on Milman Parry's theories about formulae and their subsequent revisions, though those who earlier developed the connection between formulae and orality, like G. Hermann, J.E. Ellendt and H. Düntzer, might have been mentioned.

The commentary is very well focused, economically presented and full of perceptive readings. Translation, interpretation, colometry and discussion of textual questions are all well blended. Students might, however, have wished for translation of more of the illustrative passages. Much emphasis is placed on the positioning of formulaic and other phrases, though one sometimes wonders whether audiences would have picked up (at least consciously) some of the unusual ones, as say in 74–75n., where 'for the first time in the poem, a verb at the end of one line has the first word of the next line as its direct object', or 89n. where 'the distinctive location of κοίλησι ('hollow') here and κοίλησιν in line 26 suggests that Achilles, in reassuring one priest, may allude specifically to Agamemnon's threat against another'. Such cases are not common, however. Much help is given on unfamiliar morphology and syntax, but when syntactical points are explained it is not just for their own sake but to indicate what they contribute to the passage, so a good sense of Homeric style results as well as grammatical knowledge.