

Taking Her Seriously



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" Heitman] provides a sensitive critical study of the "Odyssey" in which he strives to better appreciate the poem by focusing on the familial interactions in Ithaca . . . Heitman's interpretations . . . are unfailingly clear and thought-provoking. Highly recommended." ---"Choice" "It is an example of a neat and valuable contribution which is both intelligible to non-specialists and inspiring for psychologists and classicists. It demonstrates that research into Homer still is . . . capable of extracting ever-new exciting ideas from Homer's texts." ---"Bryn Mawr Classical Review" "Taking Her Seriously" is a reevaluation of Penelope, one of the most universally admired female characters in Western classical literature. Casting her in a new light, Richard Heitman emphasizes the courage, steadfastness, and integrity of this iconic figure while she faces potentially tragic decisions. Homer's treatment of events in Ithaca and the motivations of Penelope throughout the denser books of the "Odyssey" reveals a complicated, serious, independent, and insightful thinker whose actions are crucial to guaranteeing the well-being of her home and a safe future for her son, and for Odysseus as well. Through this thematic approach to the text, Penelope comes into focus as a loving wife whose role is far more important than passive fidelity to a wandering husband. Her integrity and wisdom in Odysseus' absence set the stage for his violent and triumphant return, and secure her place as a female role model in even the most modern of contexts. Richard Heitman is Assistant Professor of Classics and Philosophy at Carthage College.

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