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HOMER
ILIAD
BOOK XVIII

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For
OLIVER TAPLIN

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PREFACE

The name of Isaac Asimov seldom occurs in prefaces to editions of classical authors. Nevertheless, I am convinced that my first acquaintance with this book of the *Iliad* was through reading a short essay included in his collection *The Rest of the Robots* (so called because it followed on from the better-known *I, Robot*). There Asimov briefly observed that ‘I wasn’t the first in the field by the not-so-narrow margin of 2500 years’, citing the passage from *Iliad* 18 in which humanoid females assist the lame Hephaestus and quoting lines 416–20 in Rouse’s translation. I read the Asimov volume in 1969. It would be pleasant to recount that this tantalising extract sent me hurrying off to read the entire *Iliad*, but in those days my inclination was towards tales of the future, not the past. I began studying Latin in 1968 and Greek in 1970, but did not read book 18 of the *Iliad* until my first year at university, in the winter of 1974. Despite this belated start, ever since that time Homer has been an important part of my life, as a student, teacher and researcher.

When I wrote my commentary on books 19 and 20 of the *Odyssey*, published in this series in 1992, it was reasonable to begin with a section defending the poem and especially its second half against disparagement by many modern critics. No such apologia is needed in the present volume, since book 18 of the *Iliad* is widely recognised as a high point of the poem. It marks a key stage in the plot, at which Achilles learns of Patroclus’ death; we witness his reaction, his self-reproach (questions of shame/guilt are relevant here), his determination to avenge Patroclus at the cost of his own life. We also see Hector making one of his worst misjudgements, emphatically signalled by the narrator’s comment. The sequence of scenes with Thetis can be related fruitfully to both book 1 and book 24, and the references to her marriage raise intriguing questions about the mythology of Thetis as Homer understood it. The home life of Hephaestus sheds a different kind of light on the gods. The *ecphrasis* on the shield is a magnificent set piece and provided a pattern for many later authors (most obviously Apollonius, Theocritus, Catullus and Virgil), and its interpretation has been a fruitful area of debate since antiquity. All these aspects are addressed in this volume.

I hope that this edition will be useful to scholars, while also giving sufficient guidance to undergraduates and graduate readers who may have read little or no Homer before using this book. The introduction deals with the main themes and subjects of book 18, including a section on the shield, but also provides orientation in the ‘Homeric Question’ and a survey of some important features of Homeric narrative technique and style. As in my earlier commentary, I have included sections on metre and grammar for quick consultation: these will seem jejune to

experts, but they are not intended for experts, who will naturally seek more detailed and authoritative guidance elsewhere.

I have become rather more cautious in using the name Homer, but see no reason to banish it entirely from scholarly discourse. Although I continue to think that the *Odyssey* is probably by a different poet from the *Iliad*, the two poems have much in common, and probably more than either had with other early epics. ‘Homer’ is a convenient shorthand for ‘the text of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*’, and I doubt if readers will be seriously misled by this convention.

Of older editions I have chiefly consulted Van Leeuwen, Leaf, Willcock and especially Edwards, whose commentary in the six-volume Cambridge *Iliad* series, published in 1991, remains indispensable. I had all but completed a first draft of my own commentary when in early 2016 Marina Coray generously sent me a copy of her excellent volume on book 18 in the Basel series initiated by Joachim Latacz. I have learned much from it and hope not to have exploited its riches too shamelessly in the process of revision.

It was a pleasure to contribute again to this series, and like many others I have benefited from the close scrutiny provided by the editors (Pat Easterling in the early stages, subsequently replaced by Neil Hopkinson; and Richard Hunter throughout). Most of their suggestions I have gratefully incorporated. I owe much also to those who have read portions in draft or offered advice on particular points. Gregory Hutchinson read the whole of the introduction, and offered generous advice on specific points elsewhere, while Robert Parker scrutinised the whole of the commentary: I am grateful not only for their comments but for many friendly conversations over the past thirty years. Christopher Metcalf kindly commented on the Appendix. John Penney read the section on Grammar and did his best to sort out my misconceptions. Henry Mason also offered useful comments on most of the Introduction; and I learned still more from reading his excellent doctoral thesis on the Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles*. My notes on the cognate material in the *Iliad* owe a good deal to his researches, which I hope will one day be published. For reactions to specific questions or extracts I am happy to thank Deborah Beck, Evert van Emde Boas, Bruno Currie, Peter Haarer, Irene de Jong, Emily Kearns, Philomen Probert, and Nicholas Purcell. Any errors which remain are my responsibility. As always, Catherine Whistler has given encouragement and reassurance at the right moments.

As in the past, I have been gratified by the professionalism of the Cambridge University Press. Michael Sharp provided genial oversight; Sarah Starkey has been prompt in replying to any queries at each stage; Revathi Thirunavukkarasu handled the conversion into proof with great efficiency. A special word of thanks is due to Anna Oxbury for her meticulous copy-editing.

PREFACE

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Oliver Taplin's article on the Shield of Achilles appeared in 1980, at a time when I was first getting to know him and teaching some of his excellent Magdalen students. In that paper as in all his work there is a vigour of argument and a love of great poetry which all who know him recognise as characteristic of an outstanding teacher. It is a pleasure to dedicate this volume to a much-valued friend.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Arch. Hom.</i>	<i>Archaeologia Homerica. Die Denkmäler und das frühgriechische Epos</i> , ed. F. Matz, H.-G. Buchholz et al. (Göttingen 1976–2015)
Beekes	R. Beekes, <i>Etymological dictionary of Greek</i> (2 vols., Leiden and Boston 2010)
CAH	<i>Cambridge ancient history</i> , 2nd edn (Cambridge 1970–2005)
CEG	P. A. Hansen, <i>Carmina epigraphica Graeca</i> (2 vols., Berlin and New York 1983, 1989)
Chantraine	P. Chantraine, <i>Grammaire homérique</i> (2 vols., Paris 1948–1953)
Cunliffe	R. J. Cunliffe, <i>A lexicon of the Homeric dialect</i> (Glasgow 1924)
Denniston	J. D. Denniston, <i>The Greek particles</i> , 2nd edn (Oxford 1954)
EGM	R. L. Fowler, <i>Early Greek mythology</i> (2 vols., Oxford 2000–2013)
Erbse	H. Erbse, <i>Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem (scholia vetera)</i> (7 vols., Berlin 1969–1988).
Gantz	T. N. Gantz, <i>Early Greek myth: a guide to literary and artistic sources</i> (Baltimore 1993)
GEF	M. L. West, <i>Greek epic fragments</i> (Loeb series: Cambridge, Mass. 2003)
HE	<i>The Homer encyclopedia</i> , ed. M. Finkelberg (3 vols., Oxford 2011)
Homer	R. B. Rutherford, <i>Homer</i> , 2nd edn (Greece and Rome New Surveys in the Classics 41, Cambridge 2013)
LIMC	<i>Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae</i> (Zurich 1981–1999)
Lfgre	B. Snell, H. Erbse et al. (eds.) <i>Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos</i> (Göttingen 1955–2010)
LSCG	F. Sokolowski, <i>Lois sacrées des cités grecques</i> (Paris 1969)
Monro	D. B. Monro, <i>A grammar of the Homeric dialect</i> (Oxford 1882; 2nd edn 1891)
OCD	S. Hornblower, A. J. Spawforth and E. Eidinow (eds.) <i>The Oxford classical dictionary</i> , 4th edn (Oxford 2012)
Parry, MHV	M. Parry, <i>The making of Homeric verse: the collected papers of Milman Parry</i> , ed. A. Parry (Oxford 1971)
PMG	D. L. Page, <i>Poetae melici Graeci</i> (Oxford 1962)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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<i>PMGF</i>	M. Davies, <i>Poetarum melicorum Graecorum fragmenta</i> I (Oxford 1991)
Schwyzzer	E. Schwyzzer, <i>Griechische Grammatik</i> (4 vols., Munich 1934–1971)
Smyth	H. Weir Smyth, <i>A Greek grammar</i> , revised by G. M. Messing (Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass. 1956)
West	(without further specification) refers to his edition of the <i>Iliad</i> (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1998, 2000)
West, <i>Studies</i>	M. L. West, <i>Studies in the text and transmission of the Iliad</i> (Munich 2001)

Ancient authors and their works are normally abbreviated as in the list given in *OCD*.

In addition, citations of Coray, Edwards, Leaf and Willcock without further details refer to the commentaries by these scholars on the line in question (these editions are listed in the Bibliography).