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HOMER

BY  
RICHARD RUTHERFORD

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## PREFACE

This is a revised and updated version of the Survey I published in this series in 1996. As before, I have attempted to give a reasonably full and wide-ranging account of the Homeric poems and the current state of scholarship on them, with a strong emphasis on interpretation and literary criticism. The intervening period has been a fruitful one, not least in the fundamental areas of text and commentaries: the important work done here is listed in a separate section preceding the main bibliography.

The main changes have been made in the first chapter. Although this book is entitled *Homer*, I have now included a larger discussion of the other early Greek hexameter texts, both extant and fragmentary; given the explosion of work in this field (exemplified in the recent Loeb editions), it seemed useful to provide some orientation. I have somewhat expanded the paragraphs on Near Eastern influences, a subject on which Walter Burkert and Martin West have shed so much light. More has been said on chronology and related issues; some paragraphs on Homeric language have been included; and I have placed more emphasis on the view I have long supported, that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were probably written down by or in the lifetime of their composers. I have also included some comments on traditional referentiality, intertextuality (with or without texts), and allusion. These changes have involved some restructuring of the chapter: I have explained things in a rather different order and sometimes in more detail. Since the chapter is now longer, more subdivisions have been introduced, and these have been numbered throughout the Survey.

The main text of Chapters 2 and 3 has undergone little change. There are some new remarks on the importance of the community in the *Iliad* and of the lower classes in the *Odyssey*. I have modified some formulations and adjusted misleading statements, here and elsewhere. But since on the whole I have not changed my mind about the questions discussed, the modifications to these chapters mainly consist of added references. In Chapter 4 I have added a further ‘memorable scene’, a discussion of *Iliad* 17.425–56. This is not expansion for its own sake: the passage usefully illustrates some of the issues of allusion now discussed in Chapter 1. Relatively little of the older text has been dropped, though I have removed a few citations where newer work seemed more helpful or more accessible. I have abandoned the distinction between Arabic and minuscule Roman numerals to distinguish citations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; where there might be ambiguity, the title is now given.

## PREFACE

In the first footnote to Chapters 2 and 3 I refer to general studies of the *Iliad* and of the *Odyssey*. Books which deal with both poems are rarer, but there is one that deservedly wins praise for its vigour and readability, Barry Powell's *Homer* (Powell 2004; second edition 2007).<sup>1</sup>

The additions to the bibliography of course represent only a fraction of what has appeared since 1996; much has been omitted, much will no doubt have eluded me. There are very full bibliographical resources elsewhere: in particular, in the recent companions to Homer (Morris and Powell 1997 and R. Fowler 2004) and in the Wiley-Blackwell *Companion to Ancient Epic* (Foley 2005). The third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* appeared soon after the first edition of this Survey, and an enlarged fourth edition has now been published (ed. S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth, and E. Eidinow, 2012), including a new entry on Homer by Suzanne Said. I also draw attention to another essential reference work, the *Homer Encyclopedia* edited by Margalit Finkelberg (Finkelberg 2011), which again has a massive bibliography and valuable entries on almost every imaginable topic. I seldom refer to this because citations could be provided in every footnote, but any reader of Homer will learn much from it. A third work to which I am much indebted is Gantz 1993, an indispensable guide to Greek mythology in literature and art, and far more reliable than the wayward compilation by Robert Graves.

In the preface to the first edition I thanked Simon Hornblower, Robert Parker, and Peter Parsons for their advice, and Ian McAuslan for his editorial work. Although they have not been involved in this revision, I am happy to repeat my appreciation for their help with the original version. The new edition has similarly benefited from comments by Bruno Currie, Adrian Kelly, and Chris Pelling, as well as from John Taylor, the current series editor. I am grateful to all of them, as also to Philemon Probert (who kindly looked at the section on language), and to many other colleagues who have answered questions or sent me copies of papers.

Constraints of time and space have imposed limits on what could be done, but I hope that in this revised form the volume will continue to be found useful as an introduction to Homeric studies.

RBR

October 2012

<sup>1</sup> Latacz 1996 is the work of a distinguished scholar, but less stimulating. Griffin 1980 does deal with both epics, but his emphasis is much more on the *Iliad*.