

THE UNKNOWN ODYSSEUS

ALTERNATE WORLDS IN HOMER'S ODYSSEY

The Unknown Odysseus is a study of how Homer creates two versions of his hero, one who is the triumphant protagonist of the revenge plot and another, more subversive, anonymous figure whose various personae exemplify an entirely different set of assumptions about the world through which each hero moves and about the shape and meaning of human life. Separating the two perspectives allows us to see more clearly how the poem's dual focus can begin to explain some of the notorious difficulties readers have encountered in thinking about the *Odyssey*. In *The Unknown Odysseus*, Thomas Van Nortwick offers the most complete exploration to date of the implications of Odysseus' divided nature, showing how it allows Homer to explore the riddles of human identity in a profound way that is not usually recognized by studies focusing on only one "real" hero in the narrative. This new perspective on the epic enriches the world of the poem in a way that will interest both general readers and classical scholars.

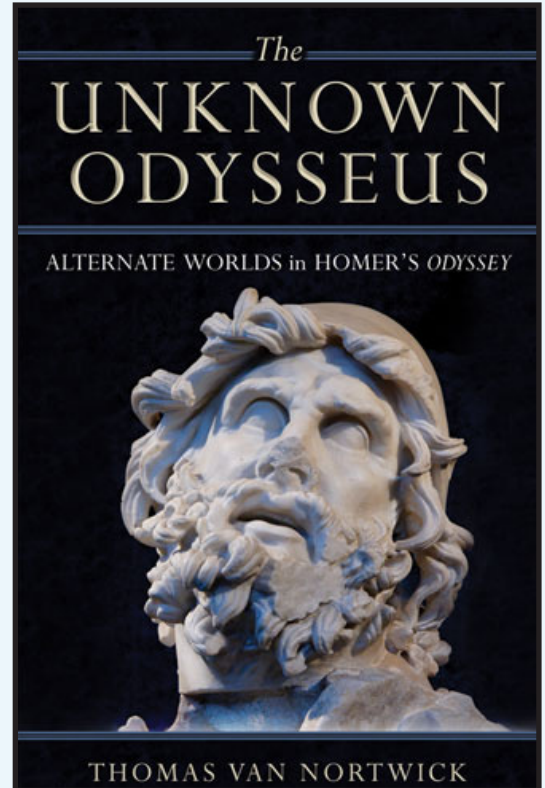
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"Thomas Van Nortwick's eloquently written book will give the neophyte a clear interpretive path through the epic while reminding experienced readers why they should still care about the *Odyssey's* unresolved interpretive cruxes. *The Unknown Odysseus* is not merely accessible, but a true pleasure to read."

---Lillian Doherty, University of Maryland

THOMAS VAN NORTWICK is Nathan A. Greenberg Professor of Classics at Oberlin College and author of *Somewhere I Have Never Travelled: The Second Self and the Hero's Journey in Ancient Epic* (1992) and *Oedipus: The Meaning of a Masculine Life* (1998).



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