The Nature of Homeric Composition

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Sing, Goddess, of Friedrich son of Wolf,
Who brought countless griefs upon the Homerists,
And sent to Hades many valiant souls of professors,
When on a time there clashed together in strife
The lynx-eyed Analysts and much-enduring Unitarians.
First did one hero take up a huge, jagged hypothesis,
(Though he alone believed it quite easily),
And hurled it at foeman's shield of six indubitable strata;
But, checked thereby, the shameless assumption glanced aside.
Next did the other lift up a much larger hypothesis,
And threw it, nor missed, at enemy's book:
Through six editions did the missile penetrate,
But the seventh stopped it, made of the hide of a calf.
Then the two armies advanced with clamour unspeakable,
And a chorus of Babel arose before the face of heaven.
As when the South Wind sheds a mist over mountain-peaks,
A mist hated of shepherd, but to robber better than night,
Even so ascended a thick dust-cloud of uncertainty
From beneath their feet as they went.

Cf. CR 25 (1911) 63.

The Homeric Question is an apt phrase. The difficulty of any genuine attempt to determine the process by which our texts of the Iliad and the Odyssey were composed may well lead even an optimist to despair. But the greatness of the poems inspires lasting pleasure and interest in every age and I hope will permit a hearing for my claim, however deluded, to be able to progress a little nearer the heart of the matter.

Let me say in advance (though I shall do my utmost to avoid using these conclusions in argument) that I believe the poems to have been composed, more or less as we have them, by a single person in a process which I call "the progressive fixation of a text." I deliberately use this
new-fangled expression, because I think we have to deal with a very special situation. I do not consider the composer an oral poet as defined by the scholars who employ this description, nor do I think it could be other than misleading to say without qualification that he wrote. Still, write I believe he did, and I will try to show how.

For my whole position on Homer the most crucial issue is that of single versus multiple authorship, and I do not think it can ever be insisted strongly enough that the earliest tradition about the poems attributes them to one man.

When Denys Page writes "the fact that tradition attached to both poems a single name, Homer, would be instructive if we knew what it meant," he is tendentiously expressing as doubtful what is on the contrary an uncompromising assertion. I freely grant the tradition may be a mistaken one. But it was not a tradition beset by uncertainty or ambiguity. In the classical age of Greece no one questioned the unity of the Iliad or of the Odyssey, or doubted that both were the work of one poet: Homer. Nor in the Hellenistic age, when the production of literary masterpieces ceased, and the Greeks diverted their great talents to subtle speculations and argumentation, not then were Homer's existence and title challenged. True, among these pieces of sophistry were attempts to prove that the Iliad and the Odyssey were put together by different authors; but Aristarchus called them paradoxes and wrote a tract in refutation. Seneca referred to them as an example of that Greek perversity in seeking absurd themes for argument. Lucian satirized them. And the world at large dismissed them as the whimsical fancies of professorial cranks until in 1795 F. A. Wolf produced his famous Prolegomena. This was the age of Voltaire and the French Revolution: an age of disbelief and scepticism; an age which glorified the common man and dethroned the great; an age animated by the conviction that mankind progresses and flourishes, not principally under the leadership of genius, but under the impetus of the collective efforts of the people. For Wolf, the Iliad and the Odyssey were folk-poetry, the poetic expression of the entire people, and not the creation of any single superior genius. Wolf's main reason for doubting the unity of the Homeric poems was that writing was unknown at the time the Iliad originated or was so little known that it could not be used for literary purposes; and without writing Wolf regarded it as impossible that a poem of such bulk as the Iliad should either have been composed or, granting that miracle, that it should have been preserved. His conclusions were these: the Homeric poems were originally not written at all but composed in the memory; exposed to the alterations of chance and design, they were carried abroad by rhapsodists until the technology of a
lettered age secured for them a written form. This is essentially the view of the analysts, a view held by many scholars today: the creative poets are beyond our reach; their material took centuries to attain its present form in our written Iliad and Odyssey; and the process was one of constant deterioration from artistic excellence. Naturally this view, utterly incompatible with the belief of antiquity, aroused and still arouses a good deal of spirited reaction. But although the unitarians were able to contrive some compelling arguments for adhering to ancient tradition, they must on the whole be deemed unsuccessful in their attempts to controvert, when they chose to meet, the arguments of their analytical opponents.

It often happens that progress does not occur in precisely the quarter at which effort has been directed, and in some ways Milman Parry's studies of formulae and his investigations into the nature of oral poetry have diverted attention from the real issue. For Milman Parry and his successors it is axiomatic that the Iliad and Odyssey have been orally composed; composed, that is to say, without the aid of writing. But this is merely to restate the problem, for by simple definition the Iliad and Odyssey are written texts; and in trying to solve the riddle of authorship we are forced back to regard the Homeric question, with Wolf, as fundamentally a matter of reconciling the existence of our written Iliad and Odyssey with the features of oral composition which they allegedly display. Albert Lord's theory that the poems are "oral dictated texts" is the only one to command any measure of acceptance; and in my earlier paper on Homer I expressed my own assent. Sixteen years however have made me conscious of grave difficulties which that theory does not solve, and also of certain aspects of Homeric composition not paralleled in the Yugoslav epics, which have (otherwise quite reasonably) been taken as imposing firm criteria for speculation about the technique of formulaic composition. Consequently I now modify my earlier paper in suggesting a different method of composition whilst maintaining the view that "Homer was a collector and stitcher of lays who effected the first great literary exploitation of the alphabet by compiling and preserving in two designedly comprehensive epics the vast treasures of oral literature." If such a view of Homer were correct, we might expect to find—contrary to the doctrine of Milman Parry—indications that the text is regarded by the poet as something to be fixed. Indeed, we should be able to detect signs of the poet's procedure in composition, fixed passages, and the intention to fix. Moreover, if the poet is designedly blending and amalgamating songs, we might expect to find: (a) continuous structural problems, and (b) a continuous combination of heterogeneous and exclusive elements. Let us consider these two matters first.
It is a natural fallacy, but a fallacy nevertheless, to regard all logical inconsistencies in the Homeric poems as marks of inferior artistry or, if not that, marks betraying the conflicting intentions of different composers. If we choose to bring a microscope to the text of the Odyssey, we may with Denys Page regard the work as seriously corrupted at the beginning, seriously corrupted in the middle, and seriously corrupted at the end. Indeed, seriously corrupted everywhere. This reductio ad absurdum should give us pause. And we meet the same views when we turn to Walter Leaf, a dedicated and appreciative Homerist, whose monumental edition of the Iliad is still for us English-speakers the most learned and helpful companion to the song of the wrath of Achilles the Peleiad. Before the text of each single book Leaf gives an appreciation of the argument, quite free from polemic or conceit, and certainly sensitive to the art of the poet. Let me quote a few extracts:

Book 1: “The problem of the composition of the Iliad meets us in a peculiarly subtle and difficult aspect on the very threshold of the poem. The first book seems, even to a careful reader, to be a perfect and indivisible whole; yet it is here that the severest battles of the critic have been fought.”

Book 2: “In the first book we found a marked unity of conception and development, marred at most by a somewhat superficial contradiction in a secondary point. With this book the case is very different; hardly any portion of the Iliad has caused such trouble to the defenders of unity of composition.”

Book 3: “... one of the most brilliant and picturesque pieces of narrative in the Iliad. But when we come to relate the section to the rest of the poem, the question is by no means so simple. There are amply sufficient grounds to prove that this part of the Iliad had no place in the story of the Menis.”

Book 4: “No serious difficulty within the story itself, though its relationship to the rest of the Iliad is fraught with thorny questions.”

Book 5: “The structure of this part of the Iliad presents a most difficult problem.”

And so for Books 6 and 7 and 8, and for every single book to the very end. Not one is free from structural problems. Thus, while Leaf eschews the rhetorical flourish and denigratory thrust characteristic of Page, his conclusions are essentially the same: structural and organic blemishes exist from the first book to the very last; the original author of the Menis has had his work no less seriously interfered with than the unhappy minstrel of the Nostos. Not only the Doloneia has been added, but the Catalogue, most of the combats, the Embassy, the Shield, and the very ransom of Hector's body—not to mention the Games, of which no less a dramatist than Schiller declared that no man who had read it could complain that he had lived in vain.
Now what is most significant is not that critics have claimed that serious difficulties occur here in the poem, or there; but rather that they have detected such difficulties consistently throughout the *Iliad*, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, just as Page (following Kirchhoff and others) did in the *Odyssey*. What we must answer is not, what is the solution of this particular difficulty, but rather, why is no single book free from structural difficulty? Even in formulating the question we discern the glimmering of an answer. The very nature of Homeric composition involves these structural difficulties: nothing is in fact so Homeric as the contradictions, interpolations, and accretions assumed without a thought as un-Homeric. Evidently they were inseparably bound up with the circumstances of composition. These structural difficulties must not— the usual mistake of the unitarian—be underestimated or argued as not existing: they are there all right. But two millennia of readers have definitively ignored them in pronouncing Homer the greatest of poets. We, who study them, must see them in the proper perspective.

And we must never forget that the great artist is not a perfectionist: no painter of genius ever confined himself to what a camera could do. You remember that illuminating discussion in Lessing’s *Laocoon* where the German critic explains that visual art is best suited to description of the static, literary art to narration of the dramatic. Homer has full control of this insight. The pictures on Achilles’ shield are not described as static but are quickened into action. Homer does not say “this picture shows us a city besieged,” “this picture shows us a trial-scene,” but without explaining or excusing his art he launches at once into narrative: we can visualize the picture in our mind’s eye the better for being told what the people in the picture have done, are doing, and will do than if we were simply told who they are and where they are.

Such are the grand aims of the poet’s art. But he has a price to pay: he can only secure those aims, if he conciliates the sympathies of his audience. Let him be persistently interrupted by a heckler asking how the pictures on the shield can move or simultaneously represent different moments in time, and he will become a laughing-stock. And a laughing-stock he is sometimes made to appear. In a tense scene the ghost of Ajax confronts Odysseus and turns away in silence, a silence extolled by the so-called Longinus as more sublime than any speech and by Rome’s greatest poet deemed worthy of imitation. Says Denys Page: “The ghost of Ajax stood apart, silent and sullen, nursing resentment against Odysseus for the wrong it suffered at his hands in the world above. Odysseus implored it to forgive him and to join him in conversation:
'but it made no answer, and went after the other ghosts into Erebus' (563 f.). That surely was all: the unforgiving ghost of Ajax disappears without a word into the gloom. What drabness now intrudes upon the sombre beauty of the poet's thought, merely in order to make way for Minos and his vassal ghosts? 'And there nevertheless he would have spoken to me, for all his anger, or I to him; only my heart within me desired to see the ghosts of other persons dead' (565 f.). The silence of Ajax, then, was accidental, imposed by the requirements of a time-table. Given another moment he would have spoken. And Odysseus' plea, that Ajax might forgive and speak to him, was nothing but formal politeness: Ajax was about to reply, but Odysseus is in a hurry, he cannot wait for the answer; another day, perhaps, but just now time is pressing. Surely we are justified in concluding with certainty that whoever conceived the image of the silent ghost of Ajax did not at once proceed to destroy his own conception?" But that the matter is not so simple emerges from a similar situation elsewhere.

Book 7 of the Iliad contains a duel between Hector and Ajax. Says Geoffrey Kirk: "He lays out Hector with a stone-throw, but Apollo quickly gets the Trojan on his feet again (VII.268 ff.). Now what will happen? 'Then indeed they would have smitten each other at close range with swords' (273)—if the heralds had not stopped the proceedings because of bad light. 'Night is coming on,' they say, 'it is good to obey night' (282)! Ajax says he will stop if Hector will, and so these duellers-to-the-death happily exchange pieces of equipment as souvenirs: a pretty piece of anti-climax, and almost inconceivable as untrammeled invention for a poem like the Iliad unless by a singularly mediocre poet." "Singularly mediocre poet" is a judgment which betrays an unsympathetic auditor. What the poet is doing in these two passages, as I claim to be able to show, is to effect a juncture between two blocks of different auditor. He does not want to drop Ajax and abruptly introduce Minos, nor does he wish to kill off inexpediable heroes, but has elected to secure a transition in the one passage and a suspension in the other by means of a contrary-to-fact apodosis: from a sympathetic viewpoint no one could reasonably imagine that Ajax was willing to forgive Odysseus or that the duellers-to-the-death were really shamming.

The Iliad and the Odyssey are poems made up of many elements. This is most obvious of the Odyssey. In his enchanting book Woodhouse distinguishes as components the Deep-sea Yarns, five Popular Tales, the Saga of Odysseus, and the Quest of Telemachus (I omit what he terms the Poet's Cement). Even in these components we find that the poet has
added (and, let it be admitted, confused) themes and tales and verses and phrases from sources none now can tell. The same is true of the *Iliad*.

We must therefore be prepared for disparate elements in Homeric epic. When Page talks of "the Homeric idea of Hades," he is imputing to Homer a disinclination, indeed an inability, to take and adapt to his own ends any story about Hades which does not conform to "the Homeric idea of Hades." Consequently for him parts of the *Necyia* cannot be Homeric, nor the *Continuation*, whose poet "is very far from the Homeric conception of the geography of Hades." But "the Homeric this" or "the Homeric that" is a fallacy: there is no such thing as a Homeric norm; all is grist to the poet's mill. "It is proper to observe," says Page, "the differences between the *Catalogue* and the *Iliad.*" This is a tendentious formulation, implying that the *Catalogue* is essentially different from the rest of the *Iliad*, which this sentence of Page's implies to be a homogeneous unit. Page later tells us: "The embassy was added to an *Iliad* which neither had it nor allowed for it." This implies that Book 9 deviates from the norm of 1–8, 10–24. But of course this is not an implication which Page intends at all: he is explicit in regarding all or part of Books 10, 11, 14, 15, 21, 23, and 24 as un-Iliadic; and he will surely have to disown the *Reconciliation* (19) after what he has said about it; indeed, if pressed would probably part with more. And it is interesting to speculate whether, if compelled to apply his own criteria everywhere, he would be compelled to part with the lot.

The important point is this, that disparate and incompatible elements are not just for being such to be considered as an indication, still less as proof, of multiple authorship or widespread contamination or corruption of the poems: they are simply the material out of which the poet has constructed his poem. This heterogeneous nature of the Homeric poems finds on the linguistic side a parallel, for the curious amalgam of dialects which is the Homeric language attests a willingness to tolerate side by side exclusive forms.

It might be thought that the conception of the Homeric poems so far outlined permits of a collector or editor who did little more than stitch together the words of others. This, however, cannot be so; we are compelled to assume that the maker of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* refashioned what he collected, and in doing so exercised an originality far greater than modern scholarship seems willing to allow him.

I confine myself to one example of Homer's own creations—the hero Odysseus. I seem to sense your surprise. "Surely," I hear you saying to yourselves, "surely the crafty Odysseus and all his exploits and travels
were part of the tradition which Homer inherited?" Well, let us see. We must admit that the name Odysseus was once borne by a man of flesh and blood, who was, like Atreus, Achilleus, Tydeus, Capanoeus, Oeneus, Theseus, one of those old Helladic kings who, very curiously, have sons whose names, unlike their own, are Greek compounds: Telemachus, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Neoptolemus, Diomedes, Sthenelus, Meleager, Hippolytus, Demophoon. However, the historical Odysseus was a minor king of an obscure island, whose life and death left little mark upon Greek legend. He must have seemed to Homer, as did Aeneas centuries later to Virgil, the ideal person for transfiguration into a superhuman hero.

Consider first the *Odyssey*. The chief themes of the poem are drawn from folktale: one such is the deep-sea yarns, those marvellous adventures which take the hero and his companions from the Cicones to the cattle of the sun Hyperion; as everyone admits, the scenes with the Cyclops, Circe, Scylla, Charybdis, and the Phaeacians belong to a fairyland, as does the hero, whom we may call Sinbad or even leave unnamed. It is not fanciful to see a trace of this folktale figure even on Homer’s own lips: "Tell me, O Muse, of the man of many wiles, who wandered right far, who saw the cities of many men and knew their minds; many were the sorrows which he suffered on the sea, when he tried to win his own life and the return of his companions."

Homer’s dazzling success has obscured the simplicity of his art, for here at the very beginning of the *Odyssey*, he has not named Odysseus, nor given us the slightest word about Penelope and the suitors, let alone Telemachus: Homer’s material here, you will see on reflection, must once have referred only to the deep-sea yarns. And on finding that in the deep-sea yarns, Athene, Odysseus’ constant protectress, plays no such role, we may reasonably suspect that it was only in our poem (not in its sources) that she acquired that role; and seemingly here in our poem that the hero of the deep-sea yarns first acquired his present name. Another theme woven into the epic, the husband who returns in the nick of time to save his wife’s honor, she having for three full years kept her suitors at bay with the ruse of the web, is incompatible with Odysseus and his twenty-year-old son. The clear conclusion to be drawn is that it is the author of the *Odyssey*, our *Odyssey*, and not his sources, who is responsible for building up the dim historical Odysseus into a full and sharply defined character; and Homer does so very cunningly by what I may call “association,” associating him with Nestor and Menelaus and, in the underworld scenes, with the great Achacans who died at Troy.

Let us now turn to the *Iliad*. Where does Odysseus appear? Well, the fact is, he practically never appears other than in a minor role, except in
scenes and books almost universally acknowledged as late or interpolated; or, as I should put it, secondary passages designedly created by Homer for the purpose (though not necessarily the sole purpose) of giving life to the character of Odysseus; he is practically absent from Books 1; 6–8; 12–18; 20–22; 24, but is significantly prominent in controversial contexts, such as the Thersites passage, the Embassy, and the Doloneia. Take such passages away, and Odysseus is reduced to what we find him in the Catalogue, to what Homer, I believe, found him in the tradition, a minor chieftain of no special consequence. The model of oralism fabricated by Milman Parry has engendered an absurd disbelief in the poet's originality, in spite of such evidence as the fictitious accounts Odysseus gives of himself: The Doloneia, for example, unthinkable without Achilles' anger, must have been composed for the place it occupies, and can hardly have existed as an independent lay. Some ten years ago in an excellent article Willcock showed that much casual reference to mythology in Homer does not depend on centuries of oral tradition but has been invented by the poet for the particular needs of the occasion.

Much of the incompatibility between the analyst and unitarian positions will disappear if due regard is given to the length of time it would have taken a single person to create the poems. How would Homer have composed the Iliad? Not in linear fashion, beginning with Book 1, then Book 2, and so on. Clearly he built it up gradually. There will have been a time when his repertory—and thus his poem—had no Catalogue, no Embassy, no Wall, no Doloneia. They were added later, as the poem expanded. The analytical school generally assumes that this process of addition and expansion took a vast number of years and involved many composers. The latter at least is an unnecessary hypothesis. No consideration which it involves becomes more difficult if one imagines a poet, Homer in fact, who over a period of years gathered a repertory of songs about the Trojan War. At one time he sang of the gathering at Aulis; at another of the seduction of Helen. Later he fitted these songs and others to his Wrath poem. Similarly with the Odyssey. Woodhouse's Components were doubtless once separate, but it is as likely that one as it is that many welded them together; and equally likely that this was he who composed the Iliad. For antiquity inherited no legend about two great poets. So let us now see how in fact Homer put his poems together. In the ninth book of the Iliad Agamemnon sends an embassy to Achilles offering amends. The episode is not a basic element of the story, and it does not affect the forward movement of the epic as a whole. The embassy fails; Agamemnon and the Greeks are no better off at the end of Book 9 than they
notice them. But how unsatisfactory that is emerges from the reformulation: Why did the Insertor of Phoenix, if not Homer, not adapt the contradictory duals? These must have sharply confronted his attention. Clearly, the text which Homer (or whom you will) was in process of expanding was fixed. It could be altered, as was II. 9.169 and 223 and other lines. But for some reason wholesale changes of the text were undesirable, an obstacle lay in the way, and alteration was kept to the absolute minimum.

The practice of inserting an additional scene into an already finished composition does not lack parallels in literature. Let me give a Latin example. In his 64th poem Catullus describes the wedding of Peleus and Thetis: that lines 50-266 which tell the story of Theseus and Ariadne were added later, two indications suggest, apart from the fact that, had the mss omitted the episode, its loss would defy detection: first, in those verses—as opposed to the rest of Catullus—there is a marked concentration of language showing the influence of Lucretius, as Munro insists in his commentary at 3.57; and secondly, the insertion imports a glaring anachronism: the marriage is an immediate sequel to the voyage of the Argo, the first ship, and yet the inserted passage describes as on view at the wedding the picture of Theseus sailing away from the wave-sounding shore of Dia with his speedy fleet. This illustration prompts some instructive reflections: there is of course no suggestion that not Catullus, but someone else, inserted the passage into his poem; furthermore, Catullus is dealing with emotions and actions not as particulars forming part of a historical sequence, but as universals possessing eternal validity, and he may even from the beginning have envisaged his poem as needing completion with just such a centrepiece, though without forming a detailed conception of what it should be. Applying these reflections to Iliad 9, we shall feel justified in pursuing the ideas (1) that Homer, not another, inserted the Embassy; (2) that the logical inconsistencies involved do not affect the universal validity of the action; and (3) that such insertions were characteristic of Homer's composition on a grand scale.

Before moving on, I should like to touch briefly on what seems to me another large-scale fallacy of those who favor multiple authorship. Inconsistent stories reflect different versions; and inconsistent linguistic forms reflect different traditions. It is evidently considered legitimate to postulate an infinitude of diversity upon which Homer's style is based. But there are limits, and that these are much narrower than most scholars realize was strikingly shown a quarter of a century ago by Manu Leumann in his brilliant Homerische Wörter. I say "brilliant," referring to his discoveries rather than his conclusions.
Very briefly, he showed that diverse and incompatible morphological and semantic phenomena, so far from being unrelated to each other, could be—indeed must be—explained as a development which took place within our Homeric corpus. For example, ἄγγελίη in II. 11.140 is an analogous development from ἄγγελίης in II. 3.206. I accept (I do not think scholars are left much choice) the general lines of his relative stratification within the two poems.

Where we are poles apart is that, for him, every single development is the misunderstanding of some dactylic ignoramus (i.e., our Homeric poems were composed by a succession of philological morons) whereas, for me, every single development is the deliberate innovation of one versifier working in special conditions.

I often see Homer refashioning his own verses, where others see scores of pseudo-Homers. Take Od. 3.311. This verse tells us that Menelaus returned on the very same day that Orestes held the funeral of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.

ἀυτήμαρ δέ οὐ ἠθε βοήν ἀγαθὸς Μενέλαος

On-self-same-day to-him came Menelaus good-at-the-war-cry.

What is the point of the coincidence? Well, nothing dramatically, but the line is modelled on II. 2.408, where Menelaus arrives at Agamemnon’s banquet of his own accord:

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Self-invited to-him came Menelaus good-at-the-war-cry.

The real nature of Homeric composition is nowhere more plainly to be seen than in the Catalogue in Book 2, which everybody recognizes to have been adapted to the poem as a whole. Unfortunately, the true significance of the adaptation has been overshadowed by the astonishing theory, generally held in some form or other by modern scholars, “(a) that the Achaean and Trojan Catalogues are substantially inheritances from the later Mycenaean period, orally transmitted through the Dark Ages; (b) that both Catalogues are, and so far as we can tell have always been, Orders of Battle; and that their connection with an overseas expedition must be historically true.” That, like so much else Mycenaean in the Homeric poems, Mycenaean names survived the Dark Ages on the lips of men, it is reasonable to assume. But to talk of Battle-orders and historical truth provokes irreverent criticism and a comparison with the faith of those who believe that the geography of the Odyssey corresponds with reality. What was the purpose of preserving this battle-order,
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Self-invited to-him came Menelaus good-at-the-warcry.

The real nature of Homeric composition is nowhere more plainly to be seen than in the Catalogue in Book 2, which everybody recognizes to have been adapted to the poem as a whole. Unfortunately, the true significance of the adaptation has been overshadowed by the astonishing theory, generally held in some form or other by modern scholars, “(a) that the Achaean and Trojan Catalogues are substantially inheritances from the later Mycenaean period, orally transmitted through the Dark Ages; (b) that both Catalogues are, and so far as we can tell have always been, Orders of Battle; and that their connection with an overseas expedition must be historically true.” That, like so much else Mycenaean in the Homeric poems, Mycenaean names survived the Dark Ages on the lips of men, it is reasonable to assume. But to talk of Battle-orders and historical truth provokes irreverent criticism and a comparison with the faith of those who believe that the geography of the Odyssey corresponds with reality. What was the purpose of preserving this battle-order,
and why was it composed without reference to its cause or conclusion? Battles concern people, and the names of the leaders who lead people in the Catalogue yield small grounds for confidence in their historical reality. Protesilau's leadership of the Phylacians is original to the earliest stratum of the Catalogue, but he is noteworthy only as the first to fall at Troy. No connection with Nestor or his genealogy occurs in the Pylos tablets, as we should expect had a king of that name ruled over Pylos at the time of the Trojan war; not that this comes as a surprise to those who see in Homer's elaborate introduction of him in II. 1.247 ff. evidence that he is a comparative newcomer to the Trojan saga. Odysseus, of course, comes from folk-tale, and there rather than in the historical Ithaca he belongs. Achilles, Ajax—can we really believe that these men were enrolled in a Mycenaean Battle-order? Take away the names of the leaders, and we have left a list of presumed Mycenaean place-names. Actually it is these that have won such confidence for the Catalogue, for as far as can be checked they correspond with Mycenaean sites. Need we wonder at this? In Homer's day remembrance of the Mycenaean age, even of places obliterated by the Dorians, must have been greater than we can now verify. The Catalogue, then, need be no less Homer's work than the rest of the Homeric poems. Let us, for example, consider a typical entry, the 6 verses 2.511-516:

511 And they who dwelt in Aspledon and Minyan Orchomenus,
These were led by Ascalaphus and Ialmenus, sons of Ares,
Whom Astyoche bore in palace of Azeid Actor,
Honored maiden, having ascended to upper chamber,
515 To mighty Ares; for he lay with her secretly.
And with these were ranked thirty hollow ships.

The second verse is evidently formulaic, and is virtually repeated at 9.82 (that is, it was a formula in the repertory of the poet who added the Embassy); similarly Peneleos and Leitus of 494 reappear together at 13.91 f. and 17.597 f.; Arcesilau's and Clonius of 495 reappear almost together at 15.329 and 340: we need deny none of these lines to Homer. Verses 513-515 hardly go back to the Mycenaean age (they, too, contain Homeric formulae), nor 516, which apart from other considerations contains the late Ionic form of the word for "ships." Thus, all in this entry which need be older than Homer is the two place-names in 511.

I believe that the Catalogue in an earlier form was actually written down by Homer himself, and comprised a narration of the Gathering at Aulis. Subsequently in his career, when he had conceived the plan of a grand epic, he adapted this narration so that it should become The Review at Troy. The poet had to consider two matters: (1) changes of personnel,
and (2) mention of ships. We find that both items are inorganically added, that is, the verses of the earlier version are preserved, even when some embarrassment arises, and whole verses are added. It seems that the earlier version was fixed. Let the principle be illustrated from 603 ff.

603 And they that held Arcadia beneath steep Cyllene,  
By tomb of Aepytus, where men fight in close combat,
605 And they that dwelt in Pheneus . . .,
609 These were led by Ancaeus' son Agapenor,
610 With sixty ships; and on each ship many
Arcadians embarked, skilled in fighting.  
For Agamemnon, king of men, had given them
Well-benched ships to cross the wine-dark sea,
Since matters of the sea were no concern to them.
615 And they that dwelt in Buprasium and goodly Elis,
Such as Hyrmine and littoral Myrsinus
And the rock of Olen and Alesium enclose within,
These had four leaders, and each one did ten
Swift ships follow, and many Épeians embarked . . .
625 And those from Dulichium and the sacred Echinae
Isles, that lie across the sea opposite Elis,
These did Meges lead, . . .
630 And with him followed forty black ships.
And Odysseus led the high-hearted Cephallenians,
Who dwelt in Ithaca and Neritô . . .
637 And with him followed twelve red-cheeked ships.
And Thoas, Andraemon's son, led the Aetolians,
Who dwelt in Pleuron and Olenus and Pylene . . .
644 And with him followed forty black ships.

Observe that the ship-verses have been added systematically, as they have been also at 509–510; 516; 524; 534–535; 545; 556; 568; 587; 602; 652; 680; 733; 737; 747; and 759. It is hard to believe that an oral refashioning of the Gathering would so consistently have maintained line-diaeresis. The few ship-entries which are not easily detachable permit of special explanations and probably all belong to the second stratum. One occurs with mention of Ajax: but it is clear that Ajax himself has been added; and this addition caused a modification elsewhere.

527 And the Locrians were led by the swift Oileid, Ajax,
The lesser, by no means as great as Telamonian Ajax,
But far less. Short was he, with linen corselets,
530 And with spear he surpassed all Hellenes and Achaeans, . . .
534 And with him followed forty black ships.
. . .
557 And Ajax from Salamis led twelve ships
And stationed them with the Athenian battalions.
Consider the significance. First, mention of Telamonic Ajax is added after 556; then a consequential alteration is made at 527, at an earlier verse. It follows that the poet is not expanding in a straightforward linear fashion. We cannot impute this to some post-Homeric editor: the presence of Telamonic Ajax in the Homeric Catalogue is crucial; without Ajax we have no Iliad. Nor to a post-Homeric editor can we impute any of the following, all inorganic additions to what seems to be an embarrassingly fixed text.

(a) The death of Protesilaus:

695 And they that held Phylace and flowery Pyrasus,
Sanctuary of Demeter, and Iton, mother of flocks,
And Antron by sea and grassy Pteleos,
These were led by the warlike Protesilaus,
Whilst he lived; but ere this black earth held him.
700 And in Phylace was left his wife with tearful cheeks
And house half-finished; for him a Dardan slew
Leaping forth from ship, far first of Achaeans.
Even so they lacked not a leader, though they missed him,
But Podarces, scion of Ares, marshalled them,
705 Son of Phylacid Iphicles rich in sheep,
Own brother of great-hearted Protesilaus,
Younger by birth; the other was elder and better
Man, warlike Protesilaus; so the people did not
Lack a leader, though they missed that noble man.
710 And with him followed forty black ships.

(b) The absence of Philoctetes:

716 And they that dwelt in Methone and Thaumacia
And held Meliboea and rugged Olizon,
These were led by Philoctetes the skilled archer
With seven ships; and on each fifty oarsmen
720 Embarked, skilled archers to fight amain.
But he lay on island, suffering severe pains,
On sacred Lemnos, where the Achaeans had left him
Suffering from grievous wound of deadly snake.
So there he lay pained; but soon were to remember
725 Argives by ships the prince Philoctetes.
Even so they lacked not a leader, though they missed him,
But Medon, natural son of Oileus, marshalled them,
Whom Rhene bore to Oileus, sacker of cities.

It is to be noted that 705 may have belonged to the earlier version, but the identical verses 703 and 726, which perform a formulaic function, show that the poet making the additions is either creating or drawing upon elements generally supposed to be the prerogative of the oral composer.
(c) The defection of Achilles:

Now them that inhabited Pelasgian Argos,
And those that dwelt in Alus and Alope and Trachis,
And held Phthia and Hellas, land of fair women,
And were called Myrmidons and Hellenes and Achaeans,

Of fifty ships of these was Achilles captain.
Yet they were not mindful of tearful war,
For there was none to lead them into the ranks.
For swift-footed goodly Achilles lay among ships,
In anger over the fair-haired maiden Briseis,
Whom after much toil he had taken from Lynnessus,
Having sacked Lynnessus and the walls of Thebes,
And felled Mynes and Epistrophus, spear-wielding heroes,
Sons of prince Evenus, son of Selephus,
So for her he lay pained; but soon was to rise again.

Notice that 694 has the same pattern as 724.

Here, then, we are observing the author of the *Iliad* at work. Our earlier speculation, that amendments of the text were difficult to make, whilst there was no apparent bar on addition, seems to have held. The clues seem to indicate that Homer was writing down his text, and writing it down in such a laborious way that he preferred expansion and explanation to deletion and alteration. It is tempting to see here the psychology of those early writers, who first wrote in alphabetic script with pens. We must be very careful not to think of them endowed with our easy familiarity with writing: rather, imagine a man laboriously chiselling out the letters of the words of his verses on a stone wall of unlimited length, and one may better appreciate why Homer, when he inserted the embassy and again later when he inserted Phoenix, and when he painstakingly but guilelessly continued the Catalogue of ships, did so with a minimum of deletion and alteration. Likely enough Homer used papyrus, but for him the act of writing must have been exceedingly taxing; alteration was not something to be resorted to lightly.

That the *Iliad* was composed by a process of expansion solves many problems. The promise of Zeus to Thetis that he will aid the Trojans (Book 1) finds its natural outcome in the Trojan success (Book 11), and so the story was once told. At some time was inserted the poignant farewell of Hector and Andromache (Book 6), as, accompanied by Paris, he went out to his last fight; and perhaps we should see in the exploits of Hector and Paris in Book 11 a vestige of this older sequence. However that may be, it is clear that the Trojan success in Book 11, which secured the Greeks the sympathy of Patroclus, once led immediately to the situation at the beginning of Book 16.
Says Nestor to Patroclus:

11.656 "Why only now does Achilles pity the sons of the Achaeans? 

Lie at the ships smitten and wounded.

660 Smitten is Tydeus' son, mighty Diomedes, 
And wounded is spear-famed Odysseus, and Agamemnon 
And smitten is Eurypylus too with arrow in thigh."

The report is conveyed to Achilles (after an interval of several books):

16.21 "Achilles, son of Peleus, far mightiest of Achaeans, 
Be not angered: such grief has overpowered Achaeans. 
For they all who once were bravest 
Lie at the ships smitten and wounded. 
Smitten is Tydeus' son, mighty Diomedes, 
And wounded is spear-famed Odysseus, and Agamemnon 
And smitten is Eurypylus too with arrow in thigh."

These little blocks of text, repeated verbatim, occur not infrequently in both poems, but almost always at short intervals. Much of Agamemnon's speech at 9.115 ff. is repeated by Odysseus a hundred lines later, just as Zeus' speech at II. 24.144 ff. is repeated by Iris at 172 ff. (and, in abbreviated form, by Priam 22 lines later). In the first book of the Iliad the invocation of Chryses to Apollo in 37-42 is except for the last verse identical with his invocation in 451-456. The second occurrence at least cannot be an impromptu oral composition: it must be the repetition of a fixed text. Consult the mendacious accounts Odysseus gives of himself at Od. 14.258 ff. and Od. 17.427 ff., and you will find that the first fifteen lines of each are identical. Here, too, the second occurrence cannot be an impromptu creation, and must be a repetition of the first, a fixed text.

Let me refer briefly to two other passages in the Iliad which are manifest additions to a fixed text. The first addition is Book 18, and concerns the Shield of Achilles. Earlier the poet had told how Patroclus went to the assistance of the Achaeans wearing his own armour. Afterwards he conceived the fine idea of creating special arms—in particular a special shield—for Achilles. Therefore, let Achilles' arms be given to Patroclus and be lost. We can trace exactly the tell-tale additions which have been made to Books 11 and 16, those two early books which twice already have revealed the order of composition.

The second concerns the Wall and Ditch constructed by the Greeks around their ships: these fortifications are undertaken and completed on Nestor's advice at the end of Book 7, but further on we encounter some passages where the wall seems to be absent: it seems to follow that the construction of the wall is yet another addition to a fixed text.
Before turning to the fixation of certain passages in the *Odyssey* it will be well to rid our minds of the natural misconception that the *Iliad* preceded the *Odyssey*. I hasten at once to add that the *Odyssey* did not precede the *Iliad*. Rather both poems were a long time in the making; in their final form each bears signs of re-working under the influence of the other. This view is nothing new, and was often advocated in the palmy days of German 19th century scholarship: apart from our different positions on single versus multiple authorship I can accept and appeal to practically everything on the subject written by Benedictus Niese in his *Die Entwicklung der homerischen Poesie* (1882). Indeed, it may be said once and for all that Analytical Scholarship in general, when freed from the stultifying shackles of multiple authorship, invariably projects a more satisfying and convincing picture of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* being put together than either the Unitarian or the Oralist schools. Thus Eduard Schwartz in his magnificent book on the *Odyssey* (how can one mention such a work save in terms of the highest praise?) describes down to the most trivial minutiae the processes by which the poem was enlarged until it attained its final form. Replace his several authors distorting their predecessors' compositions by a single author expanding his own, and one obscurity after another disappears: the deferred recognition by Penelope (obviously 18.281-283 are, like the duals in *Iliad* 9, the relic of an earlier version), the general localization of the hero's island from Weissnichtwo to Ithaca (was ever conjecture so wide of the mark as Dörpfeld's?), and little puzzles like the removal of the arms are now seen as inevitable, certainly understandable, consequences of painting on a large canvas, where canvas and paint signify materials effecting a tangible and visible recording, and are no mere irrelevant metaphor for the fleeting and unrecorded word.

We saw earlier that Homer inserted an *Embassy* into an incomplete version of the *Iliad*, and later expanded that *Embassy* by inserting into it the figure of Phoenix. We find precisely the same method of composition in the *Odyssey*. For example, there was at one stage no visit to the Underworld; then one was added; and yet later a further addition is made.

In the tenth Book of the *Odyssey* the hero reaches the island of Circe and narrowly escapes disaster. Towards the end of the Book the poet begins the motivation of Odysseus' next adventure; at the insistence of his comrades Odysseus approaches Circe, asks her to send him home (10.483 ff.) and is granted his request—at 12.23 ff. (over a book away). What now occupies the interval, and this means essentially *Odyssey* 11, Homer added later. Of Circe's instructions about his return home Denys Page
Illinois Classical Studies, II

says: "It is quite obvious that this poet does not suppose that Odysseus is already acquainted with these matters." True: "this poet" is Homer: he had not yet composed Book 11, in which Circe's instructions are largely duplicated. When Book 11 came into being, Books 10 and 12 were already composed: they were fixed and could not be altered.

Now Odysseus, as I have mentioned earlier, is not properly a warrior at all; he is a figure of folk-tale and needs all the poet's skill to take his place beside the great heroes of saga. Telemachus' journey serves to implant a conviction of his father's association with Nestor and Menelaus and their comrades, and in devising converse of Odysseus with the dead, among whom should appear the ghosts of Agamemnon and Achilles, Homer consolidates his achievement.

The composition of the Necyia insertion is simplicity itself:

1. Asked by Odysseus to send him home, Circe now tells him he must visit Hades: 10.490-550;
2. Since it is necessary because of the fixed composition of Book 12 that Odysseus return to Circe's island, Elpenor dies under circumstances not allowing his burial: 10.551-574. The insertion proper now occurs:
3. NECYIA—Introduction: 11.1-50;
4. NECYIA—Ghosts come:
   (a) Elpenor, to motivate the return to Circe's island by asking for burial: 51-83;
   (b) Tiresias: (84)-149;
   (c) Anticleia: 150-224;
   (d) Agamemnon: 387-466;
   (e) Achilles: 467-540;
   (f) Ajax: 541-564;
5. NECYIA—Conclusion: 628-640;
6. Return to Circe's island; burial of Elpenor; Circe begins speech to proceed from 10.489: 12.1-22.

The edges of the insertion should be noted.

10.487 Thus I spoke, and forthwith the goddess answered:
   "Zeus-born son of Laertes, many-wiled Odysseus,
   No longer now remain in my house against your will.

490 But you must first complete another journey and go
   To house of Hades and dread Persephone"
   ... 

12.20 And in our midst the bright goddess said:
   "Rash men, who alive have entered house of Hades,
   To die twice, whilst others die but once.
   But come, eat food and drink wine
   Here the whole day; and at break of dawn
12.25 You shall sail; and I will show way and each
    Thing tell, in order that . . . ."

The pattern of the earlier join indicated occurs at 10.456 ff.

10.456 No longer now rouse lament; I know myself
    Both the woes you suffered on fish-filled sea
    And hurt received from foes on mainland.
    But come, eat food and drink wine

460 Until . . .

At a yet later stage Homer decided to exploit the conception of Odysseus in Hades by representing him actually within the realm of the dead and observing a pageant of heroes and heroines. And foreseeing Page’s charge of clumsiness in the matter of reported speech, he inserted an interlude taking us back to the court of Alcinous as a reminder of the dramatic situation.

The last stage of composition, like the second, consists of the insertion of inorganic verses in two places; and Webster is probably right in seeing a designed balance.

A Ghosts come
1) Elpenor
2) Tiresias
3) Anticleia

B Odysseus sees heroines : 225–332

X Intermezzo : 333–386

A Ghosts come
1) Agamemnon
2) Achilles
3) Ajax

B Odysseus sees heroes : 565–627

Let us observe the joins.

222 "(Anticleia is speaking) . . .
    But hasten quickly to the light, and all this
    Know, that hereafter you may tell your wife."

225 Thus we two talked, and the women
    Came, for queenly Persephone sent them,
    . . .

385 Now when she scattered here and there the spirits
    Of the women, she holy Persephone,
    And there came the spirit of Atreid Agamemnon
    Sorrowing; and about gathered others who
    . . .

563 Thus I spoke, but he answered not, and went
    To Erebus after the other spirits of the dead.
Then yet though wroth had he spoken to me, and I to him,
But the heart in my breast was eager
To see the spirits of others dead.
Then I saw Minos, glorious son of Zeus

(Heracles speaking)...
The dog I carried off and led from Hades;
And Hermes guided me and owl-eyed Athena.”
So saying he went back into house of Hades,
But there I stayed on, if yet one might come
Of those heroes who perished in days of yore.

In 387 the word δὲ, originally a conjunction, now has to do duty as an apodotic particle. Touching the matter of Ajax’s silence, we may now retort to Page that Homer “did not at once proceed to destroy his own conception.” He added to it later. Moreover, if the earlier version was fixed, Homer’s continuation becomes much more intelligible, for it commonly happens in his story-telling that after a pause we find some resumptive phrase or device. We need look no farther than 11.225 for example, and should bear in mind that Homer was here confronted with the negative situation “thus we did not speak.”

Perhaps the most significant example in the Odyssey of composition by expansion is the Journey of Telemachus. Like the Embassy, and for that matter like the Necyia, it does not disturb the action. Telemachus’ journey yields no results affecting the return of Odysseus and is irrelevant to the sequence of events.

No less than the Necyia insertion the addition of the Telemacy is very simply effected. The earlier version of the Odyssey began with a council of the gods, to whom Athena complained of their forgetfulness of Odysseus, detained perforce on the island of Calypso; Hermes was then sent to bring about his release. We may still see the whole sequence in our texts.

Now all the others who escaped destruction
Were home, safe from war and sea;
But him alone, longing for return and wife,
Queenly nymph detained, Calypso, bright goddess,
In hollow caves, desirous he be her husband.
But when, as seasons revolved, the year came
In which the gods decreed his return home
To Ithaca, not even there was he safe from toils
Even among his people. And all the gods pitied him

Save Poseidon; but he unceasingly raged
Against godlike Odysseus until his return.
But he had gone to the distant Ethiopians,
Who are sundered in two, most distant of men,
Some at Hyperion’s setting, some at rising,
To receive hecatomb of bulls and rams.
There he delighted in the banquet; but the others
Were assembled in halls of Olympian Zeus.

And to them Athena was telling many woes of Odysseus,
For she took ill his being in house of nymph.
“Father Zeus and you other immortal gods,
Nevermore purposely kind and gentle let be
Sceptred king, nor heed justice in mind,
But ever harsh let him be and work injustice.
Since no one remembers divine Odysseus
Of people he ruled, and gentle was as a father.
But he lies in island suffering grievous pains
In halls of nymph Calypso, who him perfice
Detains; and he cannot return to native land,
For he has no oared ships and companions
To send him over broad back of sea.”

Such essentially was once the beginning of the *Odyssey*. The poet starts with Odysseus’ detention by Calypso; notes the sympathy of the gods for him; and finally arouses Athena to action. At a later stage the poet decided on a large expansion. The hero’s son was to be introduced, among other things in order to strengthen the connection between Odysseus and the Iliadic heroes. There was no technical difficulty: the council of the gods now hears, not a speech by Athena about the already mentioned Calypso, but a quite unmotivated reference to Orestes, son of Agamemnon. This eventually steers the discussion to Telemachus, son of Odysseus, whom Athena elects to visit. So the *Telemachy* is brought about, and from that point runs its course to the end of Book 4. However, *the earlier version is fixed*. It is now necessary to return to the council of the gods, at the point where Athena’s speech was replaced by one of Zeus’. The insertion, therefore, is effected as follows:

1.26 There he delighted in the banquet; but the others
Were assembled in halls of Olympian Zeus.
And to them first spoke the father of gods and men,
For he remembered in heart the peerless Aegisthus,
Whom far-famed Orestes, Agamemnon’s son, slew.

... (Telemachy)

5.1 And Dawn from couch beside proud Tithonus
Rose, to bear light to immortals and mortals;
And the gods were at council, and among them
Zeus high-thundering, whose might is greatest.
And to them Athena was telling many woes of Odysseus,
For she took ill his being in house of nymph.
“Father Zeus, ...”
We are now confronted with a situation parallel with that which occurred as a consequence of the \textit{Necyia} insertion. Then, embarrassingly (and to the disgust of Page and the Analysts), Circe repeated to Odysseus information he had acquired from Tiresias. Now, too, \textit{because of his earlier fixed text}, Homer is obliged at 5.3 to arrange another council of the gods, and we can see that it is perfectly reasonable for him to do so. In fact, he has no alternative. But to Denys Page and the Analysts

What actually happens is without parallel in the Greek Epic. The action is interrupted by a second Assembly of the gods in heaven, a pale and uninteresting image of the one which begins the \textit{Odyssey}, for no visible purpose but to go over much the same ground again and to set in motion a matter for which the first Assembly had made provision enough—the sending of Hermes to the island of Calypso.

This tedious and abnormal procedure might be excused as being merely an innovation, an unsuccessful experiment; but if we turn from the structure to the contents, we may not judge so leniently.

The gods assemble at dawn, and Athene begins to address them on behalf of Odysseus. At once a most disagreeable fact obtrudes itself: Athene’s speech is not a free composition naturally designed for this place and purpose. . . .

How right, and yet how wrong! Of course, Athena’s speech was designed for the earlier version: \textit{it was fixed, and fixed even after the insertion it remained}.

The above account, in truth, is not the whole story, but a simplification. The poet, it seems, has attempted to patch up the insertion by transferring some of the earlier version to the later version: we can still see tell-tale signs in Zeus’ reply to Athena (1.63 f. = 5.21 f.). Some of the passage 1.63–87 must originally have followed 5.20, its place being now filled by 5.21–27, an addition consequent upon the \textit{Telemachy} insertion. Interestingly, parallel problems occur with Circe and Elpenor; and it seems clear that the \textit{Necyia} insertion proper (sections 3–5, i.e., our Book 11) was composed first, and the first two sections of the insertion were adapted later (no wonder these appear “ill-conceived and ill-executed”: \textit{they were made to a fixed text}).

We must not overlook the extent to which in inserting the \textit{Telemachy} the poet has indulged his imagination and demonstrated his originality. Previously his poem had taken a rather different form. Penelope had kept her wooers at bay with the excuse that she must first complete the shroud for Laertes; and she had successfully maintained this position for three full years (19.151). But then her ruse was detected, and she was forced to marry. Or rather, she would have been forced to marry, had not Odysseus returned in the nick of time and killed the suitors. So the story
of Amphimedon as told in *Od.* 24. It is revealing to observe that the three-year delay, which does not allow the child Telemachus to grow to an age when he can be used as a character, is not altered by Homer; and the passage of 9 lines, created for the earlier version, which occurs in Book 19 as well as Book 24, is, as a little fixation, repeated verbatim at the appropriate place in Book 2 of the *Telemachy* insertion.

The *Odyssey* contains other large-scale additions, of which let me mention just two. On his arrival at the court of Alcinous (let us suppose it was a Monday) Odysseus is promised convoy home on the very next day (Tuesday), but in fact it is the evening after that (on Wednesday) before he can take his departure. Few difficulties in Homer have provoked such implausible solutions. And yet the matter is simple enough, as a concise tabulation will make clear.

**Monday Evening**

7. 167 Alcinous receives Odysseus  
177 Odysseus eats and drinks  
185 Alcinous speaks  
207 Odysseus answers  
222 “Send me home tomorrow”  
308 Alcinous answers  
317 “Yes, tomorrow”  

7.188 ff. Sends Phaeacians home  
229 ff. Phaeacians go home  
334 ff. All sleep  
(Tuesday)

8. 1 Dawn rises  
... Games;  
Banquet...  
535 Alcinous speaks  
550 “Tell your story”

9. 1 Odysseus answers  
2 And tells his story...  
13. 1 So spoke Odysseus  
17 All sleep  

**Tuesday**  
17 Dawn rises  
35 Sunset, and farewell to Phaeacia  

What we have in the *Odyssey* is a fixation of a version in which Alcinous honored his promise. Later the poet inserted material chiefly occupying Book 8. And there is an insertion within the insertion. At 8.83 ff. Odysseus
weeps and Alcinous notices; and later at 8.521 ff. Odysseus weeps again and Alcinous notices again. Why the curious repetition? Likely enough the incident only happened once in the original telling, but the insertion of the Games and the song of Ares and Aphrodite was most easily achieved by a departure from and a return to the action at the same point. One may also reasonably surmise that the request for Odysseus’ identity (7.238) was originally followed much more closely by compliance (9.19—now over a book’s distance away).

At Book 21.291 the haughty reproof of Antinous to Odysseus shows no remembrance of the beggar Irus: and we find that nothing is known of Irus outside Book 18. At the end of Book 17 Odysseus says “Let Penelope wait” and after 50 lines of Book 19 Penelope comes forth. It seems clear that Book 18 is another major insertion.

Now some of the insertions I have been referring to, and indeed all of the large-scale ones, bear a consistent relationship to the book-divisions in our printed texts; and a closer look at these book-divisions forms the next part of my enquiry.

Orthodox scholarship regards these divisions as having been made by those Alexandrian critics who first devoted themselves to researches on the text; apportionment into books (so the prevalent theory goes) was made for convenience of reference. However, two lines of argument point to the book-divisions as having been made by the composer himself.

First, both poems contain structural units which approximate to what I may call book length: second, the beginning and end of these units are, for the most part, marked by formal and thematic features characteristic of the style and design of the poems as a whole.

Consider first the Dolomeia. Differing in their views of its authorship, all scholars assume that the unit is conterminous with Book 10. Here, to begin with, are two book-divisions which go back centuries before the Alexandrian critics. Books 23 and 24 have sometimes been denied to the Iliad but no one denies that the Funeral Games and the Ransom of Hector are the units their composer conceived. The Embassy (9) is sharply divided from what precedes and from what follows. So is the Reconciliation (19), and so are the last battles of Patroclus and Hector in Books 16 and 22 respectively. Thus, of the 15,693 lines of the Iliad the eight units identified as structural give an average of 713 lines, suggesting that the Iliad was articulated in about 22 parts. Since a fluctuation of over 200 lines on either side of the mean occurs, we cannot dogmatize about the precise number of divisions intended.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>No. of lines</th>
<th>Portion of Iliad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diomedea (5)</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>1/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embassy (9)</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>1/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doloneia (10)</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>1/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of Patroclus (16)</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>1/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciliation (19)</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>1/37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of Hector (22)</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funeral Games (23)</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>1/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ransom of Hector (24)</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>1/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Odyssey* contains 12,110 lines; and we may safely identify as structural divisions Telemachus at Pylos and at Sparta; the Cyclops episode and the *Necyia* (and the intervening Circe book); the Return of Telemachus; the Taunting of Odysseus; and the Stringing of the Bow. The average number of lines (568)—again we must acknowledge wide fluctuation—indicates that the *Odyssey* was planned in about 21 parts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>No. of lines</th>
<th>Portion of Odyssey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telemachus at Pylos (3)</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>1/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telemachus at Sparta (4)</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>1/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclops episode (9)</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>1/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circe episode (10)</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>1/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necyia (11)</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>1/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return of Telemachus (15)</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>1/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taunting of Odysseus (18)</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>1/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stringing of the Bow (21)</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>1/28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So far we have shown that there is a general probability that *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were conceived in divisions comparable and perhaps conterminous with the text book-divisions (certainly we may infer that Homer did not work in units of as much as a thousand lines). When we now examine the themes accompanying the book-divisions, we at once recognize patterns which can hardly have been imposed by anyone other than the creator of the unit. For the most part the action of a unit is brought to an end by the advent of night or sleep (book-end), and the action of the next unit begins with dawn or the initiative of a sleepless person (book-beginning): so *Iliad* 1/2; 7/8; 8/9; 9/10; 10/11; (18)/19; (23)/24; *Odyssey* 1/2; 2/3; 3/4; 4/5; 5/6; 7/8; 14/15; 16/17; 17/(18); 18/19; 19/20. The following examples will speak for themselves.
(a) End II. 1 (The Gods sleep):
606 οἱ μὲν κακκείοντες ἔβαν οἰκώνδε ἑκατος,
... (to 611)
Beginning II. 2 (Zeus sleepless):
1 ἄλλοι μὲν ὑπὸ θεοὶ τε καὶ ἀνέρες ἱπποκορυφαῖα
eἶδον παννύχιοι, Δία δ᾽ οὐκ ἔχει νήδυμος ὑπνος.
(b) End II. 9 (The Greeks sleep):
712 καὶ τότε δὴ σπείραντες ἔβαν κλισίφυρδε ἑκατος,
ἑνθα δὲ κοιμήσαντο καὶ ὑπνον διώρον ἔλοντο.
Beginning II. 10 (Agamemnon sleepless):
1 ἄλλοι μὲν παρὰ νησεὶς ἀριστῆς Παναχαίων
εἶδον παννύχιοι, μαλακῷ δεδεμένοι ὑπνων
ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ Ἀτρέδην Ἀγαμέμνονα, ποιμένα λαών,
ὑπνον ἔχει γλυκερὸς . . .

The formulaic and thematic character of these book-divisions is
transparent. *Iliad* 1.606 is repeated thrice in the *Odyssey* (3.396; 7.229; 13.17; see also 1.424; 18.419) and a variation performing the same function is
found at *Od.* 18.428. *Iliad* 9.713 is paralleled at 7.482, and in the *Odyssey* Book 16 ends on the same note:

16.481 κοίτον τε μνήσκατο καὶ ὑπνον διώρον ἔλοντο.

(c) The arrival of dawn.

*Iliad* 8.1 'Ἡώς μὲν κροκόπεπλος ἐκίδνατο πάντων ἐπ᾽ αἰῶν
*Il. 19.1 'Ἡώς μὲν κροκόπεπλος ἂν Ὡκεάνιοι ῥόαν
*Il. 11.1 'Ἡώς δ᾽ ἐκ λεχέων παρ᾽ Ἀγαμόν Τιθώνιο
*Od. 5.1 'Ὡς δ᾽ ἐκ λεχέων παρ᾽ Ἀγαμόν Τιθώνιο
*Od. 2.1 ἰμος δ᾽ ἠγιανεία φάνη ῥωδόδακτυλος Ὡώς
*Od. 8.1 ἰμος δ᾽ ἠγιανεία φάνη ῥωδόδακτυλος Ὡώς
*Od. 17.1 ἰμος δ᾽ ἠγιανεία φάνη ῥωδόδακτυλος Ὡώς

The connection between the two poems is greater than appears from the
above, for the Odyssean formulaic line occurs in the *Iliad* at 1.477 and
24.788.

Naturally, the significance of these book-divisions would be seriously
compromised if similar breaks were found in the middle of books. They
are not. Occasionally dawn does rise in the middle of an Iliadic book (cf.
1.477; 23.109; 23.226; 24.788), but in no case is a break in the action
indicated. Obviously, when dawn rises four times in the course of the
Cyclops story (*Od.* 9.152; 170; 307; 437), there is no question of a par-
tition in the text. Nor at 4.306 (in the middle of the Spartan book),
5.228 (in the middle of the Calypso book), or 10.187 (in the middle of
the Circe book).

It seems, then, that all the book-divisions specified above are original
to the creator of the poems. This cannot on purely formal grounds be
proved for the rest, but some of the book-divisions share common features.
After all, men do other things than sleep, and Homer cannot everywhere use this thematic device for marking the end of a section. Sometimes he describes the action which he wishes to conclude as having reached a static point (the last line of the *Iliad* is a good example) and then, with a resumptive ως δ (οί) μέν at the beginning of the next book (this proves the composer’s intention to pause), he passes with a δε to the initiative of a new character. Thus we have:

(d) End of II. 8: The Trojans keep watch.
9.1 ως οἱ μέν Τρώες φιλοκαί ἔχουν’ αὐτάρ Ἀχαιοῦς . . .
End of II. 11: Patroclus heals Euryphylus.
12.1 ως δ’ μέν ἐν κληίνῃ Μενοίτιον ἀλκίμου νίς ἰατ’ Εὐρύπυλος βεβηλμένου’ οἱ δ’ ἐμάχοντο . . .
End of II. 15: Fighting at the ships.
16.1 ως οἱ μέν περί νηός ἐνεκέλμου μάχοντο
Πάτροκλος δ’ Ἀχιλῆ . . .
End of II. 17. Fighting at the trench.
18.1 ως οἱ μέν μάραντο δέμας πυρὸς αἰθομένου,
Τρώες δ’ αὖθ’ ἐτέρωθεν ἐπὶ θραυσμῷ πεδίου,
Σεις δὲ . . .
End of II. 19: Achilles at the head of the Greeks.
20.1 ως οἱ μὲν παρὰ νυκτὶ κορωνίς θυμήσκοντο
ἀμφί σε’, Πηλέος νιέ, μάχες ἀκόρητον Ἀχαιοί,
Τρώες δ’ αὖθ’ ἐτέρωθεν ἐπὶ θραυσμῷ πεδίου.
Σεις δὲ . . .
End of II. 21: The Trojans shut up in the city.
22.1 ως οἱ μὲν κατὰ ἄστυ περφύζετε ἡμέτε νεβροὶ
ἰδρῶ ἀπεψύχοντο πίον τ’ ἀκέοντο τε δίφαι,
κεκλιμένοι καλῆς ἐπάλξεσιν αὐτάρ Ἀχαιοὶ
teίχες ὄς ὕπαν, σάκε’ ὦμοιοι κλίναντες.
‘Εκτορα δὲ . . .
End of II. 22: Lamentation for Hector.
23.1 ως οἱ μὲν στενάχοντο κατὰ πτόλυν’ αὐτάρ Ἀχαιοὶ . . .
End of Od. 5: Odysseus asleep
6.1 ως δ’ μὲν ἐνθα καθεύθει πολύτας δίος Ὀδυσσεὺς
ὗτω καὶ καμάτω ἀρημένος αὐτάρ Ἀθήνη . . .
End of Od. 6: Odysseus in prayer.
7.1 ως δ’ μὲν ἐνθ’ ἠράτο πολύτας δίος Ὀδυσσεύς,
κούρην δέ . . .

The resumptive formula is occasionally varied:

II. 3.1 αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ κόσμηθεν . . .
II. 15.1 αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ . . . ἐβηκαν . . .
Od. 11.1 αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ . . . κατήλθομεν . . .
Od. 12.1 αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ . . . λύπεν . . .
II. 21.1 ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ πάρον ἤξον . . .

Sometimes we meet with a resumption not couched in formulaic terms, though the context reveals unmistakably that at this point occurs a
structural division: \textit{Il.} 6.1 subtly passes from heaven to earth, \textit{Il.} 13.1 from earth to heaven; \textit{Il.} 7.1 and \textit{Od.} 13.1 briefly glance back at major episodes, and \textit{Od.} 9.1 briefly acknowledges Alcinous with a δὲ as the hero embarks upon the Deep-sea Yarns. There are obvious transitions at \textit{Il.} 5.1 and \textit{Od.} 23.1, where, however, the repetition of \textit{Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη} and \textit{γρηγορέω} respectively effect a resumption.

The preceding argument enforces the general thesis: that composition of the \textit{Iliad} and the \textit{Odyssey} occurred as a progressive fixation of passages, effected not linearly, but as designed expansions of the central theme, both poems being for whatever reason articulated in lengths consonant with the traditional book-divisions and seemingly identical with them, and the close similarity of compositional technique being consistent with and seemingly confirming the traditional ascription of both poems to a single composer.

If my reasoning thus far has any validity, it seems that we shall have to abandon or at least modify seriously the hypothesis propounded by Parry that Homer was an oral poet. Of course, in a sense most poets are oral poets; certainly all the ancient poets composed for the ear rather than the eye. But we must distinguish between “impromptu” composition and “premeditated” composition. Milman Parry, like many discoverers, was quite carried away by his discovery of the formulaic systems and became obsessed with the hypothesis that even in the Homeric poems the function of the formulas must have been to prevent a break-down in impromptu composition: furthermore, he seems to have relegated anyone who repeated a fixed text to the inferior status of a rhapsode.

The technique of Homeric verse composition, like other aspects of Homer, cannot be straitjacketed in a homogeneous system. It varies. Take such a verse as \textit{τὸν δ’ ἀπωμαβόμενος προεύρη πολυμήτει Ὁδυσσεώς}, which occurs frequently in both poems. Surely we shall not argue that the poet worked out this verse anew on every occasion. Rather, he knew it by heart, and he repeated it, where it was appropriate, as a memorized text. Now these stock recurring lines, which contain a high proportion of the noun-epithet formulas, add up to a goodly total. Of all lines in \textit{Iliad} 1 no less than 1/6 recur in the \textit{Iliad} or \textit{Odyssey}.

Repeated verses in \textit{Iliad} 1:

13–16; 22–25; 33; 37; 38; 43; 58–60; 68; 73; 84; 88; 89; 101–104; 130; 131; 141; 142; 148; 172; 177; 193; 196; 201; 206; 209; 212;
In *Odyssey* 1 the proportion is even greater: it is $1/4$. In these passages the poet is not creating sentences—he is repeating fixations. Why, some passages in Homer are manufactured, not out of formulas, but out of stock lines. They are little more than centos: almost the whole of *Iliad* 8 is composed in this fashion and so are the last 125 lines of *Odyssey* 19. Let me tabulate a sample from *Iliad* 8:

| 28 = 3.95 | 45 = 5.366 | 60-65 = 4.446-551 |
| 29 = 9.694 | 46 = 5.769 | 66 f. = 11.84 f. |
| 30 = *Od*. 1.44 | 47 = 14.283 | 68 = 16.777 |
| 31 = *Od*. 1.45 | 48 = *Od*. 8.363 | 69 f. = 22.809 f. |
| 32-37 = 463-468 | 50 f. = 5.775 f. | 71 = 3.127 |
| 38-40 = 22.164-186 | 52 = 11.82 | 72 = 22.212 |
| 41-44 = 13.23-26 | 58 f. = 2.809 f. | |

and the end of *Odyssey* 19:

| 570 = 11.454 | 583 = 165 | 592 = 11.560 | 600 = 18.206 |
| 577 = 21.75 | 585 = 16.204 | 593 = 3.3 | 601 = 18.207 |
| 578 = 21.76 | 586 = 8.215 | 594 = 17.101 | 602 = 1.362 |
| 579 = 21.77 | 587 = 21.97 | 595 = 17.102 | 603 = 1.363 |
| 580 = 21.78 | 588 = 17.528 | 596 = 17.103 | 604 = 1.364 |
| 581 = 21.79 | 589 = 17.521 | 597 = 260 | |
| 582 = 164 | 590 = 12.338 | 598 = 3.365 | |

Over these stretches of the text of Homer, the theory of a technique of improvised verse-composition cannot apply; and another consideration leads me to believe that it does not apply elsewhere, either.

I refer to words that the poet never formularizes, words of zero formularity: the premeditated word. So I shall boldly call it, to arrest your attention. To be strictly scholarly I must correct myself and say: let us turn to the hapax legomena in Homer. Like the repeated lines, they are too numerous and too evenly scattered in Homer to fit any theory of impromptu oral composition. Parry says dogmatically, of the impromptu oral composer: "He can put into verse only those ideas which are to be found in the phrases which are on his tongue . . . at no time is he seeking words for an idea which has never before found expression."

Now, given this severe limitation for the oral poet, we should not expect in the 27,000 verses of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* a unique word to occur
very often. But the fact is that a word not otherwise to be found in Homer—and I have scrupulously excluded proper names from the count—occurs at a rate of once every fifteen lines. Nor can it be argued that in these cases the poet was forced outside his basic vocabulary—in many instances it is obvious that the poet has deliberately sought to include technical and ornamental detail. Why, this is proved by the way in which hapaxes, though they occur throughout the Iliad and the Odyssey, form special clusters in speeches and descriptions and digressions and similes. They could so easily have been avoided. And they are found everywhere, even cementing together cento-passages. Let me again tabulate a little of the statistics for hapax legomena:

Iliad i: 4, 32, 45, 75, 81, 95, 99, 113, 122, 126, 128, 128, 140, 155, 156, 166, 205, 216, 225, 231, 235, 236, 236, 237, 265, 269, 292, 335, 402, 434, 449, 518, 526, 575;
Speech of Phoenix (II. 9): 443, 446, 454, 456, 457, 461, 470, 490, 491, 500, 503, 503, 505, 526, 534, 539, 563, 565, 568, 579, 582, 593;
Shield of Achilles (II. 18): 493, 500, 502, 513, 519, 521, 525, 529, 531, 536, 543, 550, 553, 555, 562, 563, 566, 570, 571, 571, 576, 576, 580, 584

Here are some sample clusters from the Odyssey:

Book 4: 221, 221, 221 (Helen's drug);
Book 5: 248, 249, 250, 252, 253, 256, 261 (Making of raft);
Book 7: 90, 104, 106, 107, 118, 119, 121, 123, 125, 125, 126, 127 (Palace of Alcinous);
Book 9: 383, 384, 385, 385, 387, 388, 392, 393 (Blinding of Cyclops)

Let us speculate a little. What did Homer do when he first decided on the fixation of a long poem on the wrath of Achilles? Had he in mind the compass of 24 books? Surely not. We may even wonder whether he began with a conception of book-units. Most likely, these arose out of the convenience of book-roll and their convenience as inserts: moreover, this would account for their disparate lengths, which cannot be easily explained as the length of a recitation or as the equal division by the Alexandrians of the total mass. M. L. West puts the matter very well when he says "The absence of an audience meant that it (the Iliad) was subject to no limit of length, and it grew in the writing to a length that no oral poem had ever had or sought,"

We are fortunate, however, in being able to detect the finishing touches. The designed balances between Iliad i and Iliad 24 are so precise—see particularly Myres in JHS 1932—that most scholars who are aware of
the facts admit the formal symmetry of the poem. Of course this is only possible if the poem be fixed, that is to say written. Furthermore, since I cannot think of the embryonic Iliad as growing in writing without Iliad 1, and since I cannot think of our present Iliad 1 as anything but a very late book, I am forced to the conclusion that our present Iliad 1 represents a re-writing of the earlier version. It is easy to pick out little fixations. For example, the implication that Agamemnon in person seized Briseis (cf. 1.356, 507; 2.240; 9.273; 19.89) suggests that there was an earlier written version in which he did. The final version, in Book 1.320 ff., in which Talthybius and Eurybates take the girl, is Homer's afterthought. And it also appears that it was Achilles himself who originally made supplication to Zeus (cf. 16.236) and not Thetis, as in our present text of Book 1. Furthermore, Odysseus' journey to Chryse provides irrefutable proof of being a late insertion:

432 cf. Od. 16.324
458-461 cf. Od. 12.359-361
460-465 cf. Od. 3.457-462
467-469 cf. Od. 16.478-480
475-477 cf. Od. 19.426-428
481-483 cf. Od. 2.427-429
485 cf. Od. 16.325

In the early part of Iliad 2 and elsewhere I seem to detect signs suggesting that an earlier written version with marginalia has been reworked, and wonder whether the theory of re-writing of earlier copy might best explain some features of the Odyssey. But here we must tread with care, and I will retreat to the more general consideration voiced by Gilbert Murray: "Every work of art that was ever created was intended in some way to be used. No picture was painted for blind men; no ship built where there was no water. What was to be the use of the Iliad? What audience would listen to the recitation of such a poem? It contains over 15,000 verses. It would occupy 20-24 hours of steady declamation. No audience could endure it, no bard could perform it, in one stretch."

All field experience with oral poets seems to show that they never, except when stimulated by the most attractive inducements, exceed an hour or two in their performances. This is how Phemius and how Demodocus performed. The cinema will provide us with a parallel to their attitude: a movie for us, like an oral song for them, is something which lasts an hour or so, no more. To explain the Iliad and the Odyssey as oral poems is like postulating movies 24 hours long.

That the monumental Iliad and Odyssey have their origins in the lesser scale of oral poetry there is no reason to doubt. But the difference is
fundamental. Homer is not a singer of tales, but a recorder of them; and we should compare his work with such as that of the composer of the Kalevala, Elias Lonnrot, who in the first half of the 19th century made repeated field-trips throughout Finland collecting oral poems. Believing that these lays were the disjecta membra of a once wonderful epic he stitched them together to provide a text of 12,000 lines, which after further efforts he expanded to 23,000 lines. Such a man was Homer, except that he was no folklorist scholar, but a supremely gifted artist.

We must understand that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were not composed to meet an existing or even contrived need, but simply to fulfil the vision of an artist, like Wagner’s *Ring des Nibelungen*, which cannot be completed at a single performance, and Bernard Shaw’s *Back to Methuselah*, which exceeds the bounds of what is theatrically feasible. And once we understand that Homer’s vision was built on the realization that writing allows the songs which die in the act of recital to be given life for ever, then the method of composition uncovered in this paper appears as an ambitious and indeed exciting process, and the completion by it of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as a comprehensive as well as a prodigious achievement.

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