

- p. 255 But Herodotus unfortunately is not impeccable in matters of chronology, and, unless we know his sources, his word must not be treated as final. In this case his sources are unknown . . . In one respect, however, his date claims our regard. Thucydides in his discussion of the Trojan War agrees with him on one important point. He evidently knows Herodotus' view and not only refrains from contradicting it but implicitly supports it when he says that Homer existed long after the Trojan War(1.3.3). He agrees with Herodotus in principle, and though he gives no reasons, his support may help to make us believe that Herodotus is right. There are, however, certain external considerations which tend to support this view in placing Homer long after the Trojan War, but before Archilochus and the earliest extant fragments of lyric poetry.
  
- p. 260 The conclusion then is that the Iliad, apparently much in its present form, was well known in Ionia and less well known on the mainland by the beginning of the seventh century. In other words it existed long enough before 650 for it to be frequently quoted and to have an important influence on the earliest elegiac and lyric poets.
  
- p. 265 The conclusion to be drawn from this somewhat chaotic and nebulous evidence is that, though we have no certain evidence for the date of Homer, the statement of Herodotus that he lived in the latter part of the ninth century and was a contemporary of Hesiod may not be far from the truth. If we place him some time late in the eighth century, it suits what we know of his language and his influence on later Greek poetry. It suits, too, what we know of the world which he admired.
  
- p. 270 <sup>Unity</sup> Homer's name, remembered and honoured, is perhaps the best evidence for his early fame and influence, and the best answer to those who think that the Iliad is the work of several great poets and several bunglers. Even the Odyssey in antiquity was sometimes taken from him, but the Iliad remained his till scientific criticism strained at the goat of some difficulties in composition, and swallowed the camel of multiple authorship. The credit for the Iliad rests primarily with Homer who gave the poem its shape, its unity of character and style, its dramatic impetus and high, imaginative life. Such gifts come only from genius, and genius does not belong to compilers or guilds.
  
- p. 271 It has too often been assumed that different elements in the vocabulary or different sources of the story indicate difference of authorship. In one sense they do. The original users of the words or the inventors of the stories were many and various, and they were not the poet. But the poet made his choice of them and subordinated them to his artistic purpose. And it is with their use, and not with their origins, that literary criticism is primarily concerned. It is as if we were to assume that The Merchant of Venice and King Lear were written by different men because their action takes place in different places, or that the man who writes so well about wild flowers in A Winter's Tale cannot be he who knows so much about law in the Sonnets. The inquiries into Homer's origins have indeed been valuable, and their worth would have been greater if they had not been associated with a wrong view of how poetry can be written. To trace the style and the stories back to their farthest beginnings is an important and interesting task, but by itself it throws no light at all on the poet's achievement. The important thing is that out of these elements he made a poem.