

Reading Epic: An Introduction to the Ancient Narratives

By Peter Toohey

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Individual epics have been catered for by many fine scholarly books. However, few of these are easily ever accessible to the student of ancient literature in translation or to the general reader. Such readers ususally lack the languages and familiarity with the major intellectual and historical trends of antiquity. This book addressses the needs of these readers. Peter Toohey surveys all the major classical epics: he begins with Homer and concludes with an overview of the development of late ancient epic and of the interface between epic and the novel. "Reading Epic" offers an interpretation of the "meaning" (not simply a description of the story) of these poems within the likely intellectual constrains of the era in which they were written, in most cases these readings are provided within the format of interpretative paraphrase. The intention is to help new readers with the story and with its ideas at the same time. Dr Toohey's readings thus provide clear and reliable introductions to the central Greek and Latin epics, and to the genre as a whole. At the same time they act as a suggestive and, sometimes, provocative starting point.

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Peter Toohey is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Classics at the University of New England, Australia.

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