

Louden, Bruce. **The *Iliad*: Structure, Myth, and Meaning**. Johns Hopkins, 2006. 337p bibl index afp ISBN 0-8018-8280-X, \$55.00. Reviewed in 2006nov CHOICE.

Louden (Univ. of Texas, El Paso) addresses two key concerns of current literary criticism of Homer's *Iliad*: structure (in this case, large scale) and Near Eastern parallels. In the first four chapters, the author employs the same analytic techniques he used in *The Odyssey: Structure, Narrative, and Meaning* (CH, Nov'99, 37-1378). Here he explicates an "extended narrative pattern" in three sequences (books 4-7; 8, 11-17; 20-24), together with introductory patterns in books 1-2, 9-10, and 18-19. This dominant pattern centers on the *aristeiai* of Diomedes and Akhilleus and the duels of Hektor with Aias and Akhilleus. Loudon takes a different tack in chapters 5-7, focusing on Near Eastern, specifically Old Testament, parallels to Homeric themes. For example, he shows that siege narratives form a common "subgenre of myth" in both traditions. He also looks at mortals' misconduct (and its consequences) and the arraying of deities in an "epic triangle" around the heroic figure (adducing here Canaanite/Ugaritic myth underlying Old Testament narrative). Though the two halves of his book are not coordinated, Loudon's many useful insights into major narrative themes in the *Iliad* compensate for that lack of cohesion.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.

— J. P. Holoka, Eastern Michigan University