THE MINOR CHARACTERS OF HOMER'S ILIAD

by

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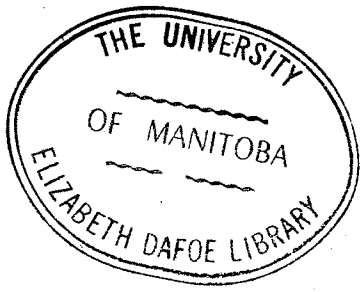
A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

FEBRUARY 1970



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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

In the introduction the first problem to be discussed is that of finding a method of approaching the characters. Since this method is to be applied to the minor characters only, it is next necessary to distinguish between "minor"and "major" characters. This distinction causes problems since Homer never intended his characters to be separated in this way but often invited comparisons and contrasts between both "major" and "minor" characters. It is also pointed out in the introduction that the characters dealt with in this thesis are treated as the creations of one poet: discussion of passages which seem spurious on artistic grounds is therefore avoided.

The first character to be dealt with is Ajax. Ajax is the loyal protector of the Greeks who, as such, illustrates one of the duties which Achilles is neglecting while he is absent from the battle. In order to facilitate his removal when Achilles steps back into the centre of attention Homer endows Ajax with an ignoble insolence in his dealings with the Trojan prince, Hector. By his insolent conduct Ajax also serves to bring out

the noble nature of the Trojan.

Another warrior to be discussed is Diomedes, the youngest of the Greek captains and one of the most formidable of the Achaean warriors. As a young man, Diomedes is reckless both in battle and in council but in the course of the Iliad the young warrior learns to control himself and to think. Through Diomedes Homer shows the development of a young hero who uses his mind to the full to remember advice and observe and imitate the clever skills of others, until he himself is seen to be a wise and mature young chief.

Nestor, though definitely a Mycenaean figure, was presumably not a well-known character to Homer's audience since the poet felt it necessary to describe the old chief at great length before allowing him to break in on the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles. Far from being garrulous, Nestor is portrayed as a wise and clever adviser and a brilliant master of tact as well as a vigorous inciter to battle.

In the Trojan King, Priam, there is much to compare and contrast with the old chief, Nestor, and Agamemnon, the leader of the Greeks. Priam is certainly an important character, important enough to win the concern of Zeus himself. He is unwarlike by nature but after the death of his favourite son, Hector, he dares to go to the Greek camp in order to ransom Hector's body from Achilles. In the Iliad Priam is made into a symbol of Troy and the Trojans as Agamemnon never is of the Greeks.

Priam's wife, Hecabe, is portrayed as the loving mother of Hector who appears to be closer to his mother than to his father. After the death of her favourite son Hecabe's grief is broken by her concern for her husband who resolves to make the dangerous journey to the Greek camp in order to ransom his son. She therefore

recognises the need to transfer her most immediate concern from her dead son to her husband, and when the old king returns in safety with Hector's body she is grateful for the return of them both.

The conclusion begins with a discussion of other prominent minor characters who for one reason or another were not dealt with at length in separate chapters. The effectiveness of the method of approach determined in the introduction is explained and the point is made that, although it has been observed that the characters of the Iliad are strikingly consistent throughout the poem and would therefore appear to be the creations of one poet, it must not be forgotten that there are arguments for the multiple authorship of the Iliad which have not been considered in this thesis. The didactic quality of Homeric character portrayal is described. It is noted that the relationships and comparisons of the minor characters to the major characters demanded a great deal of attention. Finally, the menace of the critic's own personal bias and of undue influence by secondary sources on the accuracy of his work is mentioned.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my gratitude to my advisers, Professor J.J. Reich and subsequently Professor B.L. Hijmans of the Department of Classics for their patient and helpful guidance to me in the preparation of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis we have been concerned with some of the more prominent minor characters of the Iliad. Our first task was to establish a method of approach. Here a problem arose for the solution of which little assistance could be found in the few scholarly discussions available in print: there was very little material written on the minor characters of the Iliad. One way of approaching the characters as used by other scholars (1) was to describe their appearances in the poem in chronological order, narrating what happened when they appeared and adding to this account derived from Homer some further comments on any aspects of character as revealed in the various passages.

This method proved unsatisfactory. In the first place the space devoted to comments on various aspects of the person's character in the secondary sources studied was found to be far less than that devoted to the retelling of the story. More important than this, however, was the fact that this method tends to blind one to the characters surrounding the character in question, who no doubt have been placed there by a poet highly conscious of the influence of characters on one another. It tends to cause the story to be retold with this character in the forefront and thus

gives him an importance which Homer never meant him to have. When a scholar thus distorts his character's importance it is not long before he runs into difficulty.

For example, in discussing Menelaus he might make the observation that Menelaus is a poor warrior, giving as evidence Agamemnon's comment about him (X, 121 - 123):

> '...often he hangs back and is not willing to work hard,
> not that he shrinks from it and gives way, nor in the mind's dullness,
> but because he looks to me, and waits till I make a beginning.'

Also the further observation might be made that Agamemnon, in fear for Menelaus' safety, asks Diomedes not to let Menelaus' high birth influence him in his choice of a suitable partner for his dangerous journey to the enemy camp (X, 237 - 240). Agamemnon has no confidence in Menelaus as a warrior. Therefore Menelaus is a poor warrior.

In his obsession with Menelaus the scholar might omit to consider the following question: "Does Agamemnon really believe that Menelaus is a poor warrior or is he merely being over-protective towards his brother?" He will not think about Agamemnon at all but only about Menelaus and will therefore come to the conclusion that Menelaus is a poor warrior simply because Agamemnon lacks confidence in him as one. Yet Homer in his own person mentions Agamemnon's brotherly concern (X,240).

The fact that Menelaus does enter the battlefield on a number of occasions and shows himself a very formidable warrior (XIII, 581 - 642; XVII, 43 - 69; XVII, 575 - 581) will probably go unnoticed because the user of the story-telling method

is likely to omit short passages which at first glance seem unworthy of comment. If he does notice these passages he will simply say "On these occasions Menelaus performs surprisingly well on the battlefield."

Now if this scholar had been concerned with Agamemnon as well as with Menelaus he would no doubt have used these passages to support his argument that Agamemnon is over-protective. Homer shows by the way he portrays Menelaus on the battlefield that Agamemnon has no reason to fear for Menelaus' safety. Menelaus proves himself a capable warrior whenever he is given the opportunity to fight.

The story-telling method was rejected, therefore, first because it failed to give an accurate picture in that a greater importance was attached to the character than he was actually meant to have in the poem; secondly, because it tended to discuss him only in those larger passages which seemed to warrant comment. In a word, then, this method was found to produce an account which consisted of four-fifths retold Homer and one-fifth misguided scholar.

The next approach was to list briefly the traits of character mentioned in secondary sources and to see if they truly belong to the particular person described by giving evidence from the text.

This method, too, proved unsatisfactory because, like the first method, it was found to encourage discussion of the character's appearance in some passages at great length while he would be ignored in others. Only those passages were of interest which gave evidence for a trait under discussion. This method was rejected,

therefore, because it was found to produce an incomplete account.

The valuable lesson learned in the rejection of this method was the realization that what was required was a method of approach which would explain the character in all his appearances in the poem, which would enable one to get an overall impression of the character. It was not enough to pick out and show various traits of the person being dealt with, because these would only apply to the character in certain circumstances and not in others. A summary of these traits would not give a description of the person's character but only of his behaviour in certain circumstances. In a word, it would tell what he was like but it would not tell why.

Why does such-and-such a person do such-and-such a thing at one time and not at another? In order to make up our minds about his character we must know why he does what he does. The question follows: "Who would know why he does what he does?" and the answer is "Homer".

The most important fact to remember when working with the characters of the Iliad is that they do what they do because Homer makes them do so. It is very easy when poring over Homer's pages to forget that the author is an artist, not an historian. He is not giving an historical account of the actions of his characters. He is making them do what he as an artist wants them to do. Bearing this in mind, it is necessary for a scholar to avoid treating the characters as historical personages and asking the question: "Why does such-and-such a character do such-and-such a

thing?" The character as an artistic creation had no reason for doing anything except that Homer made him do it. The scholar must therefore try to find out what Homer was trying to do with his characters. The answer to this question may depend upon the answer to the following question: "What was the purpose of poetry in general at the time when Homer composed the Iliad?"

Now Professor Kitto at the end of his chapter on the Odyssey (2) draws a comparison between Empedocles and Homer: "Both poets make demands on our intelligence, but Homer on the imaginative and constructive side, Empedocles on the intellectual and analytical. Reading Homer, we have to apprehend the significance of a mimesis, as if in pictures; reading Empedocles we would have to comprehend an exposition." I am not claiming to be able to speak about Empedocles here, but it seems that Kitto's characterization of Homer's composition and its aim may be very helpful in defining the approach to Homer's character-portrayal more precisely.

Homer makes Odysseus praise the bard Demodocus because the latter gives pleasure by "telling of the deeds and sufferings of men." (viii, 490). It is clear that "to give pleasure" (terpsis), then, is Homer's first purpose. He does this by "telling of the deeds etc." (mimesis). However, elsewhere (viii, 488) the Muse is said to have taught (edidaxe) Demodocus. The relationship between the Muse and Demodocus, then, is one of teacher-pupil, whereas the relationship between Demodocus and his audience is "pleasure." The difference, though, between

receiving pleasure and being taught may not have been nearly as great for Homer's immediate audience as it is for us. The purpose of Homer's poetry might therefore be said to be at once to give pleasure and to teach. Certainly the Iliad, besides delighting generation after generation for centuries was used, along with the Odyssey, as a text-book in educating the new generation.

It may not be too bold to say, then, that Homer uses his characters as a means of instruction. Each one of them he makes a different kind of person and through each he causes something to be taught. Some characters are more obviously used for this purpose than others. Through the characters he shows in their development and learning process, such as Diomedes and Hecabe, he is obviously trying to exercise a teaching function with regard to his audience, but what is one to say about the other characters whom he does not cause to develop in the poem? How does he teach through them?

First of all, he makes of each one of these characters a different kind of person, a kind of person we can come to know and take an interest in because we see him as a real person. The reality which Homer manages to give to each of these characters proves him a keen observer of people of all kinds and, more important, an artist of great skill in his presentation.

The poet shows in each character a mimesis of a kind of person his audience can recognise and by implication invites them to take note of his faults and virtues and benefit by them. This is Homer's main method of teaching. Most

characters have obvious lessons to teach on one occasion or another. As will be seen in their respective chapters, Ajax shows how a braggart loses the respect of friend and foe alike while through Nestor the audience is given a lesson in tact. But as a teacher, Homer goes no further than presenting these living portraits; he leaves his audience to learn from them what they will: he never preaches.

The modern critic, therefore, if the audience of Homer was delighted to be taught, will be interested in the teaching process, i.e. the composition process that went into the character portrayal. Furthermore, since Homer seems to be impartial in his own person, though not in his intended implication, the scholar must be aware of this intended implication and impartially judge the effectiveness of the portrayal.

This is the aim of the third and final method, to look at Homer's minor characters impartially with a view to seeing how Homer intended them to be seen as revealed by his composition process. Those characters are defined as "minor characters", who do not directly influence or instigate the actions of Achilles, who is the major character in that his wrath makes up the main theme of the poem. This excludes Agamemnon, who by taking the lovely Briseis from Achilles causes him to withdraw from the battle, and Hector, who by killing his friend Patroclus causes Achilles to return to the battlefield and take vengeance on his friend's killer. Agamemnon and Hector are the only two mortal characters

who cause Achilles to act (3), and as such, according to our definition, they are the only major characters in the poem besides Achilles.

But does not Patroclus by his death also rouse Achilles to action and should he not for this reason also be considered a major character? Granted that Patroclus' death causes Achilles to realize that he was wrong in staying off the battlefield and leaving the war to the rest of the Greeks. It is Hector, however, who motivates him to enter the field again in search of a definite person and to do a definite thing.

This classification of characters as major and minor is, of course, foreign to Homer. No such distinction was present in his mind. To him every character was major, a person to be developed for his own sake even if he did not always do so. These characters in their dealings with one another are made to bring out aspects of their own character as well as traits of character in the people with whom they are brought into contact. One could not say that in Homer's mind Achilles, Agamemnon and Hector were the major characters and the rest minor figures whose only purpose is to bring out aspects of character in the three major figures. Homer includes these minor characters for their own sake and follows the fortunes of each. Most of these minor characters do serve to bring out aspects of character in one or more of the three so-called major characters. However, Homer is also interested in bringing out aspects of their own characters and in letting them associate with one another to bring out further aspects.

The following question now arises: "Why apply a method, the aim of which is to see as clearly as possible what Homer was trying to do with his characters to a group of characters who have been artificially cut off from another group? Is this the way to get an accurate picture of what Homer is trying to do with his characters?"

The answer to the last question is, of course, no. If we artificially cut off one group from another we will fail to notice anything which a minor character as a whole serves to bring out in a major character as a whole and vice versa. If we examine Menelaus in general but are prevented from looking at his brother Agamemnon in general, we will fail to notice that Homer's realism is not merely shown in his characterization of individuals. In his characterization of the two brothers he shows common traits which indicate that they are brothers raised under the same roof.

On more than one occasion, for example, Agamemnon suggests that the Greeks retire from Troy when things are going badly for them (IX, 17 - 28; XIV, 65 - 81). After making this suggestion he changes his mind simply because he is manoeuvred into doing so by the others. His brother, Menelaus, captures the Trojan, Adrastus, (VI, 37 - 53) and hesitates to kill him. He finally allows Adrastus to die simply because he is forced to do so. These two incidents reveal something about the natures of both men. They are both unwarlike by nature. If we observe this fact after considering the two brothers together, one of the

subjects of a study of each one separately would be to see how each reacts to the situation of being compelled to fight in a war, even though warring is adverse to his nature.

If we believe Achilles who is speaking at the height of his rage we may believe that until the time of the quarrel at least, Agamemnon reacted in a cowardly fashion. For Achilles says of him (I, 225 - 228):

> 'You wine sack, with a dog's eyes, with a deer's heart. Never once have you taken courage in your heart to arm with your people for battle, or go into ambuscade with the best of the Achaians. No, for in such things you see death.'

After the quarrel, as we have noted, Agamemnon suggests retreat on more than one occasion when the situation becomes critical for the Greeks. We may therefore conclude that when faced with danger in battle Agamemnon behaves in a cowardly fashion.

Agamemnon's brother, Menelaus is also unwarlike by nature. When he captures Adrastus he pities him and is almost at the point of sparing his life. However, although he is not fond of war, his attitude, in a word, is, making the best of a bad situation and not allowing his dislike of war to shake his noble ideals.

Menelaus is a philosopher with ideals and his most important belief is that one should set an example of what is right no matter what the cost. For this reason he accepts Hector's challenge to single combat on behalf of the Greeks (VII, 94f.) since he believes that it is cowardice to refuse him. Though he is doomed to die, he will set an example of what is right. In doing this he is not seeking glory for himself: he is trying to make certain that the honour of his side

is not tarnished. Menelaus also believes that comrades should be avenged even if this involves attacking a superior warrior. He therefore dares to attack Aeneas (V, 559 - 575). In fighting man to man he does not regard his opponent as his enemy so much as the Trojans in general (XIII, 618 - 639):

> ...and Menelaos, setting his heel on
> his chest, stripped off his armour and spoke exulting over him:
> 'So, I think, shall you leave the ships of the fast-mounted Danaans,
> you haughty Trojans, never to be glutted with the grim war noises,
> nor go short of all that other shame and defilement
> wherewith you defiled me, wretched dogs, and your hearts knew no fear
> at all of the hard anger of Zeus loud-thundering,
> the guest's god, who some day will utterly sack your steep city.
> You who in vanity went away taking with you my wedded
> wife, and many possessions, when she had received you in kindness.
> And now once more you rage among our seafaring vessels
> to throw deadly fire on them and kill the fighting Achaians.
> But you will be held somewhere, though you be so headlong for battle.
> Father Zeus, they say your wisdom passes all others',
> of men and gods, and yet from you all this is accomplished
> the way you give these outrageous people your grace, these Trojans
> whose fighting strength is a thing of blind fury, nor can they ever
> be glutted full of the close encounters of deadly warfare.
> Since there is satiety in all things, in sleep, and love-making,
> in the loveliness of singing and the innocent dance. In all these
> things a man will strive sooner to win satisfaction
> than in war; but in this the Trojans cannot be glutted.'

Finally, at the funeral games of Patroclus (XXIII, 566 - 611), Menelaus reveals his dislike of unfairness when he reproaches Antilochus for his foul play in the chariot race. He does not, however, reproach him so that he himself may get the prize and honour he deserves. He lets Antilochus keep the prize. His object is to instruct Antilochus in what is right.

It has been shown, then, that Menelaus, believes a man's duty is to set an example of what is right and not to allow another man to err without reproach or

punishment. Although he is not a lover of war by nature, he does not allow his dislike of the present battle to shake him from his noble ideals. In spite of his own feelings he puts up with the situation with all the zeal he is humanly capable of giving. Though he curses the Trojans for never having their fill of the battle which obviously wearies him (XIII, 636 - 639) and is reproached by his brother for waiting on his instructions for battle (X, 121 - 123), Menelaus nevertheless shows himself an admirable warrior in spite of his hatred of battle (XIII, 581 - 642; XVII, 43 - 69; XVII, 575 - 581).

Menelaus and Agamemnon, therefore, are brothers who dislike battle. However, their reactions in war are completely different. Agamemnon shows himself a coward when circumstances are against him while Menelaus shows himself a noble, though at times perhaps a foolhardy, warrior. In fact, in the later part of the poem his performance on the field is so good that it stuns Apollo, who is forced to admit that the Greek has certainly shown his valour (XVII, 586 - 588).

If, therefore, we classify the characters as major and minor and then deal only with the minor characters, in the case of some of these minor characters our description will be incomplete in that it does not allow a general look at a major character which would give the beholder more insight into Homer's achievement in his characterization of the minor character. In this thesis, therefore, we avoid a discussion of those minor characters which the poet intended to be compared and contrasted in general with major characters. Comparison and contrast is a useful

way to bring out differences in character, and specific aspects of character of different minor figures are sometimes compared with those of other minor figures and the major figures themselves. Aspects of character present (or absent) in major characters as brought out by the minor characters are noted and conversely a similar function of major characters with respect to minor ones is equally mentioned. However, a general description of a minor character, which to be complete would require a general description of a major character for contrast, is avoided.

For this reason an adequate discussion of Menelaus is impossible and because of this a discussion of Paris who would be best understood by being contrasted with Menelaus is also ruled out. Finally, since no discussion of Helen would be complete without an understanding of the man she left and the one for whom she left him, Helen too must go untreated in this thesis.

Homer himself, by the very similarities and contrasts between characters, invites his audience to make comparisons. However, because the topic demands that some characters called "minor" be fenced off from the rest and dealt with alone and because this division is foreign to Homer,it limits our appreciation of his achievement in his characterization of any minor personage who, to be fully understood, should be compared to a character on the other side of the fence. Because a discussion of such a person without a discussion of the "major" character to whom he

ought to be compared would be incomplete, it is avoided here and, with it, discussions of any other minor personages dependent on this omitted person for clarification.

The characters which were found capable of being discussed independently, or, at least, without being compared in detail to the major characters have been approached by means of the following method. The actions of the character in question on every occasion he is made to appear in the Iliad were noted and the following questions posed: "Why does Homer make this character do such-and-such a thing at one time and why something else at another time? Does he cause him to do a certain thing to bring out an aspect of his own character? If so, what is that aspect? Is Homer, in making the character do what he is doing, causing him to depart by his actions from what was customary and expected? If so, what does this departure reveal about his character? If nothing seems to be revealed about the personage being discussed, could Homer be using him in this case to bring out something in another personage, one of the major characters perhaps?"

After these questions had been asked about the character in question on each occasion he was made to appear in the poem, the answers were examined and any passages about which nothing had been said were noted. The following questions were then asked with regard to the character considered in all his appearances in the poem as a whole: "What is Homer's main purpose in including this character in the poem? Is he there strictly for his own sake or is he more important for what he

brings out in other characters? Or does Homer include him with both these purposes in mind? If he is there primarily for what he brings out in other personages, is he given a character of his own? Does the poet use him primarily as a means of instruction?"

When a conclusion had been reached as to Homer's overall purpose in including the character being discussed, the passages were again examined to see if the comments noted were all compatible with this theory. Attention was also given to the passages which had so far received no comment, but which might contain an instance which ran counter to this theory.

Some of these passages were then commented on and used as further evidence to support that theory. The others which were not were either factual details which had nothing to do with the personage's character, such as an allusion to him in the Catalogue of Ships, or a passage which offered the same evidence for the theory as was offered by one or more other passages. (It was not felt necessary that statements should be supported by every single supporting reference in the epic.) The third reason for omission of reference to a particular passage was that the passage is generally considered, on grounds of its failure to make adequate sense, to be an interpolation and not a part of the original epic. Such a passage on the one hand would add or take away nothing from the argument and on the other would interrupt and clutter that argument since all one could say about such a passage was that it made no sense.

An example seems necessary here. The passage in XXIII, 798 - 883 or more particularly the lines 811 - 825 involves Diomedes and Ajax. Diomedes' victory over Ajax is definitely not the work of Homer (4). The passage shows Ajax in a bad light as none of the other well-known Greeks have been shown in the games, save Ajax's bastard brother, the son of Oileus, who throughout the poem has been seen to be rude and base and who for this reason is made to slip in some filth as a fitting "reward" for his conduct (XXIII, 773f.). Ajax's fall in Book XXIII arouses the laughter of all the Achaeans as Thersites' thrashing had done in Book II. Apart from the son of Oileus, however, no well-known Greek is made to put in a poor or humorous performance in the games. So that we may not feel sorry for the loser in the boxing-match, Homer makes the competitors characters of whom we have heard nothing (XXIII, 664f.). Then, when Telamonian Ajax and Odysseus enter the wrestling match, the contest is made to end in a draw (XXIII, 736 - 737). Why, then, should Homer make Ajax lose to Diomedes in the spear-thrusting?

The answer is that he did no such thing. This passage is the work of an interpolator and one who did not know his trade very well. Because of Ajax's faults he decided to punish him in the games by a fate which Homer never meant him to suffer. Ajax has his faults but these are given to him out of necessity. As the second best warrior after Achilles, who protects the Greeks while Achilles is away from the battle, he must have some fault which will make his removal from

the centre of attention less painful to the audience when Achilles steps back into the battle. Homer gives Ajax his faults out of necessity and is therefore not going to punish him for them after they have served their purpose.

Accordingly, reference to this passage has been omitted both from the account of Diomedes and that of Ajax. The passage neither adds to nor takes away anything from what is said about either warrior and is generally rejected (5) as the work of an inferior interpolator.

We cannot, however, omit consideration of every passage which is suspected to be an interpolation. Such passages may be suspect on linguistic or historical grounds but still valid on artistic grounds.

For example, one of Nestor's speeches (VII, 327 - 343) bothers Page (6) for two reasons. First of all, he feels the advice is out of place. It seems pointless to advise the Greeks to build a defensive wall in the tenth year of the war, especially when they still had the upper hand over the Trojans. Secondly, he is suspicious of Nestor's later advice where he tells the Greeks to take the bones of the dead home to their kin for burial. Page notes that this is a custom peculiar to Athens and therefore feels that this part of the speech was written by a later Attic hand.

Touching his first objection to the speech, that it seems out of place to advise the Greeks to construct a defensive wall in the tenth year of the war, we may say that from an historical point of view this is a valid observation.

Again, however, this is not a valid reason for rejecting the passage in Homer, because Homer is not writing history. If the passage makes sense or, better, still, is effective from an artistic point of view, there is no reason to reject it on the grounds that it seems out of place from an historical point of view.

The building of the wall in the tenth year certainly does make sense from an artistic point of view. Nestor advises its construction after the withdrawal of Achilles because he realizes that Ajax will not be able to keep the enemy back as Achilles had done and that presently they will be pouring down on the Greek ships. The fact that such a wall had to be constructed and used shows what a formidable protector had been lost by the Greeks in Achilles. Homer makes Achilles remark that this wall was not keeping Hector back as he himself had done (IX, 348 - 355).

As to Page's second objection to the passage (taking the bones of the dead home to their kin was a custom peculiar to Athens and not Mycenaean), we may again say that Homer is not an historian. The fact that an Athenian custom is mentioned here does not necessarily mean that the passage is the work of a later Attic hand. The practise of cremation which was not the usual method of burial in Mycenaean times was borrowed from Athens after the break-up of the Mycenaean empire and by Homer's time, according to Webster (7) was the established method of burial in Ionia. Homer here introduces into his poem a custom of his own time, the burning of the dead and the returning of the bones to their kinsfolk for burial.

This, of course, he may do as a poet and not a writer of history.

Suspect passages like this one, which involve a character who is being discussed in this thesis, are taken into consideration along with the rest of the passages where the character is involved because they make sense from an artistic point of view. No attempt is made to justify their inclusion in the text nor is the fact even mentioned that they have been suspected as additions. The only fact about them that is important is that they make sense and are therefore capable of being dealt with.

This policy of silence towards suspect passages, whereby those that do not make sense and which do not alter anything which has been said are simply ignored and those that do make sense are included in a discussion without the fact being mentioned that they have been suspected as interpolations, has been adopted for the following reason. In a discussion of characters, it seems pointless to break the argument to state that the passage being discussed is a suspected addition, or that another suspect passage has been omitted although it makes no difference to the argument. Even after every suspect passage has been accepted or rejected, the question still remains: "Who wrote what is left? One bard or several? "This question takes us far away from our topic and it has therefore been decided, with the aim of giving as complete a picture as possible of some of the minor characters of the Iliad as they were intended to be seen by the poet, to accept the whole text as we have

it as the work of one man called Homer and to look at the characters in all passages referring to them, with a view to arriving at an overall impression of Homer's creations which is as accurate as possible. Let others tear the text apart and quibble about who wrote what. It is our aim to deal with as much of the poem as possible, no matter how many Homers had a share in its composition.

From the point of view of style it will be impossible to begin every sentence: "Homer makes such-and-such a character perform such-and-such an action" as a reminder that these characters are Homer's creations and not historical personages. However, such a sentence will appear occasionally so that we do not forget this vital point. Formulae, ("Telamonian") customs ("Chariot-fighting") and articles (the shield of Ajax) which Homer gives to his characters and which have been shown to be Mycenaean by archaeological evidence will be noted as a matter of general interest. However, no comments will be made as to whether these characters could have really existed and taken part in a war at Troy. Whether they are historical figures or not, in the Iliad they are Homer's creations.

Passages from the Iliad have been quoted from the Richmond Lattimore translation of the poem.

CHAPTER II

AJAX

Ajax, the son of Telamon, is every inch a Mycenaean warrior. As Webster points out (1) the name "Telamonian Ajax" occurs on a Knossos tablet. In the Iliad Homer gives him weapons and manners of fighting typical of a warrior of the early Mycenaean period. The huge body shield "like a tower" which we find him carrying on three occasions (VII, 219; XI, 485; XVII, 128) is the type that fell out of use about the middle of the fifteenth century B.C., several hundred years before the sack of Troy. Homer must have derived his knowledge of the weapon from pre-existing Mycenaean poetry. It is possible that the poet makes Ajax fight with this outdated shield to illustrate the warrior's stubborn reluctance to change but this is not likely. He gives a similar shield to Hector when he goes back to Troy from the battle (VI, 117) and we may presume that Achilles also used a body shield because he says that of all the Greeks Ajax has the only shield comparable to his own (XVIII, 193). Since Ajax is not the only warrior to use the outdated body shield, therefore, Homer would appear to have had no special reason for giving this weapon to him.

Ajax is the best of the Achaean warriors after Achilles (II, 768; XVII, 279). With Achilles he shares the task of protecting the Greek camp: he has beached his ships and set up his huts at one end of the camp as Achilles has done on the other (VIII, 224f.). At these extremities danger from Trojan attack is greatest and these two heroes have stationed themselves in these critical areas trusting that their reputations for strength and bravery will be sufficient to make the enemy reluctant to make an attack on the Greek encampment. Achilles himself values no warrior more highly than Ajax and after his armour has fallen into the hands of the enemy he says that only Ajax's shield can take the place of his own (XVIII, 193). When Achilles withdraws from the fight therefore, it is to Ajax above all that the Greeks must look for help and support.

If Homer had been a writer of history, he would probably have focused most of his attention on Ajax while Achilles was absent from the battle-field and then returned to Achilles when he returned to the fight. He would no doubt have devoted a large section to the telling of Ajax's aristeia which would later be classified as a book. However, such a technique in the Iliad would have been difficult, if not impossible. The poet would be faced with a problem when he brought Achilles back into the fight. Since the central character of his poem is Achilles whose wrath makes up the main theme of the poem,he would be forced to remove Ajax abruptly from the centre of attention when Achilles

reappeared and a removal which was both graceful and satisfying to the audience would have been difficult. But at the same time, the poet of the Iliad realized that there had to be a warrior second to Achilles and that his second best warrior had to seem worthy of his reputation but that this warrior should be expendable when Achilles returned.

Homer solves the problem skillfully. He backs up his claim that Ajax is the best of the Achaean warriors after Achilles by showing the hero's worthy exploits, but he does so in such a way as to avoid difficulty in reintroducing Achilles when the time for his reappearance comes. Instead of setting aside a section for Ajax's aristeia he describes them separately at various points throughout the poem, so that the hearer on the one hand acquires respect for Ajax's prowess, but at the same time remembers that Achilles is the hero of the story.

In many respects Ajax behaves as one would expect a typical Mycenaean chief to behave. He kills and plunders more than his share of Trojans. Like Menelaus (V, 561) and others he pities his fallen comrades and avenges them (V, 610), and like any other Argive chief he urges on the Greeks in battle (XII, 265). But he does many things that are not typical but the products of his own personality.

Ajax is the loyal protector of the Achaeans. Whenever the situation is critical, it is always Ajax who is sought to save it (XII, 349; XIII, 47; XVII,

114f.). He is twice compared to a parent protecting his young (VIII, 272; XVII, 133). Each time we see Ajax coming to the rescue of the Greeks we see more and more clearly Achilles' mistake in withdrawing from the fight. Before his withdrawal he was the protector of the Greeks. Now for the sake of his honour he has left the field and thousands of his comrades are dying.

Ajax is one of the delegates sent on the Embassy to Achilles. There he bases his plea that Achilles should cease from his wrath on the concept of loyal friendship. This is Ajax's most admirable characteristic, his loyal devotion to his men in the crises of battle, a characteristic for which he is no doubt known and respected by Achilles. In the battle scenes after the Embassy in which Ajax is seen bearing aid to his comrades he serves as a living model of what Achilles should be doing.

Ajax, though valiant, is not able, as Achilles was, to prevent the loss of thousands of his men, nor can he instill fear in the Trojans as Achilles once did. They now dare to attack the Greek ships, presumably at Ajax's end of the camp, since Achilles had promised to enter the fight if they attacked at his end (IX, 650 f.). Nestor must have foreseen that Ajax would be incapable of frightening the enemy like Achilles and therefore suggested that for the first time in ten years a protective wall would be needed (VII, 327f.). As Ajax's task of protecting the Greeks becomes harder and harder, Achilles' mistake in abandoning his companions becomes more and more clear.

C.M.Bowra sums up Ajax as a man of action and not much else. "He is below the heroic standard of intelligence... He is brave as a lion but he lacks brains." (2) As evidence for this view Bowra presents two similes (XI, 548 - 565). In the first Homer compares the retreating Ajax to a hungry lion drawn from the fold by dogs and farmers. As the lion goes straight on, he meets a shower of javelins and firebrands and finally at dawn retreats in a sullen mood. Even so does Ajax reluctantly give way.

A second simile follows immediately. In a cornfield boys are breaking their cudgels on the back of a stubborn ass, but their strength is only that of children. They can hardly drive him out when he has eaten his fill. Even so the Trojans press around Ajax, striking his shield with their spears: he stands alone between Achaeans and Trojans and bars the way to the ships.

Bowra interprets this second simile of the ass as being indicative of Ajax's stupidity, while in reality Homer merely wishes by it to call attention to the hero's stubborn obstinacy; or perhaps tenacity would be a better word.

Homer makes two important observations in the second simile. First he calls our attention to Ajax's endurance in battle, especially when the odds are against him. Homer is not portraying stupid obstinacy here, but stout resistance against the enemy besetting the hero. The second observation in this simile concerns the Trojans themselves. Pressing hard upon the hero, they strike his shield with their spears, but their strength is as feeble as that of little boys

against the stubborn resistance of the slowly retreating Ajax. The Trojans never once get the better of him in the retreat.

Ajax is tenacious, not stupid. Were the latter the case, he could not rightly be called second only to Achilles, since a hero's status was based on his honour won in council as well as in battle. Ajax is certainly regarded as a good councillor. Of the speeches of the delegates on the Embassy to Achilles, that of Ajax comes closest to winning over the hero (IX, 644 - 645). As a councillor Agamemnon ranks Ajax with Idomeneus, Odysseus and Achilles (I, 144 - 145), and even his greatest enemy Hector must acknowledge Ajax's wisdom (VII, 288 - 292).

As we have seen, Ajax serves to illustrate the concept of loyal friendship towards one's comrades and thereby shows, as his task of protecting the Greeks becomes harder and harder, one reason why Achilles' withdrawal was wrong. When we think of Ajax as the loyal protector of the Greeks, we are filled with admiration for him and, although we have not been treated to a long episode devoted exclusively to his brave defence, but have only seen evidence of it here and there, we would nevertheless feel dissatisfied if Ajax were suddenly brushed aside when Achilles stepped back into the battle. As protector of the Achaeans Ajax is an admirable figure. Therefore, since Homer is going to have to remove him from the centre of attention, we would expect the poet to give Ajax some fault which would make his removal less painful to his audience.

And Homer does just that. In the Iliad we can see developing in Ajax the despicable hybris that will eventually bring about his downfall. The hero's wanton insolence arises out of pride in his personal strength. When Ajax is chosen by lot to fight Hector in single combat, he rejoices and declares (VII, 191 - 192):

> 'See, friends, the lot is mine, and I myself am made happy
> in my heart, since I think I can win over brilliant Hektor.'

Ajax is full of confidence and trusts in his strength, and he only partly redeems himself in the readers' mind by at least having the modesty to ask the Greeks to pray to Zeus for his success.

As he advances to the combat however, his confidence becomes hybris. His grim smile frightens the Trojans and Hector himself. He is aware of the fear he is producing and his modesty vanishes. He challenges Hector insolently, neglecting to show his opponent the respect his worth deserves. In his reply Hector rebukes him for his insolence and says that he himself is aware of the worth of his opponent and out of respect will try to hit him openly. Although Ajax frightens Hector the Trojan will not resort to stealth to conquer his foe. With him the important thing is not to win but to fight nobly. By causing Hector to make this speech Ajax wins admiration for the future opponent of Achilles and disapproval for his own conduct.

In the duel there is no doubt as to who the better warrior is. Ajax

triumphs with spear and stone. The contest therefore ceases to be a contest. There is no doubt about the outcome and no suspense. After it is all over, the only Greek who is filled with joy at Ajax's victory is Ajax himself (VII, 311 - 312). The others knew his victory was inevitable and while they give him the honour at the feast which he deserves, they do not rejoice in his success as though he had accomplished something great and challenging. The Trojans, on the other hand, do rejoice when Hector returns to them alive (VII, 307f.).

Homer invites a comparison between the reception of Hector and the reception of Ajax by the repetition of two verbs; chairo and ago. After the fight he tells his audience that each side led away its champion (egon VII, 310; agon VII, 312) and he describes the joy (chairo) on either side. In the case of Hector he mentions the joy which comes from the Trojans themselves over the safe return of their champion (echaresan, VII, 307) while in the case of Ajax, by contrast, the only joy he mentions comes from Ajax himself (kechareota, VII, 312). It would therefore appear that the poet, by the repetition of the verb chairo invites his audience to note the source of the joy over the performance of both champions in the combat and to observe in the case of Ajax the absence of any joy shown by the Greeks, who remain silent after his victory because of his insolent treatment of a noble foe.

Ajax has now proved his superiority over Hector but is too busy exulting in his own victory over the hated foe to realize that he is rejoicing over

nothing extraordinary. The silence of his comrades about his victory should have told him that a modest attitude would be best and would invite more praise. Then, too, the gift which Ajax accepted from Hector as a token of their friendship should have won for Hector the respect he deserved in future.

But Ajax does not give him this respect. He scorns the idea of mutual respect between enemies, and especially now that he has proven himself superior to his foe. Ajax feels contempt and hatred for his enemy and this hatred, coupled with pride in his personal strength, makes him insolent towards him and makes him blind to the fact that his ignoble conduct towards Hector makes him less admirable in the eyes of his fellow soldiers.

We can see that the silence of Ajax's friends and the Trojan's offer of friendship have done nothing to make Ajax change his attitude towards Hector and to show him the respect that the Trojan deserves. In the subsequent general battle (XIII, 809f.) Ajax challenges him insolently. Hector again rebukes him for his foolish and boastful insolence. He calls Ajax bougaie (braggart) (XIII, 824) which as Autenrieth points out (3) is usually said to be derived from bous and gaio but might better be derived from bous gegaa (big and awkward as an ox) and be considered an abusive epithet, applied to a big but cowardly fellow. In his first encounter with Ajax Hector, as we have seen, treats him with a respect which he does not deserve. After the duel he exchanges tokens of friendship with him. But now, when he sees that Ajax has refused to learn the lesson in good manners which

he has tried to teach him, he realizes that this brute is unworthy to be treated in a civil manner and that he himself will only seem cowardly in doing so. He therefore replies to Ajax in his own language with an insolent challenge (XIII, 824f.).

Ajax by his taunt has made Hector angry and all the Trojan can think of is getting the battle started as quickly as possible. He therefore concerns himself first with leading his men forward in an attack before looking to his personal quarrel with Ajax. But, before he can take up this quarrel, Homer switches to a description of the entrance of the Achaean kings into battle, Nestor and the wounded Agamemnon, Odysseus and Diomedes with Poseidon encouraging them. Moreover, Zeus, the partisan of the Trojans, is lulled to sleep on Ida. The best of the Greeks have been restored to the battle and heaven now favours the Greeks.

Homer interrupts the challenge and thrust of Hector with this passage so that when the combat is taken up again his audience may realize that, besides being superior to Hector in strength, Ajax is also on the side which is supported by the gods. His victory over Hector, therefore, is made to come as no surprize. This encounter, like the single combat, serves to build up respect for Hector and contempt for Ajax. Homer shows that Hector is a man of good judgement when he makes him drop all further attempts at dealing with Ajax in a polite and chivalrous manner. Hector realizes that such treatment towards an opponent who continues to be insolent and boorish will only make him seem cowardly. But while Hector of necessity adopts Ajax's ignoble insolence and roughness he does not [illegible] abandon his own

strictly honorable manner of fighting. He waits until his opponent is turned fully towards him before he casts his spear (XIV, 402f.). By making Ajax persist in his insolence against the noble Hector, therefore, Homer brings out a characteristic in the Greek which must definitely be judged a fault.

Hybris then, is Ajax's one fault, a fault which will eventually bring about his downfall. In the Iliad we see the hero's hybris in the first stage of its development. Ajax is extremely proud of his personal strength, so proud that he is not content to take silent satisfaction in his might, but yearns to exult in it openly. At this stage, however, his pride has not infatuated him: he realizes that if he exults in his strength to his fellow soldiers he will only succeed in winning disapproval by his boasting, and his regard for them prevents him from wishing that. The gods too he regards with respect and he bids the Greeks to pray for his success before his fight with Hector. (VII,193f.).

It is the enemy before whom he exults and his exultation takes the form of wanton insolence. His pride has already begun to blind him and he fails to notice that by his insolent treatment of Hector in the single combat he has made himself seem less admirable in the eyes of the Greeks who accept his victory in silence. It has made him unwilling to see the worth of the foe and, fed by the hatred he bears the enemy, it has caused his insolence to increase when he encounters the Trojan again.

Later Ajax's hybris will be directed against the gods themselves in the form of impious boastfulness. As we are told in the Odyssey (iv, 499 - 511) this

boastfulness so offended Poseidon that the god split the rock to which Ajax was clinging for dear life and caused the hero to perish in the sea. In the Iliad however, Ajax respects the gods and they him. In fact, so strong is their love for him that they are unwilling to diminish his satisfaction in the performance of his deeds of strength by giving him unsolicited assistance. We do not find Ajax fighting with the aid of a god as Diomedes does. This is not because the gods do not have regard for Ajax but rather because they realize that he is a capable warrior who derives pleasure from the accomplishments of his strength. They can see that he is capable of fighting without their assistance and they do not grudge him a monopoly in the satisfaction derived from his feats of might. They do not ignore Ajax; they leave him free to reap the full fruit of his accomplishments. They do this because of their love and admiration for the hero.

While they do not help him directly in fighting, the gods urge him on with the other heroes and inform him when they are favouring the enemy, thereby enabling him to avoid certain death. Poseidon's love and respect for Ajax makes the god urge him on first to battle (XIII, 46f.), and around the body of Patroclus Ajax is the first to realize that Zeus is now supporting Hector and the Trojans (XVII, 629f.). The gods let Ajax fight alone but warn him when conquest is impossible.

Hector's invocation of Ajax as bougaie requires some further discussion.

As we have said, this epithet carries with it implications of cowardice. The angered Trojan refers to Ajax by this name because he interprets his opponent's boastful insolence towards an inferior foe as the tormenting of a cowardly bully. It is not surprising that Hector should hold this opinion since Ajax does indeed behave in a cowardly fashion. He bullies an opponent weaker than himself in spite of that opponent's just claim for respect.

Ajax's insolent conduct has been explained as being the fulfillment of the hero's desire to exult in his strength, this exultation being directed against the foe by the hero's hatred for him. If this explanation is to retain validity we must now refute the charge of cowardice levelled against Ajax by Hector.

Ajax is definitely no coward. He has beached his ships and set up his huts at one end of the Greek camp, where danger from Trojan attack would be greatest (VIII, 224f.). It is Ajax who leads the Greek attack against the Trojans (VI, 5). In battle Ajax is often the first to kill a man (XII, 378; XIV, 511). He yields to no man in the fight (XIII, 321) and often succeeds in routing the Trojans completely (XI, 562; XVII, 284). He is the first on the field and the last off and is certainly not slack or timorous, but on the contrary slays the largest number of the foe in battle (XIV, 520).

When Menestheus is attacked by the Lycians he begs Ajax for help (XII, 331f.). He hopes that both the Ajaxes will come to his aid and Teucer as well, but says that if war has broken out where these men are, Telamonian Ajax

and Teucer at least should come to save him. When the messenger arrives with Menestheus's message, none of the three happen to be engaged in fighting but are urging on the men. Telamonian Ajax however, leaves his brother behind to exhort the troops and he and Teucer set out by themselves to ward off the Lycians. Ajax feels that he and Teucer will be sufficient for the task. He therefore does not take his brother as a safeguard, but boldly ventures forth alone with Teucer.

This is certainly not the act of a coward. Ajax realizes that it will not be a question of fighting off one or two weaklings but the best of the Lycian troops. His action seems more bold than brave and at this point one might even venture to call him foolhardy. This he is not however. Ajax knows when he is outnumbered and needs help and is not ashamed to admit it.

As he defends the body of Patroclus alone with Menelaus, Hector and the Trojans overwhelm Ajax. He confesses to Menelaus that he fears that both of them are doomed and that unless they find assistance all will soon be over (XVII, 238f.). The alarm he shows here is not the fear of a coward, but the natural and reasonable dread of a man outnumbered. In the fight around the body Ajax's boldness vanishes. He is not so foolhardy as to think that he can withstand his attackers without assistance. He is resolved, nevertheless, to put up a brave defence either until such assistance comes or until he perishes.

Ajax's peril becomes greater still when it becomes clear that Zeus is giving aid to the Trojans. The hero's vision, too, is hampered by the cloud of dust produced by the battling armies. He makes prayer to Zeus (XVII, 645f.), not to deliver him from destruction, but to remove the black mist so that he will be able to see his doom. Ajax is not afraid to die bravely, but the idea of dying without being able to see and fight against his slayer distresses him. In his prayer to Zeus the hero shows no trace of over-confidence. His petition is modest but dignified and Zeus therefore pities the hero who has shown his noble bravery in the most critical of situations and grants him his request.

Hector, then, is wrong in thinking of Ajax as a cowardly bully. In his dealings with the Trojan he indeed behaves like one. However, as we have seen, his treatment of Hector is the result, not of his cowardice, but of his desire to exult in his personal strength in the presence of a foe whom he hates and whose disapproval he can properly disregard.

Ajax, then, is the loyal protector of the Achaeans who, as such, illustrates one of the duties which Achilles is neglecting while he is absent from the battle. In order to facilitate his removal when Achilles steps back into the centre of attention Homer endows Ajax with an ignoble insolence in his dealings with the Trojan prince, Hector. By his insolent conduct Ajax also serves to bring out the noble nature of the Trojan. These, then, are the predominant characteristics of Ajax and the purposes they fulfill in Homer's narrative.

CHAPTER III

DIOMEDES

After Achilles withdraws from the battle, Diomedes is one of the most formidable of the Achaean warriors. When Hector instructs the Trojan women to pray to Athens for deliverance from the Greeks, Diomedes is the warrior he mentions by name as the one he would especially like to see fall (VI, 269 - 278). The poet could cause Diomedes' name to be mentioned here by way of showing the immediate effect which the young hero's aristeia, which have just been described, have had on the Trojans. However, this is not the only passage where Diomedes is noted as a dangerous threat by Hector and the Trojans and it would therefore seem more likely that Homer is not thinking of the achievements of Diomedes' aristeia so much as consistently portraying the hero as an exceptionally dangerous menace to Troy and the Trojans. Hector says that the Greeks held Diomedes in very great honour (VIII, 161 - 162) and that tomorrow will tell whether he will kill Diomedes or not (VIII, 532 - 538). Diomedes is the only Greek he mentions as a really formidable obstacle to him in his attack on the ships. Finally, Paris, in rejoicing over his wounding of Diomedes, says that he wishes he had killed the Greek because he has caused much grief for the

Trojans who now tremble before him "as bleating goats before a lion" (XI, 383).

Diomedes is the youngest of the Greek captains (XIV, 112) and he fights with the younger Trojan warriors. The number of his youthful victims is impressively large, but in describing their deaths Homer's humanity compels him to mention the great grief which Diomedes is causing for the fathers of the slain (V, 148 - 158). As Diomedes tells Glaucus (VI, 127):

...unhappy are those whose sons match warcraft against me'.

Homer makes Diomedes lay up great glory for himself but he does not forget to mention those to whom the young warrior's glory brings sorrow.

Because Diomedes is still young he sees everything as either black or white, right or wrong. When Dolon pleads for his life, Diomedes refuses him mercy because the usual custom of warriors was to refuse the enemy mercy. As Diomedes explains (X, 452 - 453):

'But if, beaten down under my hands, you lose your life now,
then you will nevermore be an affliction upon the Argives'

Refusal of mercy was the usual rule but exceptions were occasionally made to it. Menelaus, for example, is at one time about to give in to Adrastus' pleas for mercy (VI, 52 - 53). Diomedes, however, does not even ponder the question but kills his captive at once (X, 457):

and Dolon's head still speaking dropped in the dust.

Diomedes has an excellent memory which, as we shall see later on, is a great aid to him in learning. ~~However,~~ He is extremely sensitive to one type of reproach

and whether he is accused justly or not he remembers the insult and bottles up his resentment against those who taunt him. He does not like to be called a coward and whenever he is accused of this weakness he is careful to remember the incident until he can even the score against his accuser.

When Agamemnon reproaches Diomedes for shunning the battle through cowardice (IV, 372f.) he has nothing to say to the king, both because he knows that the reproach is just and because he has respect for his superior officer. But when the king suggests that they all withdraw from Troy (IX, 27f.) Diomedes forgets for the moment to talk to Agamemnon with the respect which his rank and years demand. He remembers Agamemnon's reproach and is angry because the man who once accused him of cowardice is now acting in cowardly fashion himself. Since Agamemnon is guilty of the same crime, he talks to him as an equal. He tells Agamemnon not to be angry because he is reporaching him in the assembly. Earlier Agamemnon had called Diomedes a coward in the presence of all the Greeks. Hence, it is proper for Diomedes to reproach Agamemnon publicly for this same fault (IX, 32 - 39). He then becomes bolder still and treats Agamemnon as Agamemnon had treated Achilles. He tells him to go if he wishes; the others will stay behind until Troy has been taken (IX, 42 - 46). In his eagerness to advocate a fight to the finish and further show his own bravery, he finally declares the absurd intention of fighting on with Sthenelus until Troy has been won, even if everyone else decides to leave (IX, 46 - 49). Diomedes

remembers Agamemnon's mild reproof before the battle and when his opportunity arrives he returns the taunt to the king and shows his resentment.

At another time (VIII, 130 - 171) Diomedes shows just how far he will go to avoid being called a coward. When Zeus lets it be known that he is giving victory to Hector, Nestor suggests that Diomedes retreat and avoid the wrath of the god. But Diomedes says that he would rather perish than have Hector say that he had been driven by him in cowardly flight. Nestor points out that such a remark would be meaningless since everyone knows that Diomedes is not a coward. However, when Hector does make the taunt Diomedes is three times on the point of turning and facing him. It is only after the third thundering of Zeus that he finally puts the idea out of his mind. So strongly does he hate the name of coward that he is willing to risk the wrath of a god to avoid it. Later on, however, (XI, 362f.) the tables are turned and Diomedes has the chance to jeer at Hector as he drives him in flight.

Diomedes loathes the dishonourable name of coward since he is concerned with winning as much glory for himself as possible and with proving himself the best man at all times. On two occasions, however, he runs into difficulty and then Homer shows how Diomedes reacts to setbacks.

In the first place he is wounded by Paris who shoots an arrow through the flat of Diomedes' foot and then boasts at his success in wounding the hero. Diomedes replies to him (XI, 385 - 395):

'You archer, foul fighter, lovely in your locks, eyer of young girls.
If you were to make trial of me in strong combat with weapons
your bow would do you no good at all, nor your close-showered arrows.
Now you have scratched the flat of my foot, and even boast of this.
I care no more than if a witless child or a woman
had struck me; this is the blank weapon of a useless man, no fighter.
But if one is struck by me only a little, that is far different,
the stroke is a sharp thing and suddenly lays him lifeless,
and that man's wife goes with cheeks torn in lamentation,
and his children are fatherless, while he staining the soil with his red blood
rots away, and there are more birds than women swarming about him.'

Diomedes says that Paris' arrow is painless while his own spear is lethal. He does not allow his opponent to rejoice in his success. However, the pain shoots through him as he pulls the arrow from his foot and because of his wound he is forced to retire from the battlefield (XI, 397 - 400).

Then in the chariot race at the funeral games of Patroclus, Diomedes finds himself in second place and is about to take over the lead when Apollo strikes the lash from his hand. When this happens (XXIII, 385 - 387):

... the tears began to stream from his eyes, for his anger
as he watched how the mares of Eumelos drew far ahead of him
while his own horses ran without the whip and were slowed...

Diomedes does not like to lose and, when another wins glory at his expense, he takes it badly either belittling the seriousness of the wound dealt him by an opponent or weeping in wrath at the thought of defeat at the hands of a comrade.

As a young warrior Diomedes is often reckless. When Aeneas and Pandarus attack him together (V, 239f.), Sthenelus advises Diomedes to retreat. However, although he is outnumbered, he refuses to do so while his strength is still

unimpaired and even dares to attack the two in their chariot on foot. Later on (X, 469 - 514) Diomedes and Odysseus enter the enemy camp at night and after Diomedes has killed thirteen of the Trojans as they sleep, Odysseus whistles to him as a signal to depart. But Diomedes ignores the signal and ponders whether to continue in his slaughter of the men or to take the chariot which holds their war-gear. It is not until Athene herself warns him to depart that the young warrior abandons his reckless thoughts and leaves before the Trojans are aroused.

In council he might also be called reckless, for in his eagerness to be the first to speak he gives advice without adequate thought. He does this when Idaeus comes to the Greek camp to propose a peace settlement or at least a temporary truce to allow both sides to bury their dead (VII, 385 - 397). On the previous night Nestor had recommended that the Greeks ask for a truce for burials so that they might build a protective wall around their ships (VII, 327 - 343). Now Idaeus proposes what the Greeks themselves would have had to propose. All the others remain silent as they try to think of a reply which will reject firmly the proposal of peace but which will allow the temporary truce as a gracious concession. Diomedes fails to see the opportunity which has fallen into their hands of getting what they want without asking for it. He does not think of Nestor's advice of the night before but supposes that his comrades are deliberating whether to accept the terms of peace or not. He therefore breaks

the silence and rejects the terms of peace. Fortunately he has nothing to say about the proposed truce for burials which Agamemnon quickly accepts.

Diomedes is reckless both in battle and in council but in the course of the Iliad he learns to control himself and to think. We see his character developing in the poem and we leave him much more mature and discreet than when we first found him. Through Diomedes Homer shows us the education of a young hero who is brought to his maturity by the advice of others and by his own observation and experience.

When Athene gives Diomedes the power to distinguish between men and gods on the battlefield she orders him to fight with no god except Aphrodite (V, 127 - 132), and when Aphrodite tries to save her son Aeneas from his rage he does fight with her and wounds her in the hand (V, 334 - 340). Aphrodite then departs and Apollo undertakes to protect Aeneas (V, 343 - 346). This should have been a warning for Diomedes to leave Aeneas alone, who was under divine protection. But the young warrior, exulting in his victory over Aphrodite, does not think of Athene's command that he should fight with no other gods, but recklessly attacks Apollo until the god reminds him that mortals should not fight with gods. His lesson learned, Diomedes then gives ground (V, 432 - 444).

This is Diomedes' first lesson in the Iliad and one which he learns well. For when he recognizes Ares with Hector he immediately orders the Greeks to give ground (V, 601 - 606) and when he meets the warrior Glaucus for the first time

he says emphatically and at great length that he will not fight him if he is an immortal god (VI, 128 - 141). He is cautious after Apollo's reproof and in his long speech to Glaucus he shows that he has learned to treat the gods carefully and with respect. Only once again does he even contemplate defying a god (VIII, 147f.). However he does this because he believes that his honour is at stake and not out of reckless daring as before.

Diomedes becomes more cautious in council as well as in battle. When the opportunity arrives for him to reproach his rival Achilles for persisting in his wrath against Agamemnon he does not let it pass by. He changes from the bold tone he had used in his last speech to the king (IX, 32f.) and addresses him with the traditional "Son of Atreus, most lordly and king of men, Agamemnon" (IX, 697). He calls Achilles haughty and advises Agamemnon to leave him to fight or depart as he wishes. He then advises the men to take their meal and rest so that they may be well prepared for a keen fight on the morrow when Agamemnon himself should take his stand in the foremost ranks. At his rival's expense he builds himself up in the king's estimation by condemning Achilles' unappeasable wrath and encouraging Agamemnon to take courage and fight boldly with the rest without Achilles' help. His change of tone towards the king is not indicative of hypocrisy on his part. Homer tells us that Diomedes respected Agamemnon (IV, 402). His bluntness to the king in his last speech was caused by his temporary resentment at having been upbraided for cowardice by a man who was then acting in a cowardly

fashion himself. He now addresses the king with the respect that is due him but still shows himself the same Diomedes who bravely advises a fight to the finish and encourages the king to show his valour.

However, the best proof that Diomedes has learned to control himself and think before he speaks is found when the situation becomes the same as it was on the earlier occasion, when Diomedes lost control of himself and questioned Agamemnon's valour. Agamemnon again suggests that the Greeks retreat from Troy (XIV, 65 - 81) and on this occasion Odysseus is the first rudely to upbraid him for it (XIV, 83 - 102). He shows that retreat is impossible. Were Diomedes looking for another chance to reproach the king for cowardice, he could not have found a better one than this. The king's counsel has been shown to be impossible and Diomedes might easily have said, "Once again I have occasion to reproach you for your lack of valour. You only reproached me once. Let us fight to the finish at Troy."

But Diomedes does not do this. He remembers Nestor's hint that Agamemnon is the one to please in council (IX, 61 - 62) and he realizes that it is right. Odysseus has attacked the king's advice but has offered no suggestion as an alternative plan. He has accomplished nothing by reproaching the king, because he has no advice to offer which is better than his. Diomedes therefore lets go his opportunity to criticize the king and thinks seriously of a suggestion which he may offer him. Then when the king asks for advice he speaks (XIV, 110 - 132). He

begins very modestly, admitting he is the youngest of the captains, but pointing out that he is sprung from a noble father. Because of his brave ancestry he asks the other chiefs to follow his advice if it is good. He then gives his advice telling the chiefs to go and urge on the men to battle even though they themselves are wounded. They are not to take part in the fighting themselves, but merely send those into battle who have refused to fight because of their resentment towards Agamemnon.

This is indeed a wise proposal. It suggests a course of action for the chiefs halfway between retreat and actual participation in battle, a course such as to please both Agamemnon and Odysseus. Diomedes has observed from Nestor's handling of Agamemnon's quarrel with Achilles and his own brief outburst against the king that the only way to avoid a useless quarrel and decide upon a course of action is to make concessions to both parties in an argument. He therefore does this and the chiefs "listened well to him, and obeyed him" (XIV, 133).

Through Diomedes, then, Homer shows the development of a young hero. We see immediately that Diomedes is formidable as a warrior and capable of giving correct advice in council, but that he has not yet learned to stop and think on occasion before attacking or speaking. To this potentially wise young warrior Homer gives a mind which is capable of remembering advice and observing and imitating the clever skills of others. Diomedes uses this gift to the full and when we leave him he is a wise and mature young chieftain.

CHAPTER IV

NESTOR OF PYLOS

Nestor of Pylos is definitely a Mycenaean figure. Homer gives him a Mycenaean cup (XI, 632f.) which Miss Lorimer (1) says it is reasonable to consider a representative of a type of cup transmitted, possibly with modifications, from the Bronze Age. The Dove Cup and others which have been discovered and dated and which are related in some degree to Nestor's cup as described by Homer lead her to draw this conclusion. Moreover, as Webster points out (2), Nestor's palace at Pylos which Telemachus visits in the Odyssey has been discovered with its bath and white seats and indicates that Pylos was an important centre in the Mycenaean kingdom. The formulaic epithets given to Nestor by Homer are similar to those found on Mycenaean tablets and applied to the counts of Pylos. (3) The counts of Pylos are called either by their proper name and family name (e.g. Alektryon the Eteoklean) or proper name and ethnic (e.g. Kaisamenos the Ampukan). Nestor is referred to in both ways. He is called "Nestor the Nelean" and "Nestor the Gerenian Knight."

The Pylos order of battle tablets indicate that the kingdom of Pylos was held by a commander of the army appointed by the King of Mycenae (4). These same tablets also seem to show that the men named on them are charioteers, the highest class of society according to the census tablets of Alalakh (5). In the Iliad we find Nestor instructing his charioteers after the old Mycenaean manner of chariot fighting. He tells them to keep their line as they advance because "So the men before your time sacked tower and city" (IV, 308). Moreover, the battle of his youth against the Epeians which he describes to Patroclus (XI, 742f.) was also a chariot battle. Therefore, although in the Iliad the chariot is normally only used for transporting heroes from place to place and not as a vehicle from which fighting was carried on, Homer makes Nestor fight after the old Mycenaean style of chariot fighting (VIII, 100f.) which the old man considers best and makes him instruct his men to do so as well.

We may presume that Nestor was not a well-known character to Homer's audience as Achilles and Agamemnon were. In introducing them, the poet felt it sufficient to refer to Achilles merely as "Peleus' son" (I, 1) and Agamemnon as "Atreus' son, the lord of men" (I, 7). Further description was unnecessary because the fame of these two characters was well-known.

Nestor, however, he introduces as follows (I, 247 - 252):

> ... and between them Nestor
> the fair-spoken rose up, the lucid speaker of Pylos,
> from whose lips the streams of words ran sweeter than honey.

> In his time two generations of mortal men had perished,
> those who had grown up with him and they who had been born to
> these in sacred Pylos, and he was king in the third age.

The poet considers this lengthy description necessary before he can allow the obscure Nestor to break in on the quarrel of the two famous commanders.

Nestor has often been accused of garrulity by Bowra (c) and others, although in introducing the old king Homer has nothing but praise for his speech. His speeches are often longer than those of any of the other heroes, but this is understandable to those who have paid attention to Homer's introduction of the king. He is a skilled orator and an old man who has seen much. We therefore expect his speeches to be longer, and the fact that they are "sweeter than honey" (I, 249) should make them a joy to hear.

C.M. Bowra writes of Nestor (7); " He has a habit of recounting interminable reminiscences on the slightest provocation, and though in moments of crisis ...he controls his garrulity, on more favourable occasions he inflicts his stories on whatever hearers he can find." But Nestor's "provocation" for speaking of his old comrades-at-arms (I, 260 - 273), for telling of his victory over Ereuthalion in single combat (VII, 132 - 158), for recounting an old battle between the Pylians and the Epeians (XI, 670 - 761) and for describing his victories at the funeral games of Amarynceus (XXIII, 629 - 642) is no more slight than that which moves Pandarus to explain at great length why he has entered the battlefield without a chariot (V, 192 - 205), or that which moves Diomedes

to tell the story of Lycurgus (VI, 130 - 140) and later to go into his ancestry at some length (XIV, 113 - 125), or that which prompts Glaucus to tell the tale of Bellerophon (VI, 156 - 195). Nestor is the only character whose loosely-connected digressions are always about his own past exploits. However, these are no more loosely connected to his speeches than are the digressions which many of the other characters work into theirs. Therefore we should not accuse Nestor of garrulity because some of his speeches contain stories which seem superfluous, any more than we would call Pandarus, Diomedes or Glaucus garrulous; Homer makes them digress for the sake of sharing another story with his audience.

Nestor is certainly not regarded as a garrulous old man by his fellow chiefs. Agamemnon holds him in honour above all the other elders (II, 21) and his advice is listened to and followed. On his prompting (VII, 124 - 160) the best of the Greeks volunteer to fight Hector in single combat. On his recommendation (VII, 327 - 343) the defensive wall is built. Nestor proposes that Agamemnon try to make amends with Achilles (IX, 96f.) and an attempt at reconciliation is made. He proposes that a man be chosen to spy on the Trojans (X, 204 - 217) and Diomedes volunteers for the task. Finally, it is on Nestor's recommendation that Patroclus agrees to ask Achilles' permission to fight in his armour, so that the enemy may think that Achilles has re-entered the battle (XI, 839 - 840).

Unfortunately, when Nestor tries to stop the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles he is unsuccessful, but his failure is due to no fault of his own. He rightly

treats Agamemnon with more respect than Achilles, since he is the more powerful king. He says (I, 275 - 277):

> 'You, great man that you are, yet do not take the girl away
> but let her be, a prize as the sons of the Achaians gave her
> first.'

In other words, he advises Agamemnon not to take Briseis from Achilles, even though he is a mighty king and there is no doubt that he can do so if he wishes. Nestor here gives Agamemnon the opportunity to yield without weakening his position. Nestor realizes that both parties are in the wrong, but he knows that the king's authority will be weakened if he is forced to yield to a lesser lord. He therefore advises Agamemnon in such a way that, if the king took his advice, his doing so would seem like a gracious concession to Achilles rather than an admission of error on his own part.

Having given this advice to Agamemnon Nestor then turns to Achilles. He tells Achilles not to strive with the king who is highest in honour because (I, 279 - 281):

> '... Even
> though you are the stronger man, and the mother who bore you was immortal,
> yet is this man greater who is lord over more than you rule.'

He acknowledges Achilles' worth, but says that Agamemnon is more powerful and must be obeyed.

Nestor has now given his advice to both parties, but he knows that he cannot stop there. The last person he has spoken to is Achilles, who has been advised

to yield to his superior officer. But Nestor realizes that Achilles cannot do this without doing injury to his pride. Agamemnon, on the other hand, has been given the opportunity to yield graciously and, if he allows Achilles to keep the girl, perhaps Achilles will in turn be gracious and apologize for his own boldness. It therefore remains for Agamemnon to make this proposal. So Nestor addresses him again (I, 282 - 284):

> 'Son of Atreus, give up your anger; even I entreat you
> to give over your bitterness against Achilleus, he who
> stands as a great bulwark of battle over all the Achaians.'

He begs Agamemnon to cease from his wrath against Achilles, who is worthy of his forgiveness.

By this speech above all, Nestor wins his reputation for being a skilled orator, not because of his advice itself, but because of the tact with which he expresses it. If a reconciliation is to take place, Nestor realizes that both parties must make some concessions, but that because of their pride neither party is prepared to admit outright that he is wrong. Agamemnon is the king. His authority must be respected. The actions of Achilles, his inferior, cannot be justified. But neither party can yield to the other without injuring his pride and neither is prepared to do this. Nestor therefore advises the two in such a way as to make possible a reconciliation which would have been painless to both sides. From the one he requests a gracious concession,

from the other a gracious acceptance. Unfortunately Agamemnon is too angry at Achilles to think of making any concessions to him and the quarrel becomes even more violent, almost ending in a duel.

By making Nestor fail to reconcile the two quarrelers in spite of his brilliant tact, Homer shows how passionate and violent is the anger of each at the other. The scene also shows the love and respect which Nestor has for the two men. He wants their dispute to be settled, but he wants it to be done without pain to either side.

Nestor shows himself a skillful peace-keeper again when Diomedes becomes disrespectful to King Agamemnon in an assembly (IX, 32 - 49). When he sees his chance to reproach the king, the young hero's enthusiasm takes away his prudence. He is not questioning Agamemnon's authority as Achilles was, but if he is allowed to speak so boldly to the king and get away with it, that monarch's authority will be seriously weakened. The best of the Greeks has already broken away from Agamemnon. If another prominent captain is allowed to insult him, it will not be long before all confidence in the king will be lost.

After Diomedes has made his speech, Nestor realizes that one of two things can happen. Either Agamemnon can let his remarks go unchallenged, in which case he will seem weak, or he can punish Diomedes severely as a warning to others who may try to revile him in future. In either case one of the two will be hurt and Nestor does not want this, since there is a better way to make matters

right. He cannot resist reproaching Agamemnon vaguely (IX, 63 - 64) for the strife he has stirred up between himself and Achilles in spite of the opening which had been provided for a reconciliation. Perhaps this is a subtle reminder to the king that he has seen what has happened when he failed to follow Nestor's advice in the past; he should therefore listen to him in future. Nestor praises Diomedes (IX, 55 - 56), who has rejected the idea of a withdrawal before Troy has been captured. Earlier he himself had expressed the same opinion (II, 354 - 356). However he still respects the authority of Agamemnon and tells Diomedes that his advice is not complete. He will complete it for him and (IX, 61 - 62):

> '...there is none who can dishonour
> the thing I say, not even powerful Agamemnon.'

Agamemnon is the most important one to please in council whom Nestor calls "kingliest" (IX, 69) and who, as he points out, rules over many (IX, 73).

This time when Nestor finishes speaking neither Agamemnon nor Diomedes says anything, but each takes his advice and hastens to perform his instructions. Sentinels are posted, the evening meal is prepared, a council of elders is called and the incident is forgotten.

In the battles of the Iliad we nowhere hear of Nestor killing a man. However, he still drives his chariot to where the fighting is thickest (XI, 501) and at one time rescues Machaon from the fight (XI, 504f.) and at another is himself rescued by Diomedes. (VIII, 80f.) As a leader, Nestor is energetic and in praising Menelaus for his efforts (X, 129 - 130) he sums up why every leader should be

equally vigorous in action. If he is not he will lose the respect of his men. Though he is old, Nestor's lust for battle is still keen and he despises the idea of departing before Troy is taken (II, 354 - 356), or of ceasing from battle any longer than is necessary (II, 434 - 440). As a vigorous inciter to battle Nestor is impressive. However, it is largely because of his wise counsel that the old man wins the love and respect of the Greeks and it is in the capacity of adviser that he is of greatest service to them.

CHAPTER V

PRIAM

We have mentioned that Homer invited comparisons and contrasts between some of his characters. C.M. Bowra feels that he invites such a comparison between Priam and Nestor. He writes (1): "He (Priam) inquires with insight into the personalities of the Achaean heroes, and thinks how far greater their army is than any he saw as a boy. He is the antithesis of Nestor, for whom nothing is as good as it once was."

It is possible that Homer also invites a comparison between Priam and Agamemnon. Agamemnon, as the King of Mycenae, is the head of the Greek forces. The other chiefs are his allies who follow him, as Nestor explains (I, 281), because he rules over more men. Priam is the King of the Trojans and, like Agamemnon, he too has his allies, among which are the Lycians under the leadership of Glaucus and Sarpedon. Though Agamemnon and Priam are the leaders of their sides (anaktes) (2) both are criticized by members of their soldiery. This implies that their actions have to be acceptable to their men and allies or these allies will revolt. Achilles and his men secede from the battle

when Agamemnon deprives Achilles of his prize and, as we hear from Diomedes (XIV, 131 - 132), others have withdrawn from the battle in support of Achilles' cause.

Agamemnon's suggestions for retreat (IX, 17 - 28; XIV, 65 - 81) are met with disapproval by the Greek camp. At one point the king is reproached rudely for this suggestion by Diomedes, but his authority is supported by Nestor, who advises that a council be held after the evening meal to decide on a course of action for the Greeks. Later on, however, Agamemnon himself, after being severely reproached by Odysseus is forced to admit that his advice for retreat is poor.

Priam, too, is reproached by his men, or rather, he thinks it is one of his men who reproaches him. For Iris, Zeus' messenger, breaks in on a meeting of the Trojans being held at Priam's gate and rudely addresses the king. She appears in the guise of Priam's son, Polites, a sentinel who is good at running, and says (II, 796 - 801):

> 'Old sir, dear to you forever are words beyond number
> as once, when there was peace; but stintless war has arisen.
> In my time I have gone into many battles among men,
> yet never have I seen a host like this, not one so numerous.
> These look terribly like leaves, or the sands of the sea-shore,
> as they advance across the plain to fight by the city.'

At this meeting no one recognizes Iris except Hector, who is given command of the Trojans and their allies by the goddess. To Priam's knowledge he has been reproached by an insignificant sentinel. However, he has nothing to say to Polites' strangely bold rebuff and Hector breaks up the gathering to lead forth his men to battle.

Though Agamemnon and Priam are the leaders of their people, therefore, they can be more or less controlled by their soldiery who may show their discontent by seceding or taking a less active part in the battle, as Aeneas does, or by opposing them in public and thereby encouraging dissent from their authority.

Though not important from the point of view of causing Achilles to act (3) Priam is nevertheless important enough to the poet to cause him to make the old king win the concern of Zeus himself. Like Agamemnon and Hector, Priam, though not the direct descendant of any god, receives messages from Zeus, once in the instance mentioned above when Iris reproaches him in the guise of Polites (II, 786f.) and again, when she is recognized by the king and tells him to go to Achilles' but to ransom his son's body (XXIV, 169f.). Zeus communicates with Achilles through Thetis, his goddess-mother (XXIV, 103f.) and instructs Apollo to cleanse and clothe his dead son, Sarpedon, in immortal garments and give him to Death and Sleep to convey to Lycia (XVI, 667f.). Priam, however, though not the direct descendant of any god, still receives the attention of Zeus. In this respect he is in a class with Agamemnon and Hector and in the eyes of the poet would therefore seem to be very important indeed.

We have mentioned the fact that Priam is reproached for talking instead of letting his armies look to the battle (II, 796f.). Warring is adverse to Priam's nature. However, because his people have been attacked, he does

take a keen interest in the battle, not from the point of view of what harm his armies can inflict on the Greeks, but rather from the point of view of what threat is posed to his forces and city by the enemy. Although Priam is very much aware of the danger which the Achaean force represents to the Trojans, and must admit that the Achaeans exceed in number any other army he has ever seen (III, 190), he nevertheless has the ability to lift himself beyond the anxieties of the moment to the extent that he can remark on Agamemnon's fine appearance (III, 169 - 170) and praise his good fortune for being the king of so large a host (III, 182 - 190).

However, when Idaeus comes to summon him to go down into the plain to conclude a treaty between the Greeks and the Trojans before the single combat between Menelaus and Paris, Priam shudders (III, 259). After his business is completed he departs, being unwilling to watch his son doing battle. His departing remark is interesting (III, 308 - 309):

> 'Zeus knows-maybe he knows-and the rest of the gods immortal
> for which of the two death is appointed to end this matter.'

It may be contrasted with Menelaus' remark after he tells the Greeks that he intends to accept Hector's challenge to single combat (VII, 101 - 102):

> '...While above us
> the threads of victory are held in the hands of the immortals.'

Menelaus in accepting the combat, which Homer in his own person tells us he is doomed to lose (VII, 104f.), is interested in victory. Priam, on the other

hand, is concerned with the possible death of his son. Priam, then, does not take an interest in the battle from the point of view of what victories the Trojans have won over the Greeks. He is rather concerned with the deaths which the Trojans have suffered at the hands of the Greeks and with preventing as many of these as possible.

To this end he suggests that the battle be suspended while they bury their dead (VII, 368 - 378) and later orders the gatekeepers to hold wide open the gates, so that the fleeing Trojans may find safety from the Greeks (XXI, 531 - 536). He also encourages his son, Hector, to flee from Achilles or at least not to fight with him unaided (XXII, 38 - 76). Here sympathy is aroused for Priam, as Homer achieves pathos by means of dramatic irony. He makes Priam notice that two of his sons, Polydorus and Lycaon, are missing from the ranks of the Trojans. Priam says that if they are alive they will be ransomed and, if dead, they will cause him to grieve. Because he is their father his sorrow at their death will last longer than anyone else's. The poet has already described their deaths at the hands of Achilles (XX, 413f.: XXI, 116f.) and sympathy is here aroused for Priam in his ignorance.

Priam begs Hector not to fight Achilles alone for two reasons; (a) if he dies, the Trojans will lose their protector and (b) if he dies, his old father will witness the death of his children and people and the sack of his city, until he is himself killed and outraged by his own dogs.

Dramatic irony continues to create pathos here. Homer has already explained Hector's feelings towards his fellow Trojans and his father, when he makes him express these feelings to his wife, Andromache, (VI, 440 - 465) who meets her husband at the Scaean gates as he is returning to the battle. In his reply to her request that he protect the Trojans inside the city walls, he says that he would be ashamed before them if he skulked from the battle. His valiant spirit which strives after glory will not allow him to retreat. The poet's audience therefore knows that, when Priam makes the same request of his son, he will not convince him to come inside the gates. Hector knows in his heart that Ilios will one day fall and grief will come to Priam and the Trojans. He is moved by their plight, but he realizes that he will only bring disgrace upon them and himself by cowering inside the city. As he says to Andromache, it is better for him to remain outside and fight, because, whether he is brave or cowardly, he will not avoid his doom (VI, 487 - 489). It is better, therefore, for him to be brave.

This attitude of Hector is the right one for a hero to hold and Priam in begging his son to withdraw into the city is doomed to fail in his entreaty. He is nevertheless shown in a sympathetic light, the pathetic pleader of the case to which Agamemnon also adheres (XIV, 81):

'The man does better who runs from disaster than he who is caught by it.'

After Hector's death, the people have to restrain Priam from leaving

the gates of the city. In his frenzy he proposes to go to the ships of the Achaeans and plead with Achilles for his son's body (XXII, 416 - 420). The fact that his son died far from him and was being dragged away makes him forget for the moment the great risk he will be taking and think only of the possibility of getting back his son. However, he has not yet ceased to be his usual cautious self and the people are still able to restrain him at this point.

Twelve days later, at the command of Zeus, Iris comes to Priam and orders him to go and ransom Hector (XXIV, 171f.). In obedience to the goddess' word he prepares to depart and, as he does in the case of Hector, Homer places temptations in the way of Priam which threaten to shake him from his resolve to ransom his son.

First there is his wife, Hecabe. When Priam asks her whether he should go to the Greek camp she is very much against the idea. She takes no notice of his statement that it was an Olympian messenger who had ordered him to go, but expresses shock at his suggestion which seems to be so inconsistent with his character. Priam is known to her for his caution and prudence, but now he makes a suggestion which is both dangerous and foolish. She therefore does not take his proposal seriously but, after expressing her surprise at his foolhardy suggestion, she goes on to speak of her son.

Under other circumstances, Hecabe's reference to the danger of the proposal would have been enough to stop Priam from going. But now, as he points out again, since he has heard and seen the goddess, he intends to go. Nor is this his only motive; he too loves his son and is willing to risk his life in order to see him again (XXIV, 224 - 227):

> '...If it is my destiny
> to die there by the ships of the bronze-armoured Achaians,
> then I wish that. Achilleus can slay me at once, with my own son
> caught in my arms, once I have my fill of mourning above him.'

Then Priam beholds the mourning Trojans whom he knows are bewailing their impending doom more than the death of their protector. He is made to think of the sack of the city which seems likely to occur now that Hector is dead, and the temptation is thereby presented to him to remain within the walls and try to sustain the Greek attacks for as long as possible.

This temptation, however, he resists. He is still determined to ransom his beloved son and run the risk of death. Though by staying he might repel the Greeks for a time and, if the city were captured, he might perhaps survive, survival is no longer the matter of utmost importance for Priam as it once was. Life has little meaning for him, now that his favourite son is dead, but he realizes that it will have no meaning at all after he has witnessed the capture of his city (XXIV, 244 - 246). With all the more determination, therefore, he resolves to ransom his son.

Finally, as Priam looks for the carriage which he has ordered his sons to prepare, he discovers that they have not obeyed him and made one ready. He is therefore compelled once again to order them to prepare a carriage (XXIV, 253f.) and to wait while they do so. Delay, then, is the third and final temptation which Homer throws in Priam's way.

When the carriage is at last made ready, Priam is still resolved to go. Those who had always been dear to him while Hector still lived, his wife, sons and people, have been unable to keep him from his dangerous journey to ransom his dead son. His people and sons he has seen to be considerate of nothing but themselves and their safety, while his wife has failed to dissuade him by pointing out the danger of the journey. She now reappears (XXIV, 283f.) and shows her concern for her husband in his bitterness. At her request Priam asks Zeus for a favourable omen before he leaves and, when he receives this, his bitterness turns to joy.

Having aroused sympathy in his audience for the old king, Homer now reassures them that everything is going to turn out well for him, since he is in the care of the gods. As the others turn back to the city, Priam continues to the plain and Zeus sends Hermes to guide him to the Greek camp. Though Zeus has assured Priam of success, the old man is still afraid and wishes to complete his business as quickly as possible. He is startled at the appearance of Hermes (XXIV, 358f.) and questions him warily, when the god speaks of Priam's dead son (XXIV, 379f.). Then when Achilles invites him to be seated he refuses and asks that their business be concluded at once (XXIV, 553 - 558).

Priam tries to rush Achilles into releasing Hector's body. He is still doubtful of Achilles' purpose and will not feel secure, until the body has been delivered into his hands. Achilles senses this and reproaches the old king for trying to rush him into doing what he knows he must do. Priam by repeating his request causes Achilles to reveal the terrible struggle through which he is passing, as he tries to work the matter out in his mind. He rushes from the house and orders the body prepared, making sure that this is done out of Priam's sight, so that the old king may not become angry at sight of the corpse and cause Achilles in turn to lose his temper and kill Priam. Achilles wishes above all to avoid sinning against the commands of Zeus. Before he rejoins Priam, therefore, he justifies the ransoming to himself and to his dead friend (XXIV, 592 - 595):

> 'Be not angry with me, Patroklos, if you discover,
> though you be in the house of Hades, that I gave back great Hektor
> to his loved father, for the ransom he gave me was not unworthy.
> I will give you your share of the spoils, as much as is fitting.'

Before Priam leaves, Achilles promises to hold back the army until the twelfth day, so that Priam may look after Hector's burial. He clasps the old man's right hand to reassure him and give him confidence (XXIV, 669 - 672). After the dirge has been completed Priam orders the men to gather wood, telling them not to fear the Greeks whom Achilles has promised to keep back (XXIV, 777 - 781). However, as they heap up the barrow, sentinels are

posted on every side in case the Greeks should attack before the time agreed upon (XXIV, 799 - 800). Priam never ceases to be cautious.

In the Iliad Priam learns that survival for its own sake is not nearly as important as a life that is worthwhile. After the death of his favourite son, the old king realizes that to ransom his body is the task which seems most worthwhile to him, the task which will give his life the most meaning. In order to give meaning to his life Priam is forced to risk it, though his decision to do so does not cause him to change so completely that he no longer shows any fear of death. Priam remains cautious throughout the whole poem and, though he dares to risk his life, he certainly has no wish to lose it. It would therefore be appropriate to say that his character develops in that his outlook on life changes. He is still endowed with a natural fear of death, but has come to learn that a life without meaning is not worth clinging to.

Because for a large part of this section we have been telling the story with Priam, Priam - Hecabe, Priam - Trojans, Priam - Achilles as the focal points it may appear that we have been using the story-telling method which we had rejected in the introduction (4). This, however, is not the case. We have been compelled to follow the story-line closely because Priam dominates almost the whole of the twenty-fourth book of the Iliad. For this reason, then, scene follows upon scene and in discussing Priam's appearances in this book we could not help but follow the main thread of the story. We shall now pass on to

a discussion of Priam as a symbol of Troy and the Trojans, both during the time when Hector is alive and is the effective leader of the army, and in the time after his death, when the old king risks his life to ransom his body from Achilles.

The scene where Iris reproaches Priam in the guise of Polites (II, 786f.) obviously takes effective army leadership away from Priam - if he held it before - and gives it to Hector. Up until Hector's death, therefore, Priam's role as leader is reduced to a command within the walls of the city.

While Hector lives and leads the Trojans in battle, Homer makes of their king a symbol of Troy and the Trojans themselves, a people used to a peaceful life in the city before the Achaeans came. Homer calls the Trojans "the people of Priam" (IV, 47) and he refers to "Priam and the Trojans" (II, 160), thereby closely connecting the name of the king with his people. Similarly, he connects Priam's name to Troy itself which he calls "Priam's city" (II, 37). Therefore, when Homer's audience thought of Troy, they were meant to think of Priam and, when they thought of the Trojans, they were meant to think of their king.

The close connection between Priam's name and his city and people is the result of a conscious effort on Homer's part to make of the king a symbol of his city and people. Agamemnon, the head of the Greek forces, does not receive

similar treatment. We do not hear of "Agamemnon and the Greeks" or "the people of Agamemnon". Agamemnon is not made into a symbol of the Greeks; he is rather contrasted with his people. Agamemnon adheres to the belief (XIV, 81):

'The man does better who runs from disaster than he who is caught by it.'

While the rest of the Greeks are determined to stay and face their doom, and, as we have seen, he causes a large portion of his army to withdraw from battle in protest over his taking of Briseis from Achilles (XIV, 131 - 132).

When the time comes for the concluding of a treaty between the Greeks and the Trojans (III, 275f.), Agamemnon swears for the Greeks while Priam swears for the Trojans. Agamemnon is supposed to swear on behalf of his side that his people will honour the terms of Paris' proposal, namely, that they will leave Troy, after the single combat between Paris and Menelaus has decided which one will keep Helen and her treasure. However, he adds that, if Menelaus wins, the Trojans, in addition to giving back Helen and her treasure, will also have to pay him recompense or he will continue the war against the Trojans (III, 286 - 291). After Menelaus accepts Paris' proposal, Homer tells his audience that both the Achaeans and the Trojans rejoiced, since they expected that they would now cease from the woeful war (III, 111 - 112). Agamemnon, however, will not allow his people to rest, until he has won recompense from the Trojans.

Priam agrees to the terms of the treaty, obviously wishing, like his people, to have an end of the war even if it means paying recompense to the Greeks. After the treaty has been concluded Priam departs at once for Ilios being unwilling to watch his son doing battle and running the risk of being killed (III, 304 - 309). Priam is the symbol of an unwarlike people in an unwarlike city, who is concerned with protecting his own life and those of his sons and people, rather than with taking the lives of the enemy, and with preserving his city, rather than enriching it by a conquest of the foe. The safety of his people and city is Priam's greatest interest, as he shows most clearly in his pathetic plea to his son to come within the walls of the city (XXII, 38 - 76).

After Hector's death it at first appears that Homer ceases to make of Priam a symbol of Troy and the Trojans. Hecabe's caution that Achilles will not spare Priam (XXIV, 206f.) fails to shake him from his resolve to risk his life to ransom his son. The rest of the Trojans are reproached by Priam for grieving over Hector's loss simply because they themselves will now be easier for the Greeks to kill now that their protector is dead (XXIV, 239f.). Finally, the rest of Priam's sons are renounced by their father because of their base cowardice (XXIV, 253f.). The Trojans, therefore, are seen to be afraid of submitting themselves to dangers while Priam prepares to make a deadly journey to the enemy camp.

As Priam sets out to ransom his son (XXIV, 327 - 328):

> ...all his kinsmen were following
> much lamenting, as if he went to his death.

When they reach the plain, however, his kin turn back to the city and Priam goes on alone. This dramatic parting of the king and his people seems to show that Homer is no longer thinking of Priam as a symbol of the Trojans and Troy; in making his journey to the Greek camp the old king is doing what no other Trojan would dare to do.

We must not forget, however, that Priam decided to ransom his son only after he was ordered to do so by Iris, the messenger of Zeus. It is true that he had thought of doing so immediately after his son was killed, but at that time the people were able to restrain him. When Iris comes to Priam in his palace, she finds him weeping helplessly along with his sons (XXIV, 162f.). Priam asks his wife's opinion of the plan which he just now formulated of ransoming his son, partly by way of saying farewell and partly in the hope that she may give him reassurance for the frightening journey which lies ahead. He tells Hecabe that he has been ordered to go by Iris, but does not add that his safety has been guaranteed by the goddess. This would imply that the old king is cautious despite Iris' promise and is depending upon his wife to reassure him before he leaves. Because Priam does not reveal the whole message to his wife, however, she naturally does not do this, but condemns his one man mission to Achilles

as suicidal (XXIV, 201f.).

It is because Priam fails to get this reassurance from his wife and is anxious about his impending journey, that he lashes out at the Trojans outside the treasure chamber (XXIV, 239f.). He rightfully accuses them of being concerned with nothing more than their own survival but he too is concerned for his. The thought that they are cowering within the safety of the walls, while he prepares to go to Achilles makes him all the more uneasy and he does not recall the reassuring words of the goddess.

Priam drives away the mourning Trojans in haste (XXIV, 247 - 248). It would appear that from this point he has made up his mind that, if his plan is to be carried through at all, it will be best to carry it through quickly. He is slowed down in his nervous haste by his sons' failure to prepare him a carriage and it is because they are prolonging his agony that he lashes out against them.

His parting from his people does not indicate that he is no longer a symbol of his people and city. Granted that he is doing what no other Trojan would dare to do, he is still doing it at the command and under the protection of Zeus. He is the chosen representative of the Trojans, sent by the god to ransom Hector's corpse. The fact that he is nervous in spite of the god's promise of safety further serves to show that he is a typical Trojan. Like the rest of his people he too is afraid of danger and for him the journey to the Greek camp is a

frightening experience. Though Zeus sends a bird of good omen to reassure him, Priam is still terrified at the approach of Hermes (XXIV, 358f.) and Achilles himself reproaches the old king, whose haste reveals his anxiety to get away, even though he is under the protection of the gods (XXIV, 560f.). Priam is uneasy in the presence of Achilles just as the Trojans are uneasy because of the presence of the Greeks. When Achilles asks Priam how long he would like the war suspended for Hector's funeral, the old man is doubtful of his sincerity and speaks on behalf of his people and city (XXIV, 660 - 667):

> 'If you are willing that we accomplish a complete funeral
> for great Hektor, this, Achilleus, is what you could do and give
> me pleasure. For you know surely how we are penned in our city,
> and wood is far to bring in from the hills, and the Trojans are frightened
> badly. Nine days we would keep him in our palace and mourn him,
> and bury him on the tenth day, and the people feast by him,
> and on the eleventh day we would make the grave-barrow for him,
> and on the twelfth day fight again; if so we must do.'

Priam, like the rest of the Trojans, is afraid of Achilles and the Greeks and his denunciation of his people earlier for their fear of danger is the result of his own fear. The fact that he has the word of Iris that his mission will be successful is not enough to free him from his fear. After all, the goddess could be deceiving him and advising him for his own harm and the harm of his people, as Athene had done, when she ordered Pandarus to shoot at Menelaus and thereby break the treaty between the Greeks and the Trojans (IV, 86f.), or when the same goddess appeared in the guise of Deiphobus so that Hector might stop and be slain by

Achilles (XXII, 226f.), or when Apollo beguiled Achilles, so that the Trojans might reach the safety of the walls (XXI, 599f.). Agamemnon believes that Zeus has deceived him in promising him success in his campaign against the Trojans (IX, 17f.). Therefore, it is not surprising that Priam, too, should be afraid in spite of Iris' word that he would return home alive, especially since, as Homer tells us, he is exceedingly anxious to ransom his son (XXIV, 236 - 237). Although in requesting the eleven days'truce for Hector's burial (XXIV, 660f.) Priam speaks on behalf of the Trojans and does not ask for the truce as a father for his son, Homer makes it very clear that Priam's love for his son is his strongest motive for going to the Greek camp (XXIV, 226 - 227) and his great desire to succeed in ransoming him makes him extremely uneasy, when anything occurs which could threaten the success of his mission. Homer, then, though demonstrating much interest in Priam as a symbol of Troy and the Trojans, is mainly interested in Priam himself who, though like the rest of his people he is greatly concerned about his own safety and that of his city, is nevertheless willing to risk his life because of the great love he bears his son.

CHAPTER VI

HECABE

Of all the Trojan women of the Iliad, Hecabe is the most interesting from the point of view of character development. In order fully to appreciate Homer's achievement in his characterization of Hecabe we must avoid considering her, as C.M. Bowra does (1), as being of interest merely as the mother of Hector. The poet makes of her more than just a mother to be pitied by her son, a parent who makes Hector's decision to risk his life in battle all the more difficult. Homer is also concerned with Hecabe for her own sake and shortly after the death of her favourite son he causes her true goodness and wisdom as a woman to be revealed.

Before this, however, Homer is admittedly concerned with Hecabe mainly as the mother of Hector. Hector is the pride of her life (XXII, 432 - 433). He is her "sweet branch" (XXII, 87), her most beloved son who in turn shows great affection for his mother. In fact we may believe that he is closer to his mother than to his father because on the two occasions when he mentions his two parents together he mentions his mother's name first (VI, 45: XXII, 234).

Now while it may be argued that Homer makes Hector mention Hecabe's name before Priam's simply because the poet cannot change the position of Hekabe and Priamos in these two lines metri causa, we may argue on the other hand that it is unlikely that a poet of Homer's standing would have ever composed these lines in the first place, if he had not had some objective in mind in composing them as he did. As they stand, these lines are very striking indeed and would certainly be noted as such by a member of the poet's audience, who would be used to hearing both men and women referring to themselves as essentially the sons and daughters of their fathers. A few lines before Hector's first reference to his mother before his father (VI, 451) Andromache follows the usual pattern. She refers to her father first (VI, 413) and goes on to tell of his fate before mentioning that of her mother. One's father was the source of one's greatest pride and his glory was to be proclaimed and emulated. Thus Hector prays to Zeus that his son may be better than he is (VI, 476 - 481). Because of his pride in the renown of his father, therefore, a man would normally refer to him before his mother, except in the case when his mother happened to be a goddess or otherwise superior to her husband. Because Hecabe does not fall into this class, Hector's reference to her before his father is exceptional and hence significant and would be noted as such by the poet's audience. If Homer had not wanted the lines to stand out, being the skilled poet that he was, he could and would

no doubt have rephrased the lines in such a way as to enable him to put Priam's name before Hecabe's. The fact that he did not do this, therefore, invites us to ask the question "What reasons did the poet have for composing the lines as he did?"

One reason which we have suggested is that Homer is trying to show in these lines that Hector is closer to his mother than to his father. By doing this he invites his audience to think of someone else whose mother is also closer to him than his father, Hector's future opponent, Achilles. The only reason that Thetis is closer to Achilles is that as a goddess she has the power to come to visit her son which his mortal father is denied. But because of this, she certainly is closer. Later the poet makes an implicit comparison between the fathers of the two, when Priam goes to Achilles' hut and begs Achilles to pity him as he would pity Peleus, his own father. Homer makes Achilles see in Priam the image of his own father, Achilles' father is far away while Hector's is near at hand. However, Homer does not indicate that Priam showsany affection towards his son, until the day when Hector meets his death and the old king pleads with him not to fight with Achilles unaided. This is not to say that, because Homer does not show Priam's affection for his son before the fatal day when he is killed, he means his audience to believe that such affection does not exist. However, the poet does make Hector refer to his mother before his father on the two occasions when he mentions both his

parents together and, as we have said, these striking references seem to point out that Hector is closer to his mother than to his father, however strong Priam's affection for him may be.

Both Achilles and Hector, then, consider their mothers of more importance to them than their fathers. Thetis is more important to Achilles because she is a goddess who may appear to her son and assist him whenever she wishes. Hecabe, on the other hand, is powerless to assist her son in the fighting. She wins his preference because of her warm affection for him, and the fact that Hector knows his loving mother is doomed to suffer deeply by his death makes his decision to risk his life in battle all the more difficult. It cannot be denied that Thetis too has great affection for her son. As he sits weeping after the seizure of Briseis, she comes to console Achilles in his grief as a loving mother would (I, 359f.). She does not speak to him as a goddess who has come to set all to rights for her son, but as a mother who wishes to know the cause of his sadness. However, despite her efforts, she is unable to console her son, who tells her that as a goddess she knows the cause of all his troubles. Thetis' warm affection for Achilles does not soothe him in his grief. She is important to her son for her assistance rather than for her affection.

Both Hecabe and Thetis are devoted mothers, but because Thetis is a goddess she does not win the warm affection from her son that Hecabe does from hers. Thetis is above Achilles and, as a goddess, she has nothing in common

with him. Her presence is therefore, more grievous to Achilles than consoling, though he understands that she too must suffer for being the mother of a mortal (XVIII, 86 - 90):

> 'I wish you had gone on living then with the other goddesses
> of the sea, and that Peleus had married some mortal woman.
> As it is, there must be on your heart a numberless sorrow
> for your son's death, since you can never again receive him
> won home again to his country.'

Achilles finds no consolation in the fact that he has a goddess for a mother but still is considerate of her suffering as well as his own.

When Homer makes Priam beg Achilles to pity him as he would his own father, therefore, he invites his audience to compare the fathers of Achilles and Hector. Likewise when he makes Hector speak of his mother before his father he again invites his audience to recall another person whose mother is more important to him than his father, and to compare the two mothers. Sympathy is aroused for Achilles, who finds no joy in the presence of his divine mother, but still is considerate of her own inevitable suffering as the mother of a mortal doomed to an early death and sympathy is also aroused for Hector whose decision to risk his life in battle is made all the more painful to him by the thought of his loving mother who is doomed to suffer deeply by his death.

These two lines (VI, 451; XXII, 234), therefore, seem to have been composed by the poet to serve a definite purpose. Though in the one case (VI,

451) Hector is speaking to his wife and in the other (XXII, 234) to his brother, his reference to his mother before his father is no less striking and indicative, as we have said, of his greater closeness to his mother. In this respect Homer makes him similar to Achilles and thereby invites a comparison between the two as far as their mothers are concerned.

When Hector leaves the fighting and returns to Priam's palace covered in blood and filth he is met by his mother who is obviously surprised to see him there while the fighting is still going on. She asks him why he has returned but then immediately realizes that this question may be interpreted as the opening line of a reproach for cowardice. She, therefore, goes on quickly to say that she knows why he has returned: to make prayer to Zeus. She is unwilling to see anything but good in her son or evil in his enemies whom she calls the "accursed sons of the Achaians" (VI, 255). She asks him to wait while she brings wine for refreshment after his toil in the battlefield.

Though she nowhere asks him to do so directly, Hecabe is here indirectly making the suggestion that her son should remain in the palace away from the fighting, particularly in the last part of the speech where she recommends the wine as good refreshment for one who has been worn out (kekmeotI) (VI, 261) by fighting. Hector considers the suggestion and in his reply to his mother he lets her know at the very beginning that he has not finished fighting for the day. He does this, perhaps on the one hand, in order to firmly remove the temptation

from his mind to remain apart from the wearying battle, or perhaps, on the other, so that his mother will not become more insistent in her suggestions against his returning to the battlefield and thereby either win him over by her persuasion or force him to refuse her with unseemly harshness. Hector has the greatest respect for his mother and refuses her suggestion of refreshment, libation and prayer with the greatest politeness.

Hector's meeting with his mother (VI, 251f.) is what one might call the first of three temptations of the Trojan. His ability to resist all three temptations to abstain from battle shows the valiant nature of his spirit. Tired as Hector is he resists the pampering of his mother, as we have seen, and declares his intentions to continue in battle (VI, 264 - 265). Secondly, he remains fixed in his purpose as the beautiful Helen attempts to delay him from battle by inviting him to sit. As she declares that she wishes she were the wife of a better man than Paris, a husband who was ashamed of the indignation of his comrades (VI, 350 - 351) Hector realizes that she is referring to him. However, he does not accept Helen's invitation to sit, but becomes all the more eager to return to the battle because he realizes that Helen, having just reproached Paris for bringing indignation upon himself by staying away from the battle, is now suggesting that Hector do the same thing by lingering in their palace. He is therefore not persuaded by her gentle coaxing but is rather filled with all the more eagerness to return to the aid of his comrades (VI, 360 - 362).

Hector's third temptation to remain behind is the most difficult of all for him to refuse - it is his loving wife, Andromache, whom he knows will no doubt be led into slavery when he is killed and Troy has fallen. Nevertheless, as he tells her, he cannot stay away from the battle like a coward or he will be compelled to bear the indignation of all the Trojans and to be false to his own valiant spirit which seeks after glory (VI, 441 - 446). He leaves his wife with this consolation (VI, 487 - 489):

> 'No man is going to hurl me to Hades, unless it is fated,
> but as for fate, I think that no man yet has escaped it
> once it has taken its first form, neither brave man nor coward.'

Because of this, it is better for a warrior to be brave.

Hector's valiant spirit has now been put to the test and has been shown to be firm and unshakeable. His meeting with his mother has been the first stage in this test.

The meeting scene between Hector and his mother is of interest primarily for what it tells about Hector's character. Hector cannot be kept from battle by the pampering of his mother, tired though he is. It is only after Hector's death, that the poet really begins to take an interest in Hecabe for her own sake. After Hector has fallen, Homer is concerned with his survivors.

After the death of her favourite son, Hecabe declares that she is at a loss to know how she will be able to bear life now that her son is dead (XXII, 431 - 432). In her anguish after his death she takes no notice of practical

matters, such as the question of the fate of Troy now that its protector has been killed. Hector had made up her entire life and he is all she can think about.

Twelve days later, when her husband asks her whether she thinks that he should attempt to ransom Hector's body from Achilles, she is very firmly against the idea. However she does not plead with him to remain behind because of her great affection for him, as Andromache had done with Hector, but rather because (XXIV, 205 - 208):

> '...if
> he (Achilles) has you within his grasp and lays eyes upon you, that man
> who is savage and not to be trusted will not take pity upon you
> nor have respect for your rights.'

She is amazed that a man of Priam's intelligence could even suggest such a plan (XXIV, 201 - 202). It does not enter her mind that, because of his great love for Hector, Priam may not care if he is slain by Achilles as long as he may clasp his son again. To her he is merely a cold, logical man who in this case has made a foolish suggestion. There is therefore no need for her to plead with him like a loving wife, but only to point out the danger of his suggestion like an observant schoolmaster.

She is the one who loves her son (XXIV, 209 - 216):

> '...at the first strong Destiny
> spun with his life line when he was born, when I gave birth to him,
> that the dogs with their shifting feet should feed on him, far from his parents,

> gone down before a stronger man; I wish I could set teeth
> in the middle of his liver and eat it. That would be vengeance
> for what he did to my son; for he slew him when he was no coward
> but standing before the men of Troy and the deep-girdled women
> of Troy; with no thought in his mind of flight or withdrawal.'

It is permissible for her to think of vengeance against Achilles, because she loves her son. For Priam, on the other hand, it is absurd, according to her, even to think of supplicating Achilles, because such a plan is dangerous and should therefore seem foolish to a mind governed by cold logic.

When Priam asks his wife's advice about his proposed trip to the Greek camp, he is really saying farewell. As we see afterwards, he intended to go whatever she might say (XXIV, 218). However, instead of receiving a demonstration of affection before he leaves, he receives a rebuke for his foolishness. This is what Hecabe thinks he requires. She does not believe that love can be his motive for being willing to risk his life. Hector, though dead, is still the main object of her concern. In speaking of him to Priam she refers to him as her, rather than their, son (XXIV, 214). She here shows more devotion for her dead son than for her husband in spite of his deadly proposal.

However, we must not forget in the first place that Priam in announcing his plan passes very quickly over the fact that he has been ordered to go to the Greek camp by a messenger from Zeus and he does not tell his wife that his safety has been assured him by the goddess. It is therefore not surprising that Hecabe takes no notice of his brief statement concerning the divine instigation of his journey. Her surprise at his dangerous proposal, which seems so inconsistent

with his cautious nature, causes her to ignore his short reference to Iris' command and to dismiss his plan as foolhardy and irrational. Then, too, we should note the abruptness with wich Priam announces his proposal. With stunning rapidity he reveals what he is planning to do, and his wife suddenly finds herself pressed to give her opinion of the shocking proposal. In his anxiety about Hector's body, Priam forgets to take into account the anguish he will cause his wife and it therefore does not seem unreasonable to say that, in her reply, Hecabe shows some indignation; she has been hurt, because Priam has not shown more consideration for his wife's feelings when discussing his plan with her. It therefore does not seem surprising that Hecabe does not plead with her husband to remain behind, as Andromache does with Hector.

In answer to his wife's objection, Priam says that he intends to go to the Greek camp even if it is his fate to die there. He then takes no further notice of his wife who stands by his side in the treasure chamber in silence, but begins to gather together the goods which are to be the ransom for his dear son. This completed, he leaves the room in silence. Outside he drives away the mourning Trojans and chides his sons for not hurrying to yoke and load his chariot. He stands by the chariot and supervises as they get everything ready for his departure.

Meanwhile, Hecabe remains in the treasure chamber thinking about her husband and his decision. She remembers how while Hector was alive he had made up her whole life and had taken up the greater part of her attention. She remembers how when he was killed she was at a loss to know how life would be bearable for her without him. But now her grief for Hector is broken by her worry for her husband. His decision to risk his life in order to ransom his son makes her realize that he, too, is Hector's worthy parent and that she, in addition to being the mother of Hector, is also the wife of Priam. As she hears him making his preparations for his deadly journey therefore, she recognizes the need to transfer her most immediate concern from her dead son to her husband. She realizes that nothing she can say will shake him from his purpose and that she herself is powerless to do anything to make his journey the more safe. Only the gods can protect him and the suggestion that she had given to Hector earlier, which was then untimely, she gives to Priam now when it is indeed appropriate. She asks her husband to pour a libation to Zeus and to ask the god for a favourable omen before he leaves (XXIV, 283 - 298).

When Zeus sends the omen and Priam returns to Ilios with Hector's body in safety, Hecabe is grateful to the gods and in the midst of her sorrows she does not forget all that they have done for her husband and her son. When she

rises to give her eulogy of the dead, she no longer blasphemes Achilles while praising her son, nor does she say that, now that he is dead, her life is unbearable. She rather thanks the gods for their concern for him in life and care for him in death (XXIV, 748 - 759).

It would be wrong, therefore, to discuss Hecabe under the heading "The Mother of Hector". While Hector lives it is true that she is mainly of interest from this point of view. The poet is interested in her more for what she brings out in Hector's character than for what she reveals about her own. After Hector is killed, however, we realize that Homer is interested in his survivors for their own sakes. Hecabe is introduced as the mother of Hector but after his death she is presented as a wise and good woman and wife who, in spite of her grief over the death of her favourite son and the rapidity with which her husband announces his frightening decision and prepares to depart, preserves the presence of mind to think clearly and see things as they are. She therefore recognizes the need to transfer her most immediate concern from her dead son to her husband. Then, when Priam returns in safety with her son, she is grateful for the return of them both. Finally, in her funeral speech over Hector she shows no self-pity for what she has lost, but only gratitude for the boon she has gained from the gods in that they have cared for her son both while living and when dead.

Of the three Trojan women, Hecabe is the most interesting from the point of view of character-development and we leave her a much more admirable woman than we found her, a woman whose over-attentive, pampering love for her son we see changed into loving concern for her husband and reverent gratitude to the gods for their blessings. Hecabe has learned to accept misfortune quietly and to be thankful for grace and it is in this attitude of peace that we leave her.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The characters dealt with in these chapters might be called the more prominent minor characters of the Iliad. Also included in this group, though not discussed in a separate chapter, is Andromache. We have not thought it necessary to discuss her separately because in many respects the poet's treatment of her is similar to his treatment of Hecabe. While Hector lives, Homer is interested in Andromache, as he is in Hecabe, mainly because of her connection with Hector, but after Hector's death he takes an interest in her for her own sake. We have already discussed the scene at the Scaean gates where Homer shows Andromache as the loving wife who pleads with her husband not to risk his life in battle. Of all those who are dear to Hector she makes his decision to fight outside the walls most difficult.

After Hector's death Homer causes Andromache's character to develop as he does with Hecabe's. This development, however, is not as complex as it is in the case of Hecabe. The poet merely causes Andromache to transfer her most immediate concern from her husband to her son. During Hector's life she is mainly concerned with him as her beloved husband and

protector. Astyanax serves, one might say, as the visible bond between them. However, after Hector's death, though she is deeply grieved, Andromache entirely concentrates on her infant son, whom she must now protect as best she can. Though Hecabe must be reminded that she has a husband to care for, Andromache never forgets that she has Astyanax. She is a mother as well as a wife and now that her duty to her husband has ended with his death she must not neglect her duty to her son, though Homer seems to portray her as a woman whose actions are motivated by love rather than a sense of duty.

Andromache, like Hecabe, then, is at first of interest to the poet because of her connection with Hector, while after Hector's death she is of interest for her own sake. Like Hecabe, her character is made to develop after Hector's death. Because Homer's manner of treating the two women is so similar, it was felt unnecessary to explain it in separate chapters devoted to each one. Hecabe, as the more interesting of the two from the point of view of character development, was therefore chosen to illustrate this manner of treatment and Homer's characterization of her was described, while his much less complex characterization of Andromache can be discussed briefly here.

Odysseus, too, might be considered one of the more prominent minor characters of the Iliad. However, a discussion of Odysseus was avoided since this would have involved a comparison between the Odysseus of the Iliad and

Odysseus, the central character of the Odyssey.

In dealing with the characters in the preceding chapters, we have adopted the third of the possible methods of treating the characters, that is: (a) to study all the individual appearances of the character in the epic as illustrations of aspects of his character (b) to build up from this a general picture of his character as described by Homer (c) to check the individual elements against the overall picture, looking for inconsistencies and possible contradictions. This method proved effective in that it yielded explanations for the characters' actions rather than mere descriptions of them. It also served to explain many apparent inconsistencies in the characters of the people dealt with.

For example, this method did not allow us to say (1): "Ajax is no good at the council and he gives so serious opinion...Ajax is frankly a soldier and no more. He is below the heroic standard of intelligence...He is brave as a lion but he lacks brains." and then a few lines later to point out: "He even achieves moral sublimity in defeat, when his refusal to retire has a real heroism and inspires him to eloquence." Either Ajax is eloquent or he is not. As he obviously is so in this case (XV, 733f.) he is presumably so in others. His speech at Achilles' hut may be the shortest of the three but it is also the most effective (IX, 624f.). He is not stupid as an ass in retreat, but stubborn as an ass (XI, 558 - 565). Ajax, therefore, is more than just a soldier.

He is also an intelligent councillor. This method was extremely useful, therefore, because it enabled us to observe apparent inconsistencies in the characters and called for explanations for these inconsistencies.

The fact that explanations could be suggested invites the remark that the minor characters of the Iliad are strikingly consistent throughout the poem. Passages involving the characters for which no explanation could be given, such as the passage describing Diomedes' victory over Ajax (XXIII, 811 - 825), are suspected as interpolations on other grounds than that the poet's treatment of the characters is inexplicable in them. These difficult passages are few in number in comparison to others which on other grounds are suspected as additions but which make perfect sense as far as the poet's treatment of the characters is concerned. No passages believed to be an integral part of the Iliad by other scholars have been rejected in this work because Homer's treatment of a character in them cannot be explained.

The striking consistency of the minor characters in the poem, unitarians will say, is evidence for single authorship of the epic. The characters who come to the forefront or develop in the twenty-fourth book - Priam, Hecabe and Andromache, though they appear in a book which has been suspected as a later addition, do not show signs of having been developed by a later poet as far as their characterization is concerned. This is further evidence for single authorship, because it seems virtually impossible that a

second poet could continue the work of his predecessor without leaving some trace of his own personality in his characterization of figures which he took over from Homer. Separatists, however, may still use historical and linguistic evidence to plead their case that the poem is the work of several authors and they may also mention those few passages, like Diomedes' victory over Ajax (XXIII, 811 - 825) which both unitarians and separatists generally admit are not the work of "Homer". In this thesis we have not been concerned with this evidence for multiple authorship. We have rather dealt with the characters on the supposition that they are the creations of one poet. It is of paramount importance, therefore, that we remind ourselves now of the existence of this evidence for multiple authorship so that it may be plain that the remarkable consistency of the characters which we have noticed, though a strong argument for unity, is by no means a conclusive one.

In the foregoing chapters we have discussed Homer's characterization of the more prominent minor figures and have also been concerned with his purpose in including them in the poem. One of the purposes of the minor characters, we have found, is to bring out traits of character in the major characters. This, however, cannot be Homer's most important reason for including these figures in the epic. We have seen in the case of Hecabe and Andromache that these women are at first of interest because of their connection with Hector but that after Hector's death they are of interest to the poet for their own sakes. The other characters too, Ajax, Diomedes, Nestor and Priam,

although they are each brought into contact with two of the major figures and so bring out some aspect of the character of these major figures, at the same time reveal some trait in their own character. In thinking about these minor figures we do not think about them primarily in regard to what Homer causes them to reveal in the major figures, but rather with regard to what the poet shows in these minor figures themselves by his characterization of them. Homer, therefore, characterizes these minor figures primarily for their own sakes and the question now arises as to what artistic purpose this characterization serves.

We have already touched upon the answer to this question earlier (2) when we quoted Professor Kitto's description of the nature of Homer's poetry: "Reading Homer, we have to apprehend the significance of a mimesis, as in pictures." Homer as an artist is mimetic. As a poet his primary purpose is to give pleasure and he does this by presenting his audience with these living portraits. He never expresses his opinion of a character in his own person since his poem would then become narrative rather than mimetic, but by implication he allows his own feelings to be known by the way he portrays the character. In order to understand what Homer wishes to show in each character his audience is required to use the imaginative and constructive part of their intelligence. Homer forces his audience to think in order to understand what he is trying to show. In this way he allows them to teach themselves, a far more pleasant and effective means of learning than direct moral instruction.

Homer's purpose, then, in characterizing these minor figures is at once to give pleasure and to teach and, though the main theme of the poem is that of the menis and the characters of major importance to this theme are Achilles and those who cause Achilles to act, Agamemnon and Hector, the characters which we have called "minor" are also of importance to the poet and like the "major" characters are portrayed and developed by him to give both delight and instruction.

In the introduction (3) we mentioned that by separating off some characters called "major" from the rest we were doing what Homer never intended us to do and that it would be impossible to acquire a thorough understanding of some of the minor characters without a detailed knowledge of a major character. We decided to avoid the minor characters whom the poet intended to be compared in detail to a major character but decided to discuss the other minor figures who on one occasion or another served to reveal the presence or absence of a particular characteristic in a major character.

It was found that discussions of the relationships between the minor characters and the major characters took up a considerable part of each chapter. In the case of Priam, for example, we were obliged to mention his meetings with Hector and Achilles, as well as the comparison which Homer invites between the old king and Agamemnon. In addition to bringing minor characters into contact

with major characters, Homer also invites comparisons between the two groups when they are not directly brought together. As Ajax's task of protecting the Greeks becomes more and more difficult the poet's audience is invited to think of Achilles whom Ajax has replaced as protector. The poet shows how sorely the Greeks are in need of Achilles who is nevertheless determined to remain apart from the battle. So strong is Achilles' wrath that not even the disastrous situation of his friends can induce him to abandon his hateful attitude and come to help them. At the same time, however, though the Trojans are becoming more and more difficult to withstand, Ajax's valiant strength cannot be broken, so strong is his devotion to his comrades.

Each character dealt with in this thesis is brought into contact with at least one of the major characters and, in the case of Priam and Ajax, the poet, besides bringing them into direct contact with the major characters, also invites a comparison between them and a major character. It has, therefore, been necessary to devote a great deal of attention to the relationships and comparisons of the minor characters to the major characters.

In discussing the characters we encountered one problem which could not be eliminated by any method and that problem was bias. Bias may be divided into two types, that which arises out of the scholar's own likes and dislikes and that which arises out of undue influence by secondary sources.

The first type is more difficult for one to be aware of, since its source is not easily determined. However, from time to time a scholar allows his moral or aesthetic bias to show through in his work. This prevents him from discussing how Homer intended a character to be viewed by his audience and causes him instead to describe how the character appears to himself or to a modern reader. He might think, for example: "We admire Priam for his exercise of self-control during the preparations for Hector's funeral because we know that he is deeply grieved by the death of his son and can understand how challenging it must have been for him to keep his composure before his subjects. We have sympathized with him during his earlier outbursts of passion and now are all the more sympathetic as he guides his carriage through the crowd and sits in silence as the women make lament." If a scholar were to express himself thus, he would here be describing the effect which Homer's portrayal of Priam has made on him and the feelings a modern reader might well have towards Priam from his departure to the Greek camp to his return to Troy with Hector's body, whereas he ought to be describing the effect which Homer intended the passage to have on his immediate audience. He is supposed to judge the effectiveness of Homer's portrayal of the king impartially. If the poet intended to play on the feelings of his audience, it is the scholar's task to show how he does this. It is not enough for him to describe these feelings; he must also show that they arise as the result of a conscious effort on the part of the poet to arouse them. In the example quoted

above the scholar shows that he admires greatly people who exercise self-control and that he sympathizes with a person even more when he controls his emotions in spite of his great grief than when he allows himself to lose his composure. This notion is, of course, foreign to Homer. The heroes of the Iliad are not expected to control their grief. Therefore, Achilles bursts into tears at the loss of Briseis (I, 348f.), Agamemnon weeps as he despairs that the Greeks will be able to capture Troy (IX, 13f.) and Priam himself weeps and is beside himself when Hector is killed (XXII, 408f.). The notion that self-restraint is more admirable than yielding to one's emotions is the feeling of the scholar and there is nothing in the Priam passage to suggest that Homer himself supports this idea. In order to prevent himself from interpreting Homer in accordance with his own personal likes, therefore, the scholar must assure himself that any admiration, sympathy or other emotion he may feel towards a character in the poem is the result of a conscious effort on the part of the poet to arouse this emotion in his audience.

There is a second type of bias brought about by undue influence by secondary sources. This type, like the first, prevents one from seeing what Homer is trying to do with his characters by causing one to look at them with his mind already made up about certain aspects of their character. For example, in considering Nestor, instead of asking the question: "How does Homer characterize Nestor?", he may say; "Well, C.M. Bowra speaks of Nestor's garrulity. Let us see

if we can find some examples of it." The fact that a scholar has allowed himself to be too strongly influenced by statements made by other authorities usually only becomes clear to him after he has tried and succeeded in "proving" one of their statements and then finds that it seems impossible in view of other considerations. We may illustrate this point by looking at the evidence of Nestor's garrulity as was suggested above.

That Nestor is garrulous seems apparent from the very beginning when he breaks in on the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon (I, 254f.). After rambling on about his comrades-at-arms he suggests how the pair can resolve their quarrel. They do not listen to him, since by the time he comes to his advice he has tired them out with his stories. Because he talks so much they do not take anything he says seriously.

But does it not seem odd that Homer should interrupt what is probably the most important scene in the poem, to introduce this unknown speaker who accomplishes absolutely nothing and then disappears? As relief he is not very effective. And how does one explain Homer's introduction of Nestor as the man "from whose lips the streams of words ran sweeter than honey." (I, 249)?

These considerations are enough to arouse doubt as to whether Nestor is in fact intended to seem garrulous as Bowra suggests (4) and to cause the scholar to realize that he has been influenced by another authority to such an extent that he has found evidence to support a statement of his before deciding whether he

agrees with it or not. This example serves to point out very clearly how the scholar's judgement can be unconsciously biased and that the most important fault to be guarded against in criticism of this kind is prejudice.

FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER I

1. E.g. J.A. Scott in his treatment of Helen in The Unity of Homer, pp. 182 - 189, J.T. Sheppard and G.J. Ryan in their articles, nos. 51 and 53 respectively in the Bibliography.

2. H.D.F. Kitto, Poiesis, p. 152

3. Thetis causes Achilles to agree to give up Hector's body (XXIV, 128f.). Thetis, however, is a goddess.

4. See A.T. Murray, Homer The Iliad II, p. 555, n.1.

5. Loc. cit.

6. Page, Denys, History and the Homeric Iliad, 321f.

7. T.B.L.Webster, From Mycenae to Homer, 164f.

CHAPTER II

1. T.B.L. Webster, From Mycenae to Homer, p. 115.
2. C.M. Bowra, Tradition and Design in the Iliad, p.p. 204 - 205.
3. Autenrieth, Georg, A Homeric Dictionary, p. 69, s.v. bougaie

CHAPTER IV

1. H.L. Lorimer, Homer and the Monuments, p.p. 328 - 335.
2. T.B.L. Webster, From Mycenae to Homer, p. 118.
3. Ibid, p. 98.
4. Ibid, p. 11.
5. Ibid, p. 15.
6. C.M. Bowra, Tradition and Design in the Iliad, p.p. 206 - 207.
7. Bowra, Loc. cit.

CHAPTER V

1. C.M. Bowra, Tradition and Design in the Iliad, p. 210.

2. The term anax is applied to Agamemnon in I, 7; I, 172 and elsewhere and to Priam in IV, 18; IV, 290 and elsewhere.

3. Cf. above p. 7

4. Cf. above p. 1f.

CHAPTER VI

1. C.M. Bowra, Tradition and Design in the Iliad, p. 211.

CHAPTER VII

1. C.M. Bowra, Tradition and Design in the Iliad, pp. 204 - 205.
2. Cf. above, p. 5f.
3. Cf. above, p. 8f.
4. C.M. Bowra, Loc. cit., 206 - 207.

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