

THE ILIAD  
*of*  
HOMER

TRANSLATED  
WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

## INTRODUCTION

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### 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 Achilles, his most

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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'.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> To be discussed a little later.

<sup>2</sup> 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. 225-248. 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.

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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 Ithaka 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

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

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 Achilles 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 Achilles. He proposes to give back Briseis, whom he swears he has never touched, and to offer many other gifts and honours as well, if Achilles will come back. Odysseus, Aias, and Phoinix convey this message to Achilles, 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 Achilles.

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. Achilles, 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 Achilles 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 Achilleus. 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 Achilleus himself (16. 280-282). 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 Achilleus 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 Achilleus 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 Achilleus. Next day Achilleus calls an assembly of the Achaians and declares the end of his quarrel with Agamemnon and his return to battle. The armies encounter. Achilleus 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 Achilleus. At the last moment, his nerve fails and he runs, with Achilleus 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 Achilleus' 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 Achilleus at night to ask for the return of his son's body. Achilleus 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

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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 (2. 134) 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> 18. 95-100; 22. 356-366, and elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> This is made plain by Homer, Iliad, 9. 352-359. See also the speech of Poulydamas, 18. 254-265.

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### 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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 (12. 445-449 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 (2. 484-493). 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

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

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

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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' (2. 867). Homer does not call the men of Greece Greeks (Graikoi) as we do, nor again Hellenes, as they called themselves.<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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, Achilleus' country, Phthia in Thessaly, rather than of all Greece. Anachronisms and mistakes are possible, though, here as elsewhere.

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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. Phoenix, in order to point his moral, relates to Achilles a piece of recent history, the story of Meleagros (9. 529-605). Nestor, with a blandness that becomes almost unendurable, recites again and again the heroic exploits of himself when young.

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Glaukos has the history of his ancestor, Bellerophontes, 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 (6. 144-211). 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 (9. 186-189).<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> 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' (3. 126-127): 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*, 1. 453-493). See Drerup, 75.

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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 (2. 158-162):

*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 (1. 241-243):

*Then stricken at heart though you be, you will be able  
to do nothing when in their numbers before manslaughtering 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 Menoitides, that is, *the son of Menoitios!*<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> 1. 307. 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.

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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 (24. 25-30) that Hera, Poseidon, and Athene hated Ilium and its people 'because of the sin of Paris, who insulted the

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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 4. 31-33, 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 (22. 359) 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. 493-494; 11. 523) and is said to have been built by Epeios (8. 493; 11. 523). Epeios comes into the Iliad once (23. 665) 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

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

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prose account of the contents<sup>1</sup> the general accuracy of which there is no reason to doubt. The important points concerning those parts of the Cycle which concern us<sup>2</sup> 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 of 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 (2. 716-725), the death of Protesilaos (2. 695-710), find their appropriate places in the chronicle of the Cycle.

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

<sup>1</sup> 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 Homericica*, ed. Evelyn-White, London and Cambridge, Mass. (Loeb series), new and revised edition 1936.

<sup>2</sup> 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 <sup>1</sup>	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	Aithiopis	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 Iliion and the departure of the Achaians	Sack of Iliion	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		24
From the return of Odysseus to his death	Telegony	Eugammon of Kyrene (or Kinaihos of Lakedaimon)	In question 568 B.C.	2

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

## INTRODUCTION

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 Klytimestra (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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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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 literature<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

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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*, 654-662), suggests that the order Homer-Hesiod-Archilochos is the right one.

One more consideration. The works of Archilochos and Kallinos certainly, of Arktinos, Stasinos, 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> 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.