

Richmond Lattimore's
Introduction

THE ILIAD OF HOMER

Richmond Lattimore's introduction to his translation of *The Iliad of Homer* appeared in editions published from 1951 to 2011. This PDF was scanned from the first impression of the 1962 illustrated edition (with drawings by Leonard Baskin). ©1951 by The University of Chicago.

INTRODUCTION

I HAVE tried in this introduction to put before the reader the information that will help him to a more complete understanding of the translation. 'Information', though, if it concerns Homer, means controversy; so I have had to cut a rather sweeping path through a mass of difficult or insoluble problems, working from the text and not from the literature on the subject. The exposition will of course not have the authority of a properly documented monograph. Some of my interpretations I should like, in some more appropriate place, to elaborate and defend. Still, all this aside, the introduction represents the translator's ideas about the *Iliad*.

Even a select bibliography is, accordingly, not called for here, but I may mention a few works, some of which I have referred to briefly in the following pages, which will be particularly helpful to the general student:

T. W. ALLEN: *Homer: Origins and Transmissions*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924.

S. E. BASSETT: *The Poetry of Homer*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1938.

C. M. BOWRA: *Tradition and Design in the Iliad*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1930.

From Virgil to Milton, London, Macmillan, 1945.

RHYS CARPENTER: *Folk Tale, Fiction, and Saga in the Homeric Epics*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1946.

E. DRERUP: *Homerische Poetik: Das Homerproblem in der Gegenwart*, Würzburg, 1921. (This is the authoritative account of Homeric theory and controversy up to the time of its publication.)

- H. G. EVELYN-WHITE: *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, and Homeric*, London and Cambridge, Mass., Heinemann and Harvard University Press, revised edition 1936. (The Loeb edition of Hesiod and the fragments of the Epic Cycle, Greek text with English translation.)
- GILBERT MURRAY: *The Rise of the Greek Epic*, Oxford University Press and London, Humphrey Milford, fourth edition 1934.
- J. A. SCOTT: *The Unity of Homer*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1921.
- A. SHEWAN: *Homeric Essays*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1935.

THE STORY OF THE FALL OF TROY

The Greeks of the post-Homeric period, the 'classical' Greeks and their successors, that is, those Greeks who were literate and have left articulate records of their beliefs, considered that one of the episodes in the early history of their own race was the Trojan War. As to the details of this war, as to the interpretation of its causes and its meaning, there might be disagreement; but for most persons at least, it was a piece of history, not a piece of legend or myth; and the main characters and the essential course of events were matters of general agreement.

This essential story may be summarized as follows: Paris, also called Alexandros, was the son of Priam, who was King of Troy, a city in the north-west corner of Asia Minor. Paris on an overseas voyage was entertained by Menelaos in Sparta, and from there carried away, with her full consent, Helen, the wife of Menelaos. He took her back with him to Troy, where she lived with him as his wife. The princes of Greece thereupon raised a force of a thousand or more ships, manned by fighters, with a view to forcing the return of Helen. The armada was led by Agamemnon, elder brother of Menelaos, the King of Mykenai; it included many lords or kings from the Peloponnese, Central Greece, Thessaly, and certain islands, and each prince personally led his own following. The fleet assembled at Aulis in Boiotia and made for Troy. There the Greeks landed after a fight, but were unable to take the city. For nine years they remained before Troy, keeping the Trojans on the defensive, and storming and plundering various places in the vicinity. In the tenth year, Agamemnon, the most powerful chief, quarrelled with Achilleus, his most

powerful fighting man. Achilles withdrew from the fighting, and kept his followers idle as well. In his absence, the Trojans, led by Hektor (a son of Priam and brother of Paris), temporarily got the better of their enemies and threatened to destroy the ships. Achilles returned to the fighting, killed Hektor and routed the Trojans. Achilles himself fell soon afterwards, but his death did not save Troy, which was presently taken. Most of the defenders were killed, the non-combatant population was carried into slavery, and the kingdom of Troy was obliterated. The lords of Greece made their way back, beset by weather, quarrels, and the hostility of those they had left at home years before. The destruction of Troy was brought about by the design and will of the gods.

Such is the basic story of Troy: and I call it 'basic' because, while further details or episodes *may* have found universal acceptance *later*, all Greek writers so far as we know accepted *at least* so much.

THE HOMERIC POEMS

The story outlined above derives its authority from the fact that everything in it is contained in the Iliad or the Odyssey of Homer. The Greeks regarded Homer as their first, and greatest, poet. They might speak of other names which pretended to greater antiquity, but they had no text to quote. For Homer they did. The Iliad and the Odyssey were unequivocally ascribed to him; other epics more doubtfully, as, for instance, 'the *Sack of Troy*, by Homer or Arktinos'.¹ For the Iliad and Odyssey, full and reasonably sound texts were available from at least the end of the sixth century B.C.; possibly, and I would say probably, from long before that.² Side by side with the transcription and dissemination of written texts went dissemination through recital, the business of professional reciters and interpreters of Homer, called rhapsodes.

At any rate, Homer, for the Greeks, stood at the head of their literary tradition. All knew him, few challenged his greatness. Hesiod, alone of the

¹ To be discussed a little later.

² There is considerable late evidence for some sort of editorial work performed at Athens in the time of Peisistratos, who was tyrant from 560 to 528 B.C. The tradition is, however, confused, and the pieces of evidence frequently contradict each other. For a statement of the evidence see Allen, pp. 225-48. It is quite possible that the text was edited at Athens in the time of Peisistratos; that this text was the original transcription seems to me very unlikely.

poets who have survived in more than name, was sometimes thought of as his contemporary and his equal; but Hesiod was far less widely quoted.

Of the two great Homeric epics, the *Iliad* deals with the story of Troy, the *Odyssey* with the homecoming of the Greek heroes after the capture of the city: in particular, the homecoming of Odysseus, the adventures, temptations, and dangers he went through before he made his way back to Ithaca and restored order in his own house. It thus concerns itself with heroic material chronologically later than that of the *Iliad*; and it has usually, in antiquity as in modern times, been thought of as the later of the two compositions.

THE STORY IN THE ILIAD

The *Iliad* is a poem of 15,693 lines, written in dactylic hexameter. It has been divided, as has the *Odyssey*, into twenty-four books, which range in length from 424 to 909 lines. This division was made long after, not only the first written version of the *Iliad*, but long after the time of Plato, perhaps early in the third century B.C. But the division was made well, the terminations mark clear and crucial points in the narrative, and the book numbers are regularly used in modern editions of the text.

The contents of the *Iliad* are as follows. Chryses, priest of Apollo in Chryse, a small place near Troy, comes to the camp of the Greeks to ask for the return of his daughter, Chryseis, who has been captured and allotted to Agamemnon as his concubine. Agamemnon refuses, and Chryses prays to Apollo to avenge him. Apollo inflicts a plague upon the Greeks. When there is no end in sight and the people are dying, Achilles calls an assembly of the chiefs to consider what can be done. With the support and encouragement of Achilles, Kalchas the soothsayer explains the wrath of Apollo. Agamemnon, though angry, agrees to give the girl back and propitiate the god, but demands that some other leader give up his mistress to him, in place of Chryseis. When Achilles opposes this demand, Agamemnon takes away Briseis, the concubine of Achilles. Achilles does two things. He withdraws himself and all his men from the fighting; and he prays to his mother, Thetis, a divinity of the sea, that she will use her influence with Zeus and the Olympians to see that the Achaians are defeated in his absence, so that they may learn how necessary he has been to their fortunes, and so that Agamemnon in particular must realize

what a man he has dishonoured. Thetis communicates her son's prayer to Zeus, who reluctantly promises to carry out the wish of Achilleus.

Such is the situation at the end of the first book, and from the quarrel here set forth the rest of the action is generated. In the second book, Agamemnon's army, with Achilleus missing, is after some delays and confusion marshalled and set in motion against the Trojans. A day of fighting on which fortunes vary opens with an indecisive duel between Menelaos and Paris in Book 3 and closes with an indecisive duel between Aias and Hektor in Book 7. But the Greeks are sufficiently shaken to take advantage, during a truce, of the opportunity to build a wall, which will defend their camp and their ships.

On the next day of fighting, the Trojans with the assistance of Zeus gain the upper hand, and by the end of the day (end of Book 8) they are encamped on the plain, confident that next day they can storm the defences of their enemies and sweep them into the sea. Agamemnon and his chief men are correspondingly discouraged and fearful. Before his assembled council, Agamemnon acknowledges his own fault in the quarrel with Achilleus. He proposes to give back Briseis, whom he swears he has never touched, and to offer many other gifts and honours as well, if Achilleus will come back. Odysseus, Aias, and Phoinix convey this message to Achilleus, who greets them and entertains them as friends, but is still too angry to accept. The account of these dealings takes up the ninth book. The tenth is devoted to a scouting expedition undertaken by Odysseus and Diomedes, which is represented as taking place on the same night as the embassy to Achilleus.

Book 11 opens a great and eventful day of fighting, which does not end until Book 18. The Achaians begin well, but one after another the great champions are disabled (Agamemnon, Diomedes, Odysseus, as well as Eurypylos and Machaon) until Aias is the only Greek of the first rank left in the field. The Trojans drive the Achaians back and Hektor smashes in the gate of the wall, and leads the attack until the Achaians are fighting to save their ships from destruction. Hektor calls for fire, and sets one ship ablaze, but now a new turn occurs and the Greeks are unexpectedly rescued. Achilleus, while still keeping out of the fight, has been watching it, and his dearest friend, Patroklos, has become increasingly distressed and alarmed for the sake of the whole army. He persuades Achilleus to lend him his armour and his men and let him go into battle to save the ships (beginning of Book 16).

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Patroklos is fresh and eager, and wears the superior armour of Achilles. His Myrmidons are rested and spoiling for a fight. But the Trojans have fought all day and are battle-weary, nor are they sure that the newcomer is not Achilles himself (p. 337). They break, and are swept back on their city wall. Patroklos performs enormous exploits until at last, taken at a disadvantage, he is killed by Hektor. The fighting turns in favour of the Trojans once more. Hektor captures the armour of Achilles from the corpse of Patroklos, but the Achaians rescue the body itself. That is all they can do; by the end of Book 17 they are in full retreat.

But by now Achilles has heard the news. Shocked and furious as he is, he cannot go at once into battle, for he has no armour. But the gods transfigure him, and by merely showing himself and shouting his war cry he turns back the Trojans, and the Achaians escape. The day's fighting is over. Hephaistos, at the asking of Thetis, forges new, immortal armour for Achilles. Next day Achilles calls an assembly of the Achaians and declares the end of his quarrel with Agamemnon and his return to battle. The armies encounter. Achilles leads the attack, slaughters many, and at last drives the main body of the Trojans inside their walls. Hektor refuses to take refuge and awaits Achilles. At the last moment, his nerve fails and he runs, with Achilles in pursuit. The gods agree that Hektor must not escape, and Athene tricks him into standing his ground. Hektor goes down fighting, is stripped and dragged by the heels from Achilles' chariot to the ships.

Such is the position at the end of Book 22. The fighting of the Iliad is over, but the two great dead men, Patroklos and Hektor, still lie unburied. Patroklos is burned and buried with much ceremony and sacrifice, and elaborate games are held in his honour. These events occupy Book 23. Meanwhile, Hektor's corpse has been shamefully treated, but the gods defend it from harm. Priam, guided by Hermes, goes to the shelter of Achilles at night to ask for the return of his son's body. Achilles pities the old man, and gives it back; and the Iliad ends with the burial of Hektor by the Trojans.

THE ILIAD AND THE STORY OF TROY

If we now measure the story of the Iliad against the entire story of the Fall of Troy, as it was outlined above, we can at once see important

differences. The Iliad is not the story of Troy. Neither the beginning nor the end of the war is narrated in the Iliad. We begin in the tenth year of the siege (p. 79) and we end, some weeks later, still in the tenth year, with the city still untaken. Moreover, the main plot of the Iliad is something narrower than would be the chronicle of a piece out of the siege-time. It is the story of Achilleus; or more precisely, it is, as has been frequently seen, the tragedy of Achilleus, which develops through his quarrel with Agamemnon and withdrawal from battle, the sufferings of the Greeks in his absence, the death of Patroklos who tried to rescue the Greeks from the plight into which Achilleus had put them, and the vengeance taken by Achilleus on Hektor, who killed Patroklos. This is not chronicle but tragedy, with beginning, middle, and end. It is the story of a great man who through a fault in an otherwise noble character (and even the fault is noble) brings disaster upon himself, since the death of Patroklos is the work of free choice on the part of Achilleus, and the anger of Achilleus, turned first against Agamemnon, then against Hektor, is at last resolved in a grudging forgiveness when the body of Hektor is given back to the Trojans. This, not the fall of Troy, closes the story. In fact, Achilleus did not, in the Iliad or anywhere else, take Troy; he died first, but his death is not told in the Iliad, though it is foreseen.¹ The fighting during the absence of Achilleus is not ordinary fighting such as we are to understand took place continually during the ten years' siege, but an extraordinary counter-attack by the Trojans which could be made only in the absence of Achilleus.²

So the Iliad is the story of Achilleus. But it cannot be completely torn loose from the story of Troy, or of Achaians and Trojans. There is much in the Iliad that has nothing to do with Achilleus. Furthermore, his personal actions have effects which go beyond his own story or his own aims. In avenging Patroklos, he saves the Greeks. In killing Hektor, he dooms Troy.

Further: granted that the Iliad does not tell the story of Troy, there must have been some previous account, or more than one such account, that did. The Iliad is a work of art evolved within the scope of a chronicle; it is not the chronicle itself.

¹ Pp. 377, 444, and elsewhere.

² This is made plain by Homer, Iliad, p. 207. See also the speech of Poulydamas, p. 382.

THE RELATIVE DATE OF HOMER

This can be seen most clearly if we consider the chronological relation between Homer and his material, i.e. the Trojan War. Greek historians were at their weakest when it came to chronology, yet the tradition seems good enough for our purposes. A group of dates is given by Greek authors for the fall of Troy, and the dates range from 1334 B.C. to 1150 B.C. The most noteworthy are Eratosthenes' 1184 B.C., which has prevailed as the 'traditional date'; and Herodotus' (2. 145) approximate date of 1250 B.C. All these dates are approximations based on genealogical material. We do not know which date is right, if any one is. We do not, for that matter, know whether there was a Trojan War.¹ But we can see where tradition put it. When we consider the evidence for Homer's date, we find a more drastic set of variations. Some thought him a contemporary of the events he chronicled, others made him active sixty, or a hundred, or more, years later. Herodotus (2. 53) put him '400 years before my own time, at the most', that is, about 850 B.C.²

This Herodotean date may thus appear to be 'minimal', that is, the latest we can accept. Actually, it is more likely to be maximal. Homer could not have lived at, or very near, the time of the events he tells about. For one thing, he himself makes it quite plain that what he speaks of happened long ago, when men were different from the men of his own age, and could lift easily weights no two men now could lift (p. 270 and elsewhere). Such, too, is the drift of his appeal to the remembering Muses, who must bring to life what must otherwise be a rumour confused in time (p. 89). But further: between the time of Homer's story and the time of Homer, Greek legend, which must, however confusedly, perpetuate historical fact, has placed two great events: the Dorian invasion and the Ionian colonization. The Trojan War came before these; Homer came after.

According to the tradition, upheavals and mass rival migrations followed the Trojan War. New tribes pushed into Greece, driving out or overwhelming old ones. A race of invaders called Thessalians occupied Thessaly, and dislodged the Boiotians; these in turn occupied the territory of the Kadmeians, thereafter called Boiotia. Dorians, in conjunction with

¹ But something happened which gave rise to the legend, however remote the legend may be from historical fact.

² See Allen, 11-41, with data on the life of Homer tabulated, p. 32.

the Herakleidai (the 'sons of Herakles'), came from the north to win Sparta, Messenia, Argos, and other places in the Peloponnese. Whether these movements were sudden or gradual we do not always know. There is much evidence that the newcomers sometimes established themselves by way of peaceful compromise rather than outright conquest. But establish themselves they did. The result was a further series of dislocations and migrations, of which the most significant for our purposes was the occupation of the coast of Asia Minor and the adjacent islands by Hellenes. The most important of these Hellenic groups were called Ionians and Aiolians. They came from Thessaly, Boiotia, and the Peloponnese, those areas where the invasions had taken place.

We do not know where Homer was born any more than we know when he was born. We do not know whether he was an Ionian or an Aiolian; Chios and Smyrna, where the two strains are hardest to separate, have the strongest claims on him. But of one thing we can, I think, be sure. He was born on or near the coast of Asia Minor. Homer, therefore, comes after the Ionian migration; the Ionian migration comes after the Dorian invasion; and the Dorian invasion comes after the Trojan War. Regardless of dates, the relative sequence is secure.

But the *Iliad* is pre-Dorian. Homer, himself an Asiatic Greek, deals with an age when there were no Greeks in Asia. The people of what in his day were Ionia and Aiolia fight in the *Iliad* on the side of Troy. Miletos is in the hands of 'the Karians of the outland speech' (p. 99). Homer does not call the men of Greece Greeks (*Graikoi*) as we do, nor again Hellenes, as they called themselves.¹ He calls them Achaians, Argives, and Danaans. His Argives are not necessarily from what was later Argos, nor are his Achaians necessarily from what was later Achaia; they, like the Danaans, are just 'Greeks'. He avoids the term 'Dorians', which appears once in the *Odyssey* (19. 177); and he avoids 'Thessalians'. The term *Hellene* is closely associated with the term *Dorian*. Its opposites, *Pelasgian*, *Karian*, and *barbarian*, he knows also, but regularly avoids them.

The conclusion is, I think, quite clear. Homer knew—how could he help it?—that the Dorians and the others had come and driven his people

¹ He does use, sparingly, the terms *Hellas*, *Hellenes*, *Panhellenes*. These terms seem, with the exception of one phrase found in the *Odyssey*, to be used of a particular locality, Achilles' country, Phthia in Thessaly, rather than of all Greece. Anachronisms and mistakes are possible, though, here as elsewhere.

across the water to Asia. But he ignored this, because he went back to an age generations before, when the ancestors of his audience, doubtless his own ancestors as well, were lords of Greece and went to Asia not as fugitives to colonize but as raiders to harry and destroy. He betrays himself now and again through anachronisms, but he is trying to reconstruct the remote past.

We have not, it is true, emerged from these considerations with a positive date for Homer. All we have is relative, attached to the date of the Trojan War, a date which itself cannot be fixed. We have, though, established that a considerable stretch of time elapsed between the date of Homer and the period he chose to describe. And I hope that we thus dispose of any proposal to put him back in the immediate neighbourhood of the Trojan War. Herodotus' 850 B.C. is certainly in better case than it first appeared to be, and it may be that we can find some help at the other end, counting not forward to Homer but back to Homer. But first, we should go back to the problem that led us into this chronological consideration, that is, the problem of Homer's relation to his material.

THE RELATION OF HOMER TO HIS MATERIAL

At the near end, we have the finished product, our Iliad. What do we have at the far end? Plainly, the historical counterpart of the fictitious Trojan War. This war may not have been much like what we hear about; it may not have been a ten years' war, it may not have been pan-Achaian in scale, it may not have been waged against Troy, and it may have been a defeat, not a victory. Personally, I think it was a viking-raid, or several such combined into one. But it *was something* which, justifiably or not, *generated* the story of Troy we know. From the event, the legend, and from the legend, Homer; but between the event and Homer, we see now, the legend had time to grow.

In what way? It is a question seriously debated whether Homer, comparatively late in the tradition, could write. Certainly, his most remote predecessors could not. If we look at the text of the Iliad, we find illustrations of the way a legend could begin. Phoinix, in order to point his moral, relates to Achilles a piece of recent history, the story of Meleagros (pp. 212-14). Nestor, with a blandness that becomes almost unendurable, recites again and again the heroic exploits of himself when young. Glaukos

has the history of his ancestor, Bellerophon, all in his mind, and is ready to pass it on to Diomedes as they pause and converse in the middle of a great battle (pp. 157–58). Or again: when the peacemakers come to the shelter of Achilles, they find him singing of the famous exploits of men, and accompanying himself on a lyre (p. 203).¹

The last case is noteworthy, because Achilles is singing. Nestor and the others tell their tales, of course, in Homer's hexameters, but are not making poetry. Simultaneously after the event, the tradition begins in prose saga and in verse. Neither kind of record is written down; both kinds are communicated and perpetuated by word of mouth.

Imagine this process repeating itself through the generations that string out between the event and Homer, and you have some idea of what his material was. Note that tales change in the telling, so that what reached Homer may have been very different from what really happened, through the fault of no particular individual. Note again that among the mixed lot of story-tellers and poets there would probably be some more talented and more influential than the general ruck. This would mean that certain aspects of the story would be emphasized, and prejudices might count. There is opportunity for selection within limits.

And selection within limits was the privilege of Homer, too, when he set out to compose, within the story of Troy, the story of Achilles. Within limits; the tradition must by now have fixed certain events in the story in all the authority of fact. So Homer could not make Achilles take Troy any more than he could make Troy win the battle and survive. He could not save Achilles, and he could not kill Odysseus. We have, therefore, the presumption of what we may call a basic story, which Homer knew, and which at the same time stimulated and limited his invention. He could emphasize or develop some parts, episodes, characters in the story, barely acknowledge others, omit others entirely. But he could not contradict the legends.

For although Homer has selected a series of events occupying a few weeks in the tenth year of the war, and does not deal with either beginning

¹ There is something comparable in the picture of Helen working into the design she weaves 'numerous struggles of Trojans, breakers of horses, and bronze-armoured Achaians' (p. 103): the history that is being made at the moment outside the city walls. And this in turn reminds us of the up-to-date Tyrian settlers who have got the story of Troy on their temple wall by the time Aeneas arrives to look at it (*Aeneid*, I. 453–93). See Drerup, 75.

or end, he knows the beginning and the end. The Achaians came for the sake of Menelaos, to win back Helen whom Paris had carried off. That is understood, and alluded to quite often. And he knows, and all the characters in his story pretty well know, that Troy will fall. At the same time, these parts of the story are not brought into the poem in any forthright way, as something that must be explained to an audience. The flight of Helen is alluded to in various contexts, and rather casually. She is first mentioned in Hera's speech to Athene, when the Achaians seem to be demoralized and on the point of going home (p. 80):

*As things are, the Argives will take flight homeward over
the wide ridges of the sea to the land of their fathers,
and thus they would leave to Priam and to the Trojans Helen
of Argos, to glory over, for whose sake many Achaians
lost their lives in Troy far from their own native country.*

No further explanation. So the audience *knew* who Helen was, what she did. We have struck material in what I have called the basic story. And here is the first introduction of Hektor. It occurs in Achilles' threat to Agamemnon (p. 65):

*Then stricken at heart though you be, you will be able
to do nothing, when in their numbers before man-slaughtering Hektor
they drop and die.*

One could, I suppose, gather from this that Hektor was a formidable Trojan; but scarcely more. And Patroklos? He first appears simply as Menoitades, that is, *the son of Menoitios!*¹ Hektor and Patroklos, so introduced, can hardly have been inventions of Homer. They came down to him in the tradition, and his audience knew who they were. And so, once more, we strike the basic story which tradition handed on to Homer.

Of such major fixed characters, Helen, who is far more important in the story of Troy than Patroklos, and even Achilles, is far less important in the Iliad. This emphasizes the selection within limits, and leads us to consider the use or discard of usable material.

¹ P. 67. In my translation I have here called him 'Patroklos, the son of Menoitios' so as not to be puzzling. But 'Patroklos' is not in the Greek until thirty lines later. Such introductions (or non-introductions) seem to me to be decisive against the views that either Hektor or Patroklos was a fictitious character invented by Homer.

The stories told by Glaukos, Phoinix, Nestor, which we referred to above, are pieces out of the whole complex of legend in which the story of Troy itself is only one big episode. They are unassimilated lumps of saga, from near the story but not of it. They relate to the heroes of the Iliad and can be brought in, at discretion: marginal material. But while these tales of Meleagros and Bellerophon are not part of the story of Troy, there is more material, marginal to the Iliad, which *is* part of the story of Troy, and this material concerns our problem very nearly.

MARGINAL MATERIAL

We must consider certain episodes which form part of the ultimate story of Troy, concerning which we get little or no information in the Iliad. One such episode, the flight of Helen, we have already noticed, and we have seen that Homer knew it and accepted it, but made relatively little of Helen because she is not important in that part of Troy's story which is the Iliad. If, however, we start from the story as it has come down to *us*, we may state the following propositions and try to verify them in Homer:

(a) The ultimate cause of the Trojan War was the judgment of Paris.

(b) The Achaian heroes were suitors for the hand of Helen. Her father, Tyndareus, made them swear to stand by her husband, whichever of them it might be, in case someone should carry her off.

(c) The Achaian fleet was weatherbound at Aulis because of the anger of Artemis. Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, Iphigeneia, to Artemis in order to appease her.

(d) Thetis dipped the infant Achilles in the Styx, in order to make him invulnerable. But the heel where she held him did not touch the water and remained a mortal spot. Achilles died of an arrow wound in the heel.

(e) Troy was taken by means of a wooden horse.

These five propositions form part of a tradition which has certainly grown very familiar indeed. But how much is there in the Iliad to support them?

(a) There is one statement (pp. 475-76) that Hera, Poseidon, and Athene hated Ilion and its people 'because of the sin of Paris, who insulted

the goddesses when they came to his courtyard, and praised that one who gave him disastrous lust'. This can hardly be anything except an allusion to the judgment of Paris.¹ The episode is, however, mentioned only here, in the last book of the Iliad, when most of the action is over; and it is mentioned in a queer, allusive fashion, with the names of Helen and Aphrodite suppressed. The judgment of Paris seems to be a part of Homer's tradition which he did not care to emphasize. The place where it would properly be brought into the Iliad is after page 114, where Zeus asks Hera why she hates the Trojans, and gets no answer.

(b) The oath of the suitors to Tyndareus is not mentioned in the Iliad. There are allusions to oaths. The name of Tyndareus does not appear.

(c) Iphigeneia is not named in the Iliad.

(d) Achilles in the Iliad is neither more vulnerable nor invulnerable than anybody else. Hektor, dying, predicts that Paris and Apollo will kill him (p. 444) and we are presumably meant to understand that he is right. There is no reference to a wound in the heel.

(e) There is no reference to a wooden horse in the Iliad. It is mentioned several times in the Odyssey (4. 272; 8. 493-94; 11. 523) and is said to have been built by Epeios (8. 493; 11. 523). Epeios comes into the Iliad once (p. 468) as an undistinguished warrior but a champion boxer.

These last four episodes appear to be post-Iliad, if not post-Homeric. If they were parts of Homer's tradition, he rejected them. Yet they appear in the later tradition, which is richer in episodes than the Iliad. The appearance of the Homeric poems, or at least of the Iliad, seems to have been followed by a group of continuations in a process designed to tell the complete story of Troy in a series of epic poems. Most familiar additions to Homer are found in this series, commonly known as the Epic Cycle; a few others come from random sources, sometimes much later.

THE EPIC CYCLE AND OTHER CONTINUATIONS

The group of poems is called a cycle possibly because together they round out, bring to completion, the story of the heroic age. The poems themselves have not come down to us, but we have, in addition to fragments (random lines or passages quoted by other authors), a summary

¹ The way out is to follow an ancient grammarian and declare these lines an interpolation. That way madness lies.

prose account of the contents¹ the general accuracy of which there is no reason to doubt. The important points concerning those parts of the Cycle which concern us² may be conveniently set down as follows, with the Homeric poems in their position among them (see next page).

In addition to the above, there are various works which seem to have dealt with the material of Troy, in particular a group of catalogues which have been attached by tradition to the name of Hesiod. From these, as from the Cycle, material was drawn by the great lyric poets, Stesichoros, Simonides, Pindar, and by the tragic poets of Athens. But the Cycle, as given above, represents the systematic completion of the Trojan story in verse form.

The Cycle is post-Homeric, and this can be said positively. In the first place, ancient tradition on this point is firm and unanimous. But the conclusion can be defended from analysis. If there is any character of the Cycle as a whole which is indisputable, it is the businesslike manner in which the story is told from beginning to end, without gaps. But if Homer had come later than the Cycle, there would have been such a gap, for there would have been no account either of the anger of Achilles or the death of Hektor, nor the homecoming of Odysseus, since this was apparently not part of the *Returns*. But if the *Iliad* was already there before the Cycle began, all is clear. The author of the *Cypria* took the story up to the beginning of the *Iliad*, then stopped short; and the *Aithiopsis* obediently picks the story up again immediately after the point where the *Iliad* closes.

Let us return to our episodes, considered above. The judgment of Paris, which gets into the *Iliad* by the back door, is apparently put in its right place in the *Cypria*. The wooden horse comes up in his proper chronological position in the *Sack of Ilion* (and the *Little Iliad*, which seems to overlap the two works of Arktinos). So, too, other episodes alluded to by Homer, the death of Achilles, the flight of Helen, the retirement and return of Philoktetes (p. 95), the death of Protesilaos (pp. 94-95), find their appropriate places in the chronicle of the Cycle.

But did the later poets add new material, which was not part of the

¹ Actually, the summary of a summary; the outline of Proclus, summarized by Photius. The material is found, Greek with good English translation, in *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, and Homericæ*, ed. Evelyn-White, London and Cambridge, Mass. (Loeb series), new and revised edition 1936.

² There is evidence for a good deal of material, sometimes included in the Cycle, which has nothing directly to do with the story of Troy; but this may have been considered as a kind of prologue to the story.

PART OF STORY COVERED	NAME OF WORK	NAME OF AUTHOR	DATE ¹	NO. OF BOOKS
From the decision of the gods to cause the Trojan War to the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon	Cypria	Stasinus of Cyprus (or Hegesias or Homer)	Not given	11
From the anger of Achilles to the burial of Hektor	Iliad	Homer	In question	24
From the coming of the Amazons to the suicide of Aias	Aithiopsis	Arktinos of Miletos	776 B.C. 744 B.C.	5
From the death of Achilles to the fall of Troy and the departure of the Achaians	Little Iliad	Lesches of Lesbos (or Thestorides or Kinaithon or Diodoros or Homer)	Evidence obscure, conflicting	4
From the building of the wooden horse to the fall of Ilion and the departure of the Achaians	Sack of Ilion	Arktinos of Miletos	776 B.C. 774 B.C.	2
The returns of the various heroes	The Returns	Agias of Troizen (or an unnamed Kolophonian or Homer)		5
The return of Odysseus	Odyssey	Homer	In question	24
From the return of Odysseus to his death	Telegony	Eugammon of Kyrene (or Kinaithos of Lakedaimon)	568 B.C.	2

¹ Dates (traditional) are, as usual, absolutely unreliable, but may be relatively sound.

basic story known to Homer? It seems unlike the workmen of the Cycle, and yet Homer betrays no knowledge of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, told in the *Cypria* and familiar ever since. His story, however, permits him to ignore this episode, which may conceivably have been invented in order to motivate more fully Agamemnon's murder by Klytaimestra (this last is mentioned in the *Odyssey*). Outside of the Cycle, however, additions seem to have been made. The oath of the suitors to Tyndareus comes from the *Catalogue of Women* attributed to Hesiod; but it is a minor motive and could have been in the *Cypria* and left out by its epitomizer. The vulnerable heel of Achilles seems to be a late invention, and first appears in the form familiar to us in Servius' commentary on the *Aeneid*, though less familiar variants can be found earlier.¹

Further speculations would be inappropriate to an introduction of this sort, but enough has perhaps been given to show how the tradition might have formed itself. The conjectural stages may be summed up as follows:

1. The event.
2. Immediate record and elaboration in hearsay and oral poetry.
3. Formation of a fixed legend and formation, perhaps over the same period, of hexameter verse.
4. The *Iliad* of Homer.

The *Odyssey* of Homer. Both recognized as authoritative, whether because of their excellence and elaboration, or because they were the first poems to be written down, or both.

5. The completion of the Trojan Story in the Epic Cycle, exhausting pre-Homeric material not exhausted by Homer, but avoiding the areas in the legend dealt with by Homer.

¹ In its earliest traceable form, the story is that Thetis tried to make all her children immortal. Thus Apollonius of Rhodes (early third century B.C.), 4. 869. On the other hand, the legend that Aias was invulnerable except in one part of his body is at least as early as Aeschylus, and the Achilles story may have been borrowed from this. It is to be noted that all these episodes *explain* something which Homer left unexplained or problematical. The judgment of Paris explains the rape of Helen and the hostility of Hera and Athene to the Trojans. The oath of the suitors explains the participation of chiefs from all over Greece in what might have appeared to be a private quarrel between Menelaos and Paris. The sacrifice of Iphigeneia explains more fully the murder of Agamemnon. The mortal heel of Achilles explains how Paris could kill him when Hektor could not (and may have been suggested by Paris' disabling of Diomedes with an arrow shot in the foot). The wooden horse explains how the Achaians took Troy without Achilles, although they could not do it with his help.

6. Elaboration and interpretation of material not used by Homer in choral poetry, tragedy, late epic.

DATES

The author of the most authoritative history of Greek literature¹ has stated flatly that, in view of the confusion among the ancients themselves, we shall never know when Homer lived. With this one must agree. But the student can hardly avoid having an opinion, and an introduction in which the *Iliad* is analysed does seem to call for some statement, however guarded and personal, of belief. What follows is an opinion, and nothing more.

Consider first that the appearance of the Homeric poems is followed by (1) the Epic Cycle, (2) Hesiod and the Hesiodic continuations, (3) short personal poems, elegy or lyric. All three developments are generally post-Homeric according to Greek tradition, and all three use or modify the hexameter, in whose history the Homeric poems seem to have marked an epoch. Now, are these three developments contemporary? Possibly; but tradition, at least, would put Archilochos, Kallinos, and Terpander after Hesiod and after Arktinos and Stasinos; and the forms, which employ and modify hexameter and break with the epic tradition of narrative, speak for innovation and relative lateness. If we put Homer before Hesiod and Stasinos, and these before the lyricists and elegists, we can compute back to a misty species of date. Because Archilochos, Kallinos, and Terpander were dated, after a fashion. The first two are made roughly contemporary, so that Archilochos carries Kallinos with him; and Archilochos is put by the majority in the earlier half of the seventh century. Terpander of Lesbos is dated as having been active at dates ranging from 676 to 645 B.C.

If we work back from these, we get an eighth-century Homer, and there are a few bits of evidence that tend to make this more likely. A late authority gives for Terpander the surprisingly brief genealogy: Homer-Euryphon-Boios of Phokis-Terpander, which would mean a Homer born early in the eighth century. Let us also reconsider Herodotus, who dated Homer '400 years before my time, no more.' Why did Herodotus think he knew this? There is a probability that he calculated from the number of generations he believed to have elapsed between Homer and himself.

¹ W. Schmid, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, I. I (Munich, 1929), 83.

We know from a statement he made elsewhere (2. 142) that Herodotus reckoned three generations as one hundred years: $33\frac{1}{3}$ years as an average from father to son seems rather long, to involve too late an age at marriage. But twelve generations *might* be correct. If so, by subtracting 60 to 100 years for over-reckoning of generations we come out once more with an eighth-century Homer. A possible synchronization between Hesiod and a man prominent in the Lelantine War, generally dated about 700 (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 654-62), suggests that the order Homer-Hesiod-Archilochos is the right one.

One more consideration. The works of Archilochos and Kallinos certainly, of Arktinos, Stasinus, Hesiod probably, were written down. In spite of the certainty that Iliad and Odyssey were preserved through rhapsodes, or reciters, their authority also almost demands that these two poems also were written down, whether by Homer himself or by a contemporary or immediate successor. If so, we can go back so far.¹

No one knows better than I that such evidence as I have just referred to is none too stout. I have given merely the reasons why I believe that Homer composed in the eighth (conceivably into the seventh) century.

THE UNITY OF HOMER

And did he write both Iliad and Odyssey? This is not a soluble problem and it is not, to me, a very interesting one; it is the work, not the man or men who composed the work, which is interesting. But Greek tradition down to the time of the Alexandrians is unanimously in favour of single authorship. If someone not Homer wrote the Odyssey, nobody had a name to give him. Later authors quote Iliad and Odyssey constantly; other poems of the Cycle are less well known. *They* may be attributed to Homer; but not vice versa. The special position of Iliad and Odyssey, under the name of Homer, in Greek tradition, puts the burden of proof on those who would establish separate authorship, and I have not encountered any arguments strong enough to alter that situation.

¹ See Carpenter, 11-16. Mr. Carpenter would put Homer before Hesiod, but considers that Hesiod wrote, while Homer composed orally. Therefore, Hesiod-in-writing is earlier than Homer-in-writing. He would date the composition of the Iliad 'close to 700 B.C.' (p. 179), and would put the Odyssey almost fifty years later. My own preference is for a date a little earlier, but not much.

THE PATTERN OF THE ILIAD

The Iliad is the elaboration of a stretch in the story of Troy, a stretch running from the quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles to the death and burial of Hektor. In the whole story it is not a long stretch. If the essential narrative contents of the Iliad were summarized, as the narrative contents of the poems in the Cycle were summed up, we should appear to have a very short story. In fact, we do not; we have a very long one. To put it rather differently: it would be easy to think of an epic that set forth the essential plot of our Iliad in three books, thus:

1. Quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon. Withdrawal of Achilles.
2. Defeat of the Achaians by the Trojans and Hektor.
3. Intervention and death of Patroklos. Return of Achilles. Defeat of the Trojans. Death of Hektor.

This is the irreducible plot. But the Iliad contains not three books, but twenty-four.¹

Book 1 of our real Iliad is identical with Book 1 of the hypothetical work outlined above. At its close Achilles is out of the action, and Zeus has promised Thetis to see that the Achaians are defeated. In order to do this, he sends a dream to Agamemnon informing him that if he attacks he may take Troy.

This is at the opening of the second book, and so far all is in order. Homer has thoroughly motivated a headlong attack led by Agamemnon which will be disastrously repulsed, thus showing how Agamemnon cannot get along without Achilles. This is what the audience must have expected.

And this is precisely what does not happen. Instead, Agamemnon calls a meeting of the chiefs and proposes to test out the spirit of his army by inviting them to go home. They take him literally, and are barely rallied by Odysseus and Nestor, with the inspiration of Athene. Still, rallied they are, and advance, while the poet pauses to enumerate the chiefs and contingents on both sides. By the opening of the third book, the armies are on the point of collision.

But they do not encounter. Instead, a duel is arranged between Mene-

¹ By way of comparison, consider the enormous amount of 'history' that has got crammed into the eleven books of the *Cypria*: from the beginning of the beginning through all the preparations and the first nine years of the war down to the quarrel.

laos and Paris, the winner to have Helen, while the others swear peace and friendship. As Paris is in danger of death or capture, Aphrodite miraculously snatches him away and sets him down in Ilion. But Paris is clearly beaten, and by the terms of the treaty Helen must go to Menelaos. The war will be over and Troy will survive. Hera and Athene will not let this pass, and by the gods' consent Athene induces Pandaros, a Trojan ally, to break the treaty by trying to kill Menelaos. Again the armies prepare to attack and the battle, long anticipated and twice deferred, at last begins (p. 125).

It does not, however, result in any defeat for the Achaians. Instead, the fighting sways back and forth; the Achaians, led by the unheralded Diomedes, get rather the better of it. The battle closes with a duel between Aias and Hektor (pp. 169–76). The only reminder that this day's battle should have been a defeat is seen in the fact that the Achaians now fortify their camp.

A subsequent battle results in an Achaian defeat (Book 8). The unsuccessful embassy to Achilleus (Book 9), the night spying expedition of Odysseus and Diomedes (Book 10), carry us to the great battle which at last brings on the assault of Hektor on the ships (Book 15), the intervention and death of Patroklos (Book 16); so that the position forecast in Book 1 has at last been reached. The intervention of Achilleus and death of Hektor are attended by further delays, but we have seen enough to perceive how the pattern works.

Plainly, the *Iliad* sees through the anger of Achilleus much of the whole story of Troy. The catalogues, of the ships and of the Trojan allies, widen the scope of the poem. The episodes of the third book take us to actors even more nearly concerned in the basic story than Agamemnon and Achilleus; namely, to Helen, Menelaos, and Paris. And thus material like the duel between Menelaos and Paris, which ought by right to come at the beginning of the war, gets incorporated into the story of Achilleus without interfering with it, and though beginning and ending in the tenth year we have a sense of the beginning and end of the war.

Moreover, the *Iliad* was composed for a Hellenic audience, of the upper class, among which many claimed to trace their ancestry back to the heroes of the Trojan War. The pro-Hellenic bias is plain, though not crude, though tempered by a considerate sympathy for the Trojans; and the pro-Hellenic bias involves the reputation of the Achaian heroes.

The *logical* structure of the Achilles story is the brief one outlined above. But immediate and utter rout of the Achaians on the withdrawal of Achilles leaves no very glorious part open to the other heroes. Homer's dilemma ran thus: he must maintain the truth of Achilles' dictum: 'Without me you cannot cope with Hektor and the Trojans.' And at the same time he must maintain the claims to greatness of Diomedes, Aias, Agamemnon, Odysseus, and the Achaians in general. He cannot do both in short compass; he must be more devious.

It is not only that with Achilles out of action the other Achaians have a better chance to show their valour (a special show of valour by an individual is called *aristeia*), since sooner or later they must retreat. The ancients called the first great battle the *aristeia* of Diomedes; the battle is drawn. But through the second and third battles, where the Achaians must be losing, the 'Achilles situation' (rout of the Achaians stemmed by one man) is repeated again and again. In the first battle, a Trojan charge led by Hektor is stemmed by Diomedes. In the eighth book, Zeus announces that the other gods (and he means the 'pro-Achaians') must stay out of action. He lightens and thunders from Ida, and the lords of the Achaians turn and run (p. 184). The expected rout is on. But Diomedes turns to rescue Nestor from danger, brings down Hektor's charioteer, and *would have routed the Trojans* (p. 185) had not Zeus once more thundered and lightened. Back go the Achaians again in headlong flight, beaten into their defences by Hektor; and he would have burnt their ships, had not Hera inspired Agamemnon to rally them. By the day's end the Achaians are beaten, but not irrevocably, and the close of the eighth book motivates the embassy to Achilles. But it is not soon enough for Achilles to give in; the danger has not come close enough, Hektor has not stormed the defences or fired the ships; so we get one more day of fighting.

During this day, the pattern of rout and rally continues, until, like Diomedes and Agamemnon in the eighth book, Diomedes (pp. 242-43), Eurypylos (p. 249), Polypoites and Leonteus (p. 262) have had their chances to play Achilles, but all in vain, because Zeus favours the Trojans. So the amusing episode of Zeus beguiled by the charms of Hera is not merely an episode, because in Zeus' absence the Achaians rally and defeat their enemies once more. It takes Zeus to make good Achilles' statement.

We might feel that such men as the Achaians could take care of them-

selves under any circumstances. *Do* they need Achilles after all? They must, and way is made for him as his rivals are cleared away, one by one. Agamemnon opened this day by leading an irresistible charge, but is at length wounded and has to withdraw. Diomedes repulses Hektor, but is put out by an arrow wound in the foot. Odysseus is stabbed by one of his victims. Paris, who had wounded Diomedes, disables Eurypylos with another arrow, then Machaon. These men are not considered defeated. Agamemnon and Odysseus kill the men who wound them; the others are victims of archery, not overcome in fair fight. Still, in spite of Diomedes' finely expressed contempt for the bow (pp. 244-45), he and his fellow victims fight no more in the Iliad.

By the end of the eleventh book, the only Achaian of the first magnitude left in the fighting is Aias. He does not break, but he can only sustain, cannot beat off, the Trojan attack. At the end of Book 15 he is fighting, tired, overmatched, bravely but hopelessly, from the ships. The desired moment for the entry of Patroklos, representative and forerunner of Achilles, has been reached.

Without, however, permitting us to escape feeling that the Achaians are better men. Consider the close of the long eleventh book. Wounded Eurypylos gives a gloomy report to Patroklos (p. 256); the Trojans are winning, the Achaians are doomed. Yet, if we look back over the course of the battle through which this position was reached, we find that, in addition to five big heroes wounded, nine Achaians were killed, and twenty-eight Trojans.

Whether such legerdemain indicates the hand of a single author, I leave it to my readers to decide. But note that the dilemma—vindicate Achilles but do not dishonour the Achaians—has been solved.

HEKTOR AND ARISTEIA

There is one figure in the Achilles story to whom we have not yet given full attention. This is the enemy hero. The Achaians are not being defeated by, Achilles does not rescue them from, any horde of nameless Trojans. The hero must have a worthy opponent: a gigantic warrior, a Goliath of Gath.

In the Iliad, this is Hektor. What his part should be in the Achilles story, we may see from parallels which lie near at hand and which express

the basic pattern of the *Achilleis*. After the death of Hektor, according to Arktinos, 'the Amazon Penthesilea, the daughter of Areas and of Thracian birth, comes to aid the Trojans'. She fights bravely (*aristeia*) but is killed by Achilleus. It is perhaps only inference that Penthesilea routed the Achaians before Achilleus disposed of her, though the language suggests it. But the case is clearer for Memnon. 'Next Memnon, the son of Eos (Dawn), wearing armour made by Hephaistos, comes to help the Trojans. . . .' In the battle which follows Antilochos is killed by Memnon and Memnon by Achilleus. That Memnon routed the Achaians before Achilleus intervened seems clear from Pindar's *Sixth Pythian*. Still another leader of the Trojans slain by Achilleus was Kyknos, the son of Poseidon. Kyknos, Memnon, and Hektor are grouped as the three greatest victims of Achilleus by Pindar (*Olympia* 2; *Isthmia* 5).

The best parallel, though, is the Telephos story. Stasinus, according to the summary, told in the *Cypria* how the Achaians on their first expedition put in at Teuthrania, in Mysia, down the coast from Troy. They thought the city was Ilion and tried to sack it, but the Mysians came out against them. Telephos, their leader, killed Thersandros, an Achaian chief, but Achilleus then wounded Telephos. Pindar is more explicit, for he tells us how Patroklos

*brought with the sons of Atreus
in the plain of Teuthras stood his ground alone with Achilleus
when Telephos, bending back the rest of the valiant Danaans,
hurled them against their own beached ships.¹*

Clearly, it is no great exaggeration to say that Hektor *is* Telephos. He performs the same function in the same script. Only Homer, as we already saw, has complicated the script.

For Hektor, as the giant who leads the defence, should be the greatest warrior on either side, with the exception of Achilleus. Achilleus should defeat him only after a struggle, and perhaps only with help.²

¹ *The Odes of Pindar*, R. Lattimore, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1947, p. 29 (*Ninth Olympian*).

² This last is interesting. Note that in the story of Memnon, the hero kills Antilochos (Achilleus' second-best friend) before he falls. Telephos, in the *Cypria*, killed Thersandros before he was defeated. According to the *Little Iliad*, Neoptolemos, the son of Achilleus, called to Troy to help the Achaians, fought Eurypylos, the son of Telephos, who had come to help the Trojans. Eurypylos was killed; but he killed Machaon first. When the Asian hero claimed his victim before going down, was that

In the Iliad, Hektor both does and does not appear as such a hero, and in such stature. Achilles insists, as we have seen, that the other Achaians cannot stand against him. He is a bogey with which to frighten Agamemnon and the rest. But Achilles has no doubts that he, himself, can handle him (p. 207).

Not so the other Achaians. Agamemnon claims that Achilles has been reluctant to fight Hektor (p. 171). Odysseus appeals to Achilles to save them from Hektor, and their bravest constantly show fear of him, doubt if they can stop him (pp. 326, 219, 379). When he challenges any Achaian to single combat, not one man is willing to fight him. Menelaos at last volunteers, for shame, and is roundly told that he would have no chance. Only after a characteristic scolding by Nestor do the bravest Achaians rise up and say that they are ready. And yet Aias, chosen by lot from the volunteers, clearly defeats Hektor, and he does so once more for their other combat (pp. 304–5). Similarly, Diomedes is frankly afraid of him, but smashes him back in their brief encounter (p. 243). So Hektor himself is inclined to brag, and anticipate more than he can do (e.g. pp. 196, 293, 383), but he himself is constantly being heckled by some other prince, as Sarpedon (pp. 140–41) or Glaukos (pp. 344–45; there are numerous similar passages). Plainly, the reputation of Hektor continually surpasses his achievements. These are great. He is the heart and soul of the Trojan defence, and when he falls the Trojans feel their chances are gone. He kills many. But his only really great victim is Patroklos; and from Patroklos he runs, and must be rallied to fight him; and Apollo stuns and disarms Patroklos, and Euphorbos spears him in the back, before Hektor runs up to dispatch a helpless man, and boast that he has beaten him. Much of what he does is by divine favour. Apollo picks him up when he is down, and Zeus is behind his charges. He runs in panic from Achilles, until Athene, disguised as Deiphobos, brings him to stand and fight. He is beaten by Aias and repulsed by Diomedes. Agamemnon and Odysseus he does not meet, so that his only advantage against a major Achaian warrior

victim *helping* the Achaian hero, and so enabling him to win? In Pindar's story, Patroklos and Achilles fought Telephos together. In a pre-Homeric version, was Patroklos *helping* Achilles when Hektor killed him, and Achilles killed Hektor? And did Homer alter it, for the greater glory of Achilles, and consequent diminution of Hektor, and in order to motivate the return of Achilles through desire for honourable revenge?

is the tainted triumph over Patroklos. His moment of highest grandeur comes when he smashes in the *gate*: 'no man could have stopped him then', but no Aias stands in his path to be shamed.

Whatever his failures, he remains a figure of terror to the Achaians:

so Hektor

*followed close on the heels of the flowing-haired Achaians,
killing ever the last of the men; and they fled in terror.
But after they had crossed back over the ditch and the sharp stakes
in flight, and many had gone down under the hands of the Trojans,
they reined in and stood fast again beside their ships, calling
aloud upon each other, and to all of the gods uplifting
their hands each man of them cried out his prayers in a great voice,
while Hektor, wearing the stark eyes of a Gorgon, or murderous
Ares, wheeled about at the edge his bright-maned horses*

(p. 191).

*With this in mind he (Zeus) drove on against the hollow ships Hektor
Priam's son, though Hektor without the gods was in fury
and raged, as when destructive fire or spear-shaking Ares
rages among the mountains and dense places of the deep forest.
A slaver came out around his mouth, and under the lowering
brows his eyes were glittering, the helm on his temples
was shaken and thundered horribly to the fighting of Hektor*

(p. 325).

And he does what he must do. Knocked out, beaten off, he comes back, and with gods' help or no help he does, almost single-handed, pile the Achaians back on their ships and begin to fire the fleet. Here, from another view, is that same sleight of hand by which the great Achaians, never surpassed in *aristeia*, are yet shattered and beaten in on their ships, and army and fleet are lost without Achilles.

Two ways, again. Homer's success is somewhat left-handed. He has so industriously diminished his Goliath for the sake of others that we sense deception, and feel that Hektor '*really was*' greater than Patroklos or any other Achaian except Achilles. For this Hektor, Homer's Hektor, who brags outrageously, who sometimes hangs back when the going is worst, who bolts from Achilles, is still the hero who forever captures the af-

fection and admiration of the modern reader, far more strongly than his conqueror has ever done.¹ Such are the accidental triumphs of Homer.

STYLE: FORMAL ELEMENTS AND FORMULA

The narrative character of the Iliad, which is free invention working on and within advanced but still fluid tradition, is reflected also in the style of the Iliad. And as Homer took over details of person and act from his predecessors, he also took over from them exact phrases by which to characterize the person, or narrate the act.

We can perhaps best understand Homeric style if we state two mutually dependent propositions. First: the Iliad is essentially oral composition, since, *whether or not* Homer himself wrote it down, it was intended to be recited aloud, not read silently, and since it builds on a deep-piled tradition of oral recitations. Second: all statement is dominated by the metre, which is dactylic hexameter, so that ready-made phrases which fit the metre tend to be retained, while possible innovations are subject to rejection if they do not fit.

With this in mind, consider the following passage, taken almost at random (p. 102):

- 67 *Now though, if you wish me to fight it out and do battle,
make the rest of the Trojans sit down, and all the Achaians,
and set me in the middle with Menelaos the warlike*
70 *to fight together for the sake of Helen and all her possessions.
That one of us who wins and is proved stronger, let him
take the possessions fairly and the woman, and lead her homeward.
But the rest of you, having cut your oaths of faith and friendship
dwell, you in Troy where the soil is rich, while those others return home
75 to horse-pasturing Argos, and Achaia the land of fair women.*

The passage may be called padded, in that the underscored words and phrases are not necessary to the minimum meaning which is to be communicated. Homer had not been told to be concise or terse, or that having once said 'fight it out' he need not, therefore should not, add 'and do

¹ *If this be so, then bragless let it be.
Great Hector was a man as good as he.*

Shakespeare has deliberately made Achilles' triumph over Hektor even hollower than Homer made Hektor's triumph over Patroklos.

battle'. A passage like this (and it is typical enough) shows no preoccupation with brevity, and no ambition to be original. The superfluous words and phrases are, on the other hand, *metrically* necessary and since they fall into position in the cadences of the line, they are employed not only here, but anywhere else in the poem where they suit both text and metre.

A leisurely style, and one that does not avoid saying a thing in a practically desirable way merely because the thing has been said that way before. On the contrary. Lines 71 and 72 are repeated, 73 virtually repeated, when Hektor passes on this proposal to the Achaians.

Such repeats are frequent in Homer. Even the casual reader will notice them, but only the careful student will find a pattern of repetition so all-pervasive that it creates an essential texture of language without which Homer would not be Homer.

But repeats are of various orders. In the first place, an entire passage, often of considerable length, may be repeated. When Agamemnon after the first Achaian defeat proposes to abandon the siege and go home (pp. 198–99), he borrows his entire speech from the text of the previous speech in which he was 'testing' the Achaians (pp. 79–80),¹ except for the first line, which had opened a still earlier speech (p. 78), and which is used six times in the Iliad. His appearance, in tears, is described in terms used later to present the weeping Patroklos (beginning of the first line adjusted). All repeats are founded on the principle that a thing once said in the right way should be said again in the *same* way when occasion demands. Agamemnon proceeds to enumerate the gifts through which he offers to propitiate Achilleus (p. 201). When Odysseus transmits the offer to Achilleus (pp. 205–6), he does it in the exact words of Agamemnon, except that he must shift from first to third person, and that one line, involving Agamemnon's long name, must be more drastically altered. Aias' spear-throw against Hektor is described in the terms of Menelaos' spear-throw against Paris (pp. 109, 175).

Such repeats of a few lines are exceedingly numerous, but far more numerous are repeats of single lines. Highly characteristic are hexameters for the introduction of a speech, as

Then in turn the Gerenian horseman Nestor answered him,

or for the address to an individual:

¹ Note that the original speech is longer. What Agamemnon has borrowed is the beginning and the end.

Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus,
or a death in battle:

He fell, thunderously, and his armour clattered upon him.

Finally, there is the word group of less than a line which forms a metrical unit adaptable to any place where sense demands, and the metre will accommodate.¹ This can be most easily illustrated through the noun-adjective or name-adjective combinations, involving the fixed epithet, although such combinations by no means exhaust the varieties of formula. Names, or nouns, carry with them descriptive terms, of varying appropriateness, which adhere so closely that they are scarcely more than extensions of the noun. Examples are: innocent children, strong-greaved Achaians, grey-eyed Athene, generous Troad.

The metrical significance of such formulae may be illustrated as follows. Suppose a name closes a line, and that the line is filled except for the last two feet, so that what is desired is $-\cup\cup--$.

Formulae involving the names of Odysseus, Hektor, and Zeus are as follows:

dios Odysseus (brilliant Odysseus),
phaidimos Hektor (glorious Hektor),
metieta Zeus (Zeus of the counsels),
euryopa Zeus (Zeus of the wide brows).

But now suppose the syllables desired are $\cup\cup | -\cup\cup | --$, we get

polymetis Odysseus (resourceful Odysseus),
korythaiolos Hektor (Hektor of the shining helm),
nephelegerata Zeus (Zeus the cloud-gatherer),

and for three and a half feet, $\cup | -- | -\cup\cup | --$, we get

polytlas dios Odysseus (long-suffering brilliant Odysseus),
megas korythaiolos Hektor (tall Hektor of the shining helm),
pater andron te theon te (the father of gods and men).

Note how Zeus changes from counsellor to storm-mountain-god to

¹ In the discussion which follows, I make no claim to originality. The analysis and application of formula in Homer is the work of Milman Parry; his methods and conclusions have revolutionized Homeric studies. All I have tried to do is illustrate some of his findings for the benefit of those who do not know Greek. My entire interpretation of the formal elements in style is based on Parry. His chief publications on this material are: *L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère*, Paris, 1928; and 'Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 41 (1930), 73-147; 43 (1932), 1-50.

paternal god, *not* in connection with what he is doing, but at the dictates of metre. He is not *nephelegerata* Zeus when he is gathering clouds, but when he is filling the metrical unit $\cup \cup - \cup \cup - -$. Just so, Achilles, whose name is the exact metrical equivalent of Odysseus ($\cup - -$), shares with him the rather general epithet *dios*. And Menelaos and Diomedes get the odd epithet 'of the great war cry' not because they are noisier than anybody else, but because their metrically identical names can usefully terminate a line beginning $- - - \cup \cup - \cup$ with

boen agathos (Menelaos)
(Diomedes).

Now such an epithet is (metre aside) neither specially appropriate nor yet inappropriate. Elsewhere, though, the formula trails its adjective into surprising contexts. So Aigisthos, of all people, is 'blameless'. Aphrodite is 'laughing' when she voices a complaint (p. 138) in tears. If Helen will be the 'beloved wife' of the rival who wins her (p. 104) this implies no archness or slyness on the part of the speaker. 'Beloved' goes with 'wife'.

It is the manipulation of such counters that makes up, in part, the Homeric style. Parry's contention that the formulae are too numerous to be the work of a single man, while probably right, is not demonstrably so. But it does not seem possible that the same man could have invented all these formulae *and* the metre which they involve, as it involves them. Formulae are words, and they come down in the tradition, though many may be the work of a single man, and in the incredible skill of their manipulation in the Iliad we may be justified in seeing a single, original poet. But not original in the sense that he would throw away a ready-made phrase for the sake of making a new one, his own. In this respect later Greek poets, such as Pindar and Aeschylus, are as remote from Homer as are Donne, Crashaw, and Browning.

STYLE: THE SIMILE

The formulaic aspect of Homer represents the traditional as the fixed story represents the traditional. He did not make this style, he used it. It needs no defence. Padded, adjectival, leisurely, routine, it works.

But formula does not exhaust the style, since there are passages which, unique, non-standardized, non-formulaic, show the operations of original technique as clearly as do the characterizations of Hektor and others. The

escape of the individual from the impersonal may be shown in the intensely characteristic similes.

In Homer, as in Greek literature generally, direct and detailed description is rare. In the *Iliad*, only one person receives full physical characterization, and this is the grotesque Thersites (p. 82) who receives it precisely because he varies from the august standards of the characteristic hero. Elsewhere, single adjectives as 'huge', 'fair-haired', 'glancing-eyed', 'deep-girdled', or adherent epithets as 'ox-eyed', etc., suffice, nor does Homer describe the details of a situation directly as such. Indirectly, though, description can be communicated through effect (the beauty of Helen, the strength of Achilles). Or through comparison.

I would, briefly, distinguish metaphor and simile thus: In simile, you say that A is like B. In metaphor, you say that A is B, or you introduce A as B without making any specific equation. This is an insufficient account, but will serve here because Homer does not use metaphor extensively, and when he does the use is confined to simple phrases as 'dikes of battle' or 'this pestilence, Hektor' or, of a mountain, 'mother of sheepflocks', or which the last two are deliberate personifications, the first probably a primeval and fossilized phrase whose meaning might have been as lost to Homer as it is to us. Intensification of such metaphors would lead to the difficult austere figures of a Pindar or Sophocles, in which the reader or listener must make the transition from A to B himself; where an act of sorcery and transmutation has taken place and A is no longer A but has turned into B. Homer carries metaphor no farther than the simple figures shown above. He develops the more explicit simile.

Simple similes appear. Aias carries his shield which is like a wall, men attack like wolves or lions, fight like fire, the island of the Phaeacians lies like a shield in the sea. But a simile may develop itself, and development takes place not of A, the thing described, but B, that to which it is referred. Consider the wound of Menelaos (p. 117):

- 141 *As when some Maonian woman or Karian with purple
colours ivory, to make it a cheek piece for horses;
it lies away in an inner room, and many a rider
longs to have it, but it is laid up to be a king's treasure,
145 two things, to be the beauty of the horse, the pride of the horseman:
so, Menelaos, your shapely thighs were stained with the colour
147 of blood, and your legs also and the ankles beneath them.*

White skin, blood-stained; like a stained cheek piece. The cheek piece has a history of its own, and this is told before we return to our subject. This shows the construction. A is like B (141); B has such and such a history, progresses in such and such a manner (141-45); and (we repeat) it is like A (146-47).

The development of the form begins where we enter the history of B, which is, from the point of view of narrative, superfluous. Development need not take place. In a place which comes a little before the simile of the cheek piece, Athene brushes the arrow away from its mark (p. 116).

*She brushed it away from his skin as lightly as when a mother
brushes a fly away from her child who is lying in sweet sleep.*

This simile, which stops at A is like B, is not developed. It is complete in itself.

In simile, we are referred from the scene in the Iliad to a scene which is not part of the Iliad; sometimes to the supernatural, more often to the everyday world. Such passages represent in part an escape from the heroic narrative of remote events which is the poet's assignment and the only medium we know of through which he could communicate his craft. It is perhaps such a liberation that wittingly or not vitalizes the development within the simile (p. 125):

*As when rivers in winter spate running down from the mountains
throw together at the meeting of streams the weight of their water
out of the great springs behind in the hollow stream-bed,
and far away in the mountains the shepherd hears their thunder;
such, from the coming together of men, was the shock and the shouting.*

Such similes are landscapes, direct from the experience of life, and this one is humanized by the tiny figure of the shepherd set against enormous nature.

So the development may sweep on for its own sake until it ends even by contradicting the effect which it was introduced in order to achieve. Consider the following: a volley of missiles from men defending a wall (pp. 265-66):

*And they, as storms of snow descend to the ground incessant
on a winter day, when Zeus of the counsels, showing
before men what shafts he possesses, brings on a snowstorm
and stills the winds asleep in the solid drift, enshrouding*

*the peaks that tower among the mountains and the shoulders out-jutting,
and the low lands with their grasses, and the prospering work of men's
hands,
and the drift falls along the grey sea, the harbours and beaches,
and the surf that breaks against it is stilled, and all things elsewhere
it shrouds from above, with the burden of Zeus' rain heavy upon it;
so numerous and incessant were the stones volleyed from both sides,
some thrown on Trojans, others flung against the Achaians
by Trojans, so the whole length of the wall thundered beneath them.*

What the missiles have in common with the snow is, of course, descent in infinite quantity, but the snowfall, described first, builds a hushed world from which we wake with a shock to the crashing battle. The ultimate effect is not of likeness, but contrast.

Simile offers the most natural and frequently used, but not the only, escape from the heroic. Consider (p. 236):

86 *But at that time when the woodcutter makes ready his supper
in the wooded glens of the mountains, when his arms and hands have
grown weary
from cutting down the tall trees, and his heart has had enough of it,
and the longing for food and for sweet wine takes hold of his senses;*
90 *at that time the Danaans by their manhood broke the battalions.*

This is to indicate the time of day, but the time of day has been indicated as we end line 86. What follows is gratuitous. It has the *form* of the simile, as well as the content: unheroic but interesting woodcutter, a moment out of his life and feeling. And in this spirit Homer takes advantage of Achilles' new shield to illustrate, under form of a rehearsal of its decorations, scenes representing the life of his day. In this series the sense of description is so strong that the inert images on the shield come to life and move in time and space before our eyes.

I take such passages to be non-traditional and original. For as an essential characteristic of the formula is repeat, an essential of simile is uniqueness.¹ Therefore, it happens that when a very minor figure is set into the narrative, appearing once (often in order to be one of the victims of a major

¹ Very few similes are repeated. The most notable case is Book 6, ll. 506–11, and Book 15, ll. 263–68 (p. 166, ll. 30–35 and p. 316, ll. 15–20; see also p. 281, ll. 28–32, and p. 343, ll. 15–19). There are a few cases where a later simile borrows a line or two from an earlier one. See Shewan, 219–20.

hero), he may trail after him a few lines of personal history constructed after the manner of the simile, since then he enters in a capacity similar to that of the stained cheek piece that describes Menelaos' wound. Consider this battle-sequence (pp. 129–30):

- while Menelaos son of Atreus killed with the sharp spear*
50 *Strophios' son, a man of wisdom in the chase, Skamandrios,*
the fine huntsman of beasts. Artemis herself had taught him
to strike down every wild thing that grows in the mountain forest.
Yet Artemis of the showering arrows could not now help him,
no, nor the long spearcasts in which he had been pre-eminent,
55 *but Menelaos the spear-famed, son of Atreus, stabbed him*
as he fled away before him, in the back with a spear thrust
between the shoulders and driven through to the chest beyond it.
He dropped forward on his face and his armour clattered upon him.
Meriones in turn killed Phereklos, son of Harmonides,
60 *the smith, who understood how to make with his hand all intricate*
things, since above all others Pallas Athene had loved him.
He it was who had built for Alexandros the balanced
ships, the beginning of the evil, fatal to the other
Trojans, and to him, since he knew nothing of the gods' plans.
65 *This man Meriones pursued and overtaking him*
struck in the right buttock, and the spearhead drove straight
on and passing under the bone went into the bladder.
He dropped, screaming, to his knees, and death was a mist about him.

Skamandrios and Phereklos are people of no importance. In narrative, they are just cannon-fodder for Menelaos and Meriones. There are innumerable battle-victims like them in the *Iliad*. Did all these people and their names make their way down the tradition to Homer? We cannot tell, but invention seems probable. In any case, note that Menelaos' success could well end at line 50, Meriones' at 59. The huntsman particularly, a prototype of Hippolytos, offers a brief escape into individual lines and matter, before his death is described in the ghastly formulae for death in battle (55–58). Such passages with their incidental pathos are in the manner of similes, with which they can unobtrusively stand in combination (a good example is Simoesios, pp. 125–26).

Simile, with its relatives, is as essential to Homer as formula. It has been more frequently noticed, but even more seriously misunderstood. Simile

in Homer is not decoration; it is dynamic invention, and because of this no successor has been able to swing it in the same grand manner.¹

THE PEOPLE OF THE ILIAD

The Iliad is a story, and the strength of a story, as such, depends to a great extent on its characters. The actions and achievements of the great Homeric characters might have been fixed in tradition, or twisted by *tendenz*, but within the frame-work of fact the personality of the hero might remain plastic. Not the 'what', but the 'how' and 'why', gave the poet some option.

THE DEFENDER: HEKTOR

Against the tragedy of Achilles is set the tragedy of Troy, and the two strands are closely involved. The hero of the Trojan tragedy is Hektor. We looked at him once before, from the Achaian point of view; to them he was a figure of terror even for their bravest, over-rated perhaps, but deadly enough in his actions as well as his menaces. But Goliath of Gath might have looked to the wives and mothers of the Philistines very different from the monster seen by Saul and Abner. It shows a significant difference between epic and chronicle when Homer takes us over to the other side and lets us see Hektor as the Trojans saw him.

In Troy, Hektor was beloved. Homer interrupts his narrative to take him back to Troy and show him with mother, brother and sister-in-law, wife and child, all affectionate and concerned. Priam and Hekabe consider him far the best and dearest of their sons. Helen testifies that where others were hateful (an exaggeration characteristic of Helen) Hektor was always kind (p. 495).

Hektor's tragedy is that of Troy. He, like it, is destroyed fighting a quarrel unworthy of him. He does not believe in Paris' quarrel, and he does not like to fight. When Andromache beseeches him not to go back into open battle, the beginning of his answer is revealing (p. 165):

¹ This is not to detract from Virgil, Dante, Milton, and others who have made magnificent original use of the tradition. Dante is particularly fortunate, but quite different from Homer in that he combines simile with metaphor of quite un-Homeric sophistication and depth. I should have liked to go further into such distinctions. See Bowra's valuable chapter on oral and literary epic, *From Virgil to Milton*, 1-32.

*yet I would feel deep shame
before the Trojans, and the Trojan women with trailing garments,
if like a coward I were to shrink aside from the fighting;
and the spirit will not let me, since I have learned to be valiant
and to fight always among the foremost ranks of the Trojans.*

Perhaps one should not stress too much the implications of 'I have learned', but the close of Hektor's speech to Paris a little later shows the same tendency (p. 167):

*Let us go now; some day hereafter we will make all right
with the immortal gods in the sky, if Zeus ever grant it,
setting up to them in our houses the wine-bowl of liberty
after we have driven out of Troy the strong-greaved Achaians.*

Not bloodthirsty enough to be a natural warrior, he fights finely from a sense of duty and a respect for the opinions of others, a respect which Paris notoriously lacks (p. 101).

*Surely now the flowing-haired Achaians laugh at us,
thinking you are our bravest champion, only because your
looks are handsome, but there is no strength in your heart, no courage.*

*No, but the Trojans are cowards in truth, else long before this
you had worn a mantle of flying stones for the wrong you did us.*

The sneer sticks to Hektor himself. Some hidden weakness, not cowardice but perhaps the fear of being called a coward, prevents him from liquidating a war which he knows perfectly well is unjust.¹ This weakness, which is not remote from his boasting, nor from his valour (p. 164), is what kills him.

ACHILLEUS: THE TRAGIC HERO

The function of Achilles in the Iliad of itself necessitates certain qualities. The necessary man must be a supreme warrior, but in station and as a king he ranks below Agamemnon. As a hero of tragedy, he is great, but human and imperfect. His tragedy is an effect of free choice by a will that falls short of omniscience and is disturbed by anger.

¹ Shakespeare sees the difficult question: 'Why do not the Trojans return Helen, in spite of Paris?', and has his own answer. His Hektor, as intelligent as brave, demolishes the arguments of Paris and Troilus, then gives way in a spirit of chivalry.

In the *Iliad* his supremacy as a warrior is scarcely challenged, and is insisted upon at all times. After Patroklos' death he terrifies the battle-weary Trojans by appearing, unarmed (pp. 380-81). But his supremacy is powered by gods who favour, strengthen, and protect him. In the scene just mentioned, he is supernaturally attended. When he shouts, Athene shouts with him, and when he appears he is surrounded in a flaming nimbus lit by Athene. Thetis carries his case to Zeus, and it is put through against the will of powerful goddesses. Hephaistos makes him immortal armour. When Hektor at last fights him, he fights at a gross disadvantage, swindled by Athene and deserted by Apollo, with inferior body armour and with no spear. Achilles goes so well guarded by gods that Aineias, himself a divine favourite, can justly complain; none can meet Achilles on fair terms (pp. 406-7).

Nevertheless, Achilles is not in any sense immortal. The legend of almost complete invulnerability is either unknown to Homer or discarded by him. He is closer to the gods than other heroes, but defers to them generally; one failure to do so, in his fight with the river, almost brings him to an abrupt and undignified ending, from which he is saved only by the intervention of stronger divinities. Achilles is prescient beyond others, but his knowledge has limitations, and his character can be invaded by the human emotions of grief (p. 375), fear (p. 411), a passage which makes plain that he is neither semi-divinity nor superman (p. 333), and, above all, anger.

It is the anger of pride, the necessary accompaniment of the warrior's greatness, that springs the tragedy of the *Iliad*. We see it in the treatment of Hektor's body and the slaughter of captives; we see it motivate the quarrel of the first book, where the fourth word of the first line is 'anger'. He dares Agamemnon, makes it almost impossible for the latter to act except as he does. Yet as he leaves to pray for the defeat of his friends, though this prayer amounts to outright treason, we feel, as we are meant to feel, that he is in the right. In the ninth book, the burden shifts. Agamemnon has never touched the girl Briseis, and now he will give her back and offers abundant gifts in addition. The offer is conveyed by three of Achilles' best friends. Odysseus warns him against pride and anger, and appeals to him in the name of friendship, but Achilles rejects all appeals. Then Aias reproaches him, not with treachery or lack of patriotism, but with bad friendship, and Achilles answers (p. 215):

*all that you have said seems spoken after my own mind.
Yet still the heart in me swells up in anger, when I remember
the disgrace that he wrought upon me before the Argives.*

He has now put himself in the wrong. Anger has clouded a high intelligence, and Achilleus acts uncertainly. Before, he had announced his intention of sailing home, but instead stayed by his ships and watched the fighting, torturing himself and the others by his inaction. Now, again, he threatens to go home; but shifts again, and refuses to fight until Hektor reaches the ships of the Myrmidons. Such a moment is near, when Achilleus at last gives way to Patroklos and lets him go in his place. He is again uncertain (pp. 331-32):

*Still, we will let all this be a thing of the past; and it was not
in my heart to be angry forever; and yet I have said
I would not give over my anger until that time came
when the fighting with all its clamour came up to my own ships.
So do you draw my glorious armour about your shoulders;
lead the Myrmidons whose delight is battle into the fighting.*

There is no reason now why Achilleus should not fight himself. His action makes no sense, and is fatal to Patroklos. So Achilleus admits to his mother (p. 377). The tragedy is his, the result of his own choice.

Apollo, outraged at the treatment of his friend Hektor, practically describes Achilleus as a brute and a barbarian (p. 476). He is not. He is a man of culture and intelligence; he knows how to respect heralds, how to entertain estranged friends. He presides over the games with extraordinary courtesy and tact. He is not only a great fighter but a great gentleman, and if he lacks the chivalry of Roland, Lancelot, or Beowulf, that is because theirs is a chivalry coloured with Christian humility which has no certain place in the gallery of Homeric virtues. Above all, Achilleus is a real man, mortal and fallible, but noble enough to make his own tragedy a great one.

AGAMEMNON: THE KING

Most of the greater Achaian heroes are kings in their own right, but the greatest king among them is Agamemnon. Whether he is emperor of the Achaians, or general of the army, or the king with most subjects,

whose friends stand by him in his brother's quarrel (unless he insults them), is a question apparently as obscure to the heroes of the *Iliad* as it is to us. But essentially a king is what he is; not the biggest Achaian, says Priam to Helen, but the kingliest; a bull in a herd of cattle; a lord who must be busy while others rest, marshalling his men for ordered assault. In the quarrel with Achilleus, he demands recognition of his kingly stature, as if afraid of losing his position if he lacks what others have, in this case a captive mistress. So he comes off badly, yet even here, while he reviles Kalchas and beats down Achilleus, his first thought is for the army.

Here, in his position, is the key to Agamemnon's character. As brave and effective a personal fighter as one could ask (Achilleus' strictures are manifestly untrue), Agamemnon is a worried, uncertain man. Beyond others, he drifts in his thinking. He invites the Achaians to go home in order to 'make trial' of them, but ends up as if he had outwitted himself and believed his own falsehoods. Certainly, he stands helpless in front of the confusion he has caused, and it is Odysseus, backed by Hera and Athene, who pulls the situation around. His panic, when Menelaos is treacherously wounded, causes a similar drift of thought: he begins with the assurance that the Trojans must die for their treachery (p. 117) and ends by visualizing a triumphant Trojan jumping on the grave of Menelaos (pp. 117-18). He veers between the two poles of thought: that he can take Troy at once, without Achilleus; that he will be lucky if he gets any of his men home alive. Twice after his test of the second book he proposes mass flight, at once (pp. 198-99, compare p. 218, p. 296). In all moods of despair, he must be rallied and propped up by Odysseus, Nestor, and Diomedes, who are tougher than he. But the uncertainty is that of a king, with whom Homer's aristocratic audience may well have sympathized, and it is his 'kingliness', his concern for those he leads, which grounds his uncertainty.¹ Nevertheless, irresolution and consequent anger combine with the anger of Achilleus to motivate tragedy.

¹ That tyranny corrupts character, so breeds tragedy, becomes a commonplace for Herodotus and the tragic poets. Sophocles' Kreon is the clearest case: a good man, inadequate to monarchy, whose disqualification ruins him and others. Kreon and Agamemnon alike make one rash statement, after which their rebellious opponents give them no chance to escape.

ODYSSEUS: THE PRUDENT COUNSELLOR
AND COMPLETE MAN

Odysseus of the Iliad foreshadows Odysseus of the Odyssey not only in his epithets (resourceful, long-suffering, etc.) but in his whole character. I do not know whether this means that the same man composed both Iliad and Odyssey; but it does mean that the author of the Odyssey thoroughly understood the Odysseus of the Iliad. We can, I think, argue from one work to the other.

Odysseus is crafty, resourceful, daring, and merciless. These characteristics have usually been taken as essentials of his personality, from which stem the stop-at-nothing politician of Sophocles, or Dante's treacherous captain (*Inferno*, Canto 26). But guile and unscrupulousness are only secondary characteristics of the Homeric Odysseus.

Essentially, he can be described by the Greek word *sophron* (though the word is not Homeric). This is untranslatable. It means, not necessarily that you have superior brains, but that you make maximum use of whatever brains you have got. Odysseus is the antithesis of Achilles. Achilles has a fine intelligence, but passion clouds it; Odysseus has strong passions, but his intelligence keeps them under control. Achilles, Hektor, and Agamemnon, magnificent as they are, are flawed with uncertainty and can act on confused motives; Odysseus never. So those three are tragic heroes, but Odysseus, less magnificent but a complete man, is the hero of his own romantic comedy, the *Return of Odysseus*, or *Odyssey*.

A single purpose guides Odysseus in the Iliad. The expedition against Troy must succeed. Whether this motive grows out of personal affection for Agamemnon is not clear. But this is the end toward which the demoralized army must be rallied, Thersites chastised, Achilles propitiated, Agamemnon braced. A single purpose guides Odysseus through the Odyssey as well. He must get home and put his house and kingdom in order. To do this, he must drive his men and himself, outwit and outlast trial by danger and trial by pleasure, leave the blandishing goddesses, fight down his joy at seeing home and wife for fear joy might give him away prematurely, fight down, for the same reason, rage at seeing the disorder in his household.

A man who could win through all this is a man supremely adequate, in mind and body; therefore, by corollary, resourceful, much enduring.

Odysseus can be most eloquent, but he wastes no eloquence on Thersites—who has an unanswerable argument—but beats him up and makes him cry, which is far more effective. He can build a raft and sail it, or build a bed, or plough a field. He has no recklessness, but does have stark courage when that is needed; the Odysseus who makes the plans for others to fight by is post-Homeric. Always equal to the occasion, he startles the Trojans who think he looks like a fool and can be no orator, as he startles the suitors who take him for a broken-down tramp. Not the noblest or stateliest of Homer's heroes, he is the one who survives.

AIAS: THE SOLDIER

Greatest of the warriors after Achilles is Aias. Homer is very firm about this (p. 96), although Diomedes at times seems to surpass anything that Aias can do. Diomedes in his *aristeia* fights under the protection of Athene, and Achilles is constantly attended and favoured by divinities; but Aias carries on, from beginning to end, without benefit of supernatural aid.

A huge man, he is compared to a wall, and carries a great shield of seven-fold ox-hide. He is not the man to sweep the enemy back in a single burst, as Diomedes, Agamemnon, Achilles, or Hektor can do; rather, his fighting qualities appear in a comparison drawn by Idomeneus (pp. 279–80):

*Nor would huge Telamonian Aias give way to any man,
one who was mortal and ate bread, the yield of Demeter,
one who could be broken by the bronze and great stones flung at him.
He would not make way for Achilles who breaks men in battle,
in close combat. For speed of feet none can strive with Achilles.*

Lack of inspired brilliance may go with the failure, in Aias' case, of that divine aid lavished on other heroes. He fights as a big man, with no aura of the supernatural about him; best on defence and when the going is worst. With the other great Achaians out of action, he keeps the Achaian retreat from becoming a rout, defends the wall, and then the ships. At the last moment before Patroklos and the Myrmidons come to the rescue, we find him leading the defence of the ships, baffled by Hektor, beaten, sweating, and arm-weary, without hope, but still fighting. Lacking the

glamour of others, never the greatest leader, Aias remains throughout the best soldier of them all.

PEOPLE OF THE ILIAD IN LATER TRADITION

Space will not allow further analysis of Homeric persons, and such a study has in any case frequently been made. My purpose has been to illustrate, briefly, the coherence of these persons as they appear *in the text of the Homeric poems*, particularly the Iliad. It was necessary to do this, because we too often observe the Homeric hero through a disfiguring mist, and with preconceptions which lead us into error.

The political situation in the Achaian army, as implied in the Iliad, becomes explicitly developed and exploited in later tradition, until we find something like the following. An unscrupulous king, backed by a little group of politicians, not only leads Hellas into a disastrous, unnecessary war, but consistently slights and outrages his noblest warriors. Homer's story of Achilleus, the analogous, unused story of Philoktetes, the post-Homeric tale of Palamedes—Odysseus' rival, a truly wise man, done to death by chicanery¹—show the trend. The people of the epic become, in the fifth century, counters for political propaganda and the exploitations of intra-Hellenic hatreds. To Pindar, Aias is an Aiginetan; to Sophocles, an Athenian. Menelaos, the courtly and considerate *grand seigneur* (and millionaire!) of Iliad and Odyssey, becomes the vulgar villain of Sophocles' *Aias*, the personification of Spartan *machtpolitik* in Euripides' *Andromache*.² Euripides can use Kalchas to vent his spleen against soothsayers, Talthybios to convey an almost equally potent aversion for heralds.³

Such manipulations passed, of course, as 'historical interpretations', and are merely developments, sometimes outrageous, of a situation inherent in the story-pattern of the necessary man. A clear case is the rivalry of Odysseus and Aias. In the Iliad, it does not exist, or at least goes unrecognized. But in the Odyssey, we find allusion⁴ to the story of how the armour of dead Achilleus was awarded to Odysseus, rather than Aias,

¹ See Evelyn-White, *Hesiod*, pp. 493, 495, 505. The story, with variants, was told in the Cycle, and was the subject of a tragedy by Euripides.

² See also Euripides, *Orestes*, *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, and *Trojan Women*.

³ *Helen*, ll. 744-57; *Trojan Women*, ll. 424-26.

⁴ II. 543-51.

and how Aias died as a result. How and why Aias died Homer does not tell us, even in the *Odyssey*; but according to the Cycle, he went mad and killed himself.

By the time Pindar and the tragic poets get to work, the opposed heroes have come to represent the man of counsel and the man-at-arms. Odysseus, his valour and devotion forgotten, has stood ever since for the crafty, treacherous politician.¹ Aias does not come off much better. The story of the armour, *in itself*, demands a character different from that of the hero in the *Iliad*,² for the *Iliad*'s Aias is as soberly sane as anyone in the epic. The reasoning must be something like this: Aias died as a result of not being awarded the armour. Nobody is known to have killed him, he must have killed himself. If so, he must have been mad; and if capable of insanity over such a point of honour, therefore naturally proud, vain, and choleric.³ The bare negative fact of the *Iliad*, that Aias fought so well without divine protection, becomes twisted into a positive story that he arrogantly despised the proffered help of the gods, particularly Athene, the protectress of Diomedes and Odysseus.⁴ Therefore, she wrecked him with delusions which drove him to slaughter cattle in the belief they were his enemies. Here we may have a contamination with Aias' namesake, the Lokrian, who 'defied the lightning' and came to so violent an end. At all events, we have the materials for Shakespeare's unbelievably believable caricature in *Troilus and Cressida*. This is an example of tradition, character, interpretation, and new tradition in the life of Homeric figures.

THE GODS IN THE ILIAD

I have said little in this introduction about the part played by the gods in the story of Troy; partly because the modern reader will generally be

¹ Sophocles' interpretation in his *Aias* is ultimately favourable to Odysseus, but even here he is no warrior. To Euripides (*Iphigeneia in Aulis*, *Trojan Women* particularly) Odysseus is responsible for all the deceptions and most of the brutalities perpetrated by the Achaians.

² If Homer composed the *Odyssey*, did he know, when he composed the *Iliad*, of the fate of Aias? The probability is that, in any case, he did, for there is no variant story which we can trace. If so, he suppressed the episode, with a view to making Aias the sort of person he did make him. The episode could be suppressed, or rather need not be introduced, because it lay outside the proper scope of the *Iliad*.

³ With exactly those faults for which Aias, in the *Iliad*, so effectively reproaches Achilles.

⁴ Sophocles, *Ajax*, ll. 758-77.

more interested in human than divine character; partly because the question is too complicated to be discussed in brief compass. But I will state briefly a few conclusions.

(1) The gods of Homer are mainly immortal men and women, incomparably more powerful than mortals, but like mortals susceptible to all human emotions and appetites, therefore capable of being teased, flattered, enraged, seduced, chastised. As immortal people, they may *also* represent projections of feelings or activities in the observed world. Thus, Ares is an immortal person, son of Zeus, protector of Troy, a brutal and blustering character. Ares is also war (Ares in lower-case, so to speak) and as such he is a force, a fact, and has no character at all. The two concepts may be combined. When Helen protests to Aphrodite, who has dragged her off to Troy for the sake of an unworthy man, I think she is doing two things at once. First, she is appealing to a supernatural person who is making her do what that person wants. Second, she is talking to herself, to that susceptibility (her Aphrodite) which has made her behave in a manner which the excellent mind of Helen considers idiotic.

(2) These gods have, in relation to men, absolute power. God may be overborne by god. The strongest is Zeus, who can do as he pleases, but often refrains from so doing for fear of unpleasantness. Zeus is *not* subject to fate. When Hera protests against his notion of saving Ilion or rescuing Sarpedon, against fate, she implies that he can do these things if he insists. The weighing of destinies on scales, apparently impersonal (pp. 184, 440), is a ceremony representing compromise with a different view.

(3) We simply do not know how seriously Homer took his Olympian gods, to what extent they are his divinities, or those of his tradition, or those of his audience. For narrative, they are enormously useful. They can turn events, reconcile otherwise impossible motives, rescue people who have got to be rescued. But one thing the gods-as-persons of Homer do not do: they do not change human nature. They manipulate Achilles, Aineias, Paris, but they do not make them what they are. The choices are human; and in the end, despite all divine interferences, the Iliad is a story of people.

A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

My aim has been to give a rendering of the Iliad which will convey the meaning of the Greek in a speed and rhythm analogous to the speed and rhythm I find in the original. The best metre for my purpose is a free six-beat line. My line can hardly be called English hexameter. It is less regular than that of Longfellow, or the recent Smith-Miller translation of the Iliad. It is not based on a quantitative theory (or any other theory) as is Robert Bridges' rendering of part of the *Aeneid*. I have allowed anapaests for dactyls, trochees and even iambs for spondees. The line is to be read with its natural stress, not forced into any system.

Matthew Arnold has stated¹ that the translator of Homer must bear in mind four qualities of his author: that he is rapid, plain and direct in thought and expression, plain and direct in substance, and noble. Even one who does not agree in all details with Arnold's very interesting essay must concede that Homer has these qualities. I have tried as hard as I could to reproduce the first three. I do not think *nobility* is a quality to be directly striven for; you must write as well as you can, and then see, or let others see, whether or not the result is noble. I have used the plainest language I could find which might be adequate, and mostly this is the language of contemporary prose. This usage is not 'Homeric'. Arnold points out that Homer used a poetic dialect, but I do not draw from this the conclusion, which Arnold draws, that we should translate him into a poetical dialect of English. In 1951, we do not have a poetic dialect, and if I used the language of Spenser or the King James Version, I should feel as if I were working in Apollonius of Rhodes, or at best Arktinos, rather than Homer. I must try to avoid mistranslation, which would be caused by rating the word of my own choice ahead of the word which translates the Greek. Subject to such qualification, I must render Homer into the best English verse I can write; and this will be in my own 'poetical language', which is mostly the plain English of today.

¹ *On the Study of Celtic Literature* and *On Translating Homer*; p. 149 in Macmillan edition of 1910.