

Unity of Homer

- p. 260 In general the structure of the Iliad is loosely knit: there is the sharpest contrast between the excellence of the narrative art within an episode and the weakness of the connexion (very often) between episodes. Patroclus is sent to deceive the Trojans, especially Hector, who will suppose him to be Achilles because he is dressed in Achilles' armour; that is one episode, brilliantly narrated. Then Patroclus fights the Trojans and is killed by Hector; another episode brilliantly narrated. But the connexion between the two episodes is wonderfully feeble, $\frac{1}{2}$ in the second episode the poet actually forgets that Patroclus is supposed to be masquerading as Achilles. Again, nothing in the Iliad is of higher quality than the Embassy to Achilles in the Ninth Book; yet in the following episode Achilles is unaware that any such embassy was ever sent to him. The unity of the Iliad exists in broadest outlines only; the connexions between the chief structural features are usually rather loose and sometimes very weak.

Truth and Fiction in Homer

- p. 296 I might have written, if Leaf had not, this: "Between the general fact that the war took place, and the most fanciful incidents described as occurring in it, such for instance as the battle of the gods in Il. XX, there is every gradation of actuality. The larger part of the incidents we shall of course dismiss at once as mere invention. . . . We shall not conclude that because Achilles was a historical person, the same may be said of the dog Argos" (Homer and History 28)
- p. 296 The same distinction, between the typical and the individual, may help us to answer another question: whether the episode of the Wooden Horse is founded on fact or not. In summary, it does not appear that this belongs to the stock-in-trade of the storyteller; the Wooden Horse is likely to be, in Professor Rose's words, "a confused reminiscence of some Oriental siege-engine" (Reference is here made to Murray's Rise of the Greek Epic, p. 56 . . . "And even incidents which have a special air of verisimilitude about them, like the stratagem of the Wooden Horse, may represent only a brilliant afterthought of what ought to have been done.