

Almog

The Origins of the Law in Homer

The Iliad and the Odyssey as Legal Narratives

The book aims to introduce the Homeric oeuvre into the law and literature canon. It argues for a reading of Homer's The Iliad and The Odyssey as primordial narratives on the significance of the rule of law. The book delineates moments of correspondence between the transition from myth to tragedy and the gradual transition from a social existence lacking formal law to an institutionalized legal system as practiced in the polis. It suggests the Homeric epics are a significant milestone in the way justice and injustice were conceptualized, and testify to a growing awareness in Homer's time that mechanisms that protect both individuals and the collective from acts of unbridled rage are necessary for the continued existence of communities. The book fills a considerable gap in research on ancient Greek drama as well as in discourses about the intersections of law and literature and by doing so, offers new insights into two of the foundational texts of Western culture.

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