

III.—Love and the Hero of the *Iliad*

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By the Fifth Century the Greeks had reinterpreted the *Iliad* so as to idealize Achilles and ignore Hector. Their loathing for barbarians contributed to this, also their indifference to national patriotism and their admiration for paederasty ahead of conjugal love — attitudes which developed in the post-Homeric period but were foreshadowed in the *Iliad*. Homer's Achilles stands out as a man of intense but narrow devotion, to himself and his comrade Patroclus.

A scholar's most important business may be to show how the literature of one age has influenced the character and behavior of posterity; but while we are studying that, it is just as amusing, and perhaps enlightening, to see how posterity has understood, or misunderstood, the books it has inherited. From remote times, a picture of certain heroic types was communicated to every generation of Greeks, in the *Iliad*, which they read or listened to from childhood on. Whatever the contemporary environment might make of a Greek, he was, through the poem, insensibly molded by his distant ancestors, or rather by what his ancestors admired. Yet the Greeks of the Golden Age were less touched by some parts of the *Iliad* than by others. They could and did slight one of the two leading personages — Hector — who moves most modern readers and even scholars far more than Achilles. We would rather be like Hector; but are we as close to the feelings of the poet and his Achaean audience as their descendants were, who saw in Achilles alone the great hero of the *Iliad*?

Offhand, the presumption is against us. Homer is a smaller part of our patrimony than of theirs. Indeed, all the Hellenism in us does not outweigh our other traditions. Eternal Rome has left its mark. The Bible and the Christian Church have transformed or at least altered every nation of Europe. And the Germanic, Celtic, and other peoples of the North have undoubtedly bequeathed to us many qualities that did not come from the civilized nations of antiquity. Our schools can easily introduce us to the Greek, Roman, and Hebrew traditions, because they are recorded in literary works of great and enduring appeal, which indeed directly inculcate their ancient viewpoint in all impressionable readers. The Nor-

thern element in our morals is in its beginnings less well known, and depends much less on books and schools for its perpetuation.

Although subject to so many influences, we cannot mistrust ourselves to the point of denying this: the Greeks who were centuries away from the *Iliad* had developed traits that made them less sensitive to some of its sublime pathos. They combined limited, imperfect patriotism with animus against barbarians; and they had little esteem for love between man and woman. These failings can be detected even in the Achaean world which Homer described, but they did not pervade and vitiate it. That came later.

I. PREJUDICE AGAINST THE TROJANS

What scholar has not wondered why in the Golden Age the Greeks so detested the barbarians but did not love or value one another enough to live together as a unified nation? Both facets of this mentality may be compared with Homer's. He does show slight partiality in narrating the ἀπιορέλαι of more Achaean than Trojan heroes; and he usually tells of Trojan warriors being not only killed but also despoiled, whereas dead Achaeans are saved by their stalwart comrades from the second indignity.¹

Justice is on the side of the invaders, insofar as Troy not only received Helen and Paris in the first place but — even worse — violated the truce after Paris's duel with Menelaus (Books 3 and 4 *passim*, especially 4.235–39). The poet, however, does not dwell on this theme.² His tacit and informal philosophy gave justice not enough weight to content later Greek thinkers. Seeing that every war is a terrible evil, they felt that some man or men must bear the blame. Even Thucydides, who less than any other ancient writer is an avowed moralist, carefully shows who is responsible for every action. His speakers discuss right and wrong far more than Homer's, who prefer to dwell on honor and disgrace (cf. Thucydides 1.68–71 with *Il.* 9.225–306).

Now innumerable wars with the peoples of Asia left the Greeks full of ill-will towards barbarians, and they looked on the Trojan

¹ E.g. 5.573; 17.533–37; Patroclus, however, is a conspicuous exception (17.125).

² Does he feel that all the sufferings of the war come more from the gods than from the guilt of Troy and Paris? Characters on both sides who blame the gods (3.164; 7.69–73; 24.525 ff.) may not be expressing Homer's judgment, but in his narrative he shows the gods to be moved less by justice than by spite (e.g. 4.20 ff.; 21.211–13). Their solicitude for some favored man makes them all the more cruel to others (1.9 ff.; 5.1–3, etc.).

war as a precursor.³ So Isocrates was able to interpret the *Iliad* as a poem in praise of "those who fought the barbarians" (*Paneg.* 159), although Homer gives Greek names to practically all the Trojans and makes them scarcely different from the Achaeans.⁴ The invidious word *βάρβαρος* he does not use at all (except for the harmless phrase *Καρῶν βαρβαροφώνων* in the catalogue of Troy's allies, 2.867).⁵

But the Greeks not only projected their hatred of recent or contemporary barbarian enemies back upon the Trojans. They also identified them with the despised Phrygians who still inhabited part of the region (Euripides, *Or.* 1448; cf. *Alc.* 675–76, etc.). With Hellenic pride such as Euripides puts into the mouth of Iphigenia,⁶ it was hard to do justice to a Trojan hero (and easy to exalt an Achaean beyond Homer's praises). Hector was mostly neglected, but that was not the worst. The author of the *Rhesus*, the only extant tragedy adapted from the *Iliad*, made him into a ridiculous, conceited, bombastic Phrygian. This arrogant figure is blown up out of a few hints in Homer, lines which show Hector proud of being the mightiest warrior of Troy, and impatient — sometimes unfairly — with all Trojans that he thinks are shirking their part in the war (3.38–57; 6.492–93; 12.210–14, 246–50; 13.765–73; 15.348–51, 721–23). But in nearly all such passages, he displays a certain redeeming magnanimity, candor, or affection. In the *Rhesus*, just a few debased traces remain of his Homeric virtues.⁷

³ The Persians did too, according to Herodotus (1.3–4). His catalogue of outrages indicates that some Greeks seriously traced their enmity toward Asia back into heroic times, and that they passed their legends on to Persians acquainted with Hellenic culture.

⁴ Priam's polygamous family (6.242–50) has no parallel among the Achaeans, but little is made of it in the *Iliad*. Apart from Hecabe, a few of her sons, and her daughter Cassandra, it consists of many shadowy figures. Those who emerge from the shadows make up a Homeric family group not unlike Nestor's or Odysseus'.

The Achaean household differed of course in important respects from that of later Greece. A retainer like Phoenix or Patroclus (9.480–95; 11.785–91; 23.84–90) would find a place among the barbarians of Lydia (Herodotus 1.35–42) more readily than in Greece.

⁵ The Carian commanders also have Greek names!

⁶ *IA.* 1378–1401, especially the last two lines: "It is fitting, mother, that Greeks rule barbarians, not that barbarians rule Greeks; for they are slaves, but we are free." This fulsome scene may conceivably have been intended as caricature, but even so Iphigenia's speech must have been suggested to Euripides by an attitude he found among his contemporaries.

⁷ Cf. the speech regretting Rhesus' death, especially 957–61: "I sent and he came; I meant that he should share my burdens. I cannot help grieving for his death. Now I am ready to give him burial and to lavish exquisite robes upon his pyre, for he came as a friend and goes away in misfortune."

The *Iliad* itself was interpreted according to the Greeks' bias that their ancestors were right and the enemy wrong.⁸ When Thetis prophesies to her son that he will die soon after Hector, Achilles is not deterred by that, but only chagrined because he failed to stand by his comrade Patroclus (18.94 ff.). His famous reply to Thetis is altered by Socrates (or Plato), who quotes snatches of it but sandwiches his own words in between Homer's (which I italicize): "*May I die at once*, after I have inflicted on the wrongdoer [Hector] his just deserts, that I may not abide contemptibly here *by the curved ships—a burden upon the earth*" (*Apol.* 28D). The Athenian moralist introduces a foreign but more edifying motive — justice — and abandons Homer's subtle characterization of Achilles, a blend of impulsiveness, loyalty, vengefulness, and thirst for renown.

Once the Trojan war entered Latin literature, sympathy swings away from the Achaeans, because the Trojan Aeneas was held to be the father of Rome. The Greeks themselves were to blame for this legend, which a line of "historians" from Hellanicus down to Timaeus of Tauromenium embroidered before the Romans took it over.⁹ We need not follow Achilles and Hector through fragments and complete works in both classical and medieval Latin. Except for "Dictys Cretensis" and the *Achilleid* of Statius (1.397–406; 2.59 [345] ff.), this literature is rather monotonously and sometimes intensely hostile to the Greeks. Since ancient times, it has probably inculcated a prejudice solid enough to outweigh the opposite prejudice of Attic writers. The *Aeneid* alone must influence each generation strongly in favor of Troy, for in every educational system outside of Greece it is read before the *Iliad* or any other Greek book.¹⁰

If our minds are now exposed to strong prejudices from both

⁸ Compare how Jewish stories treat Jacob and Esau. Genesis gives a very human, balanced picture of both, while post-Biblical writings, which associate Esau with the Herodian party, the Romans, and later the Christians, record and amplify traditions that idealize Jacob but vilify Esau (see Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* 1 [Philadelphia, 1909] 313–421; for anecdotes scattered through later volumes, see Index in Vol. 7).

⁹ O. Rossbach in *RE* s.v. "Aineias."

¹⁰ Perversely enough, a Greek — Euripides — was the first to detract from the glory of Homer's Achaean heroes, one and all. Sophocles had indeed debased the Atreidae in his *Ajax*, but was never an anti-Hellenist, like Euripides in the *Hecabe*, the *Troades*, and here and there in other works. This same iconoclast could, however, be a super-patriot in the Iphigenia plays.

sides, we have some advantage over those who listened only to one. We may come out leaning just slightly toward Troy, whereas Homer leaned slightly the other way; but did Greek readers, thoroughly swayed by national partisanship, understand his attitude better than we do?

II. LOVE OF COUNTRY

The greatest of the Achaeans was bound to become, in their descendants' eyes, the most *exemplary* character in the *Iliad*, for Greeks could not possibly esteem the greatest of the Trojans as much. Now this model of theirs is depicted by Homer as a man jealous for his own honor above all. He is the center of a small circle united in profound mutual loyalty — the Myrmidons; for the rest of the Achaeans he cares much less. He does take the first step to halt the plague which has been ravaging the people (1.54–56); but once Agamemnon has injured him, he hopes “that Zeus will succor the Trojans and press the Achaeans in tight among the ships' sterns and by the sea; that they will be killed in order that they may all enjoy their king to the full” (1.408–10).

It is not Homer's manner to applaud or censure *directly*. But all the speeches of the elders — Nestor, Odysseus, Phoenix, and by implication even Ajax — convey to us that Agamemnon was greatly at fault and Achilles cannot be blamed for avenging the king's insult upon the people (1.275 ff.; 9.104–13, 260–303, 496 ff., 628 ff.). Only *after* he rebuffs Agamemnon's conciliatory and indeed highly honorific overtures does he incur reproach from Ajax and Diomedes for being so callous to the Achaeans' desperate need (9.624 ff., 697–703). A few lines in Phoenix's speech sum up the rights and wrongs of the whole quarrel:

If, instead of bringing you gifts and announcing more to follow, Atrides were still furious and unyielding, I would not tell you to cast away your wrath and defend the Argives — much as they need you. But here he does offer you a great deal immediately and has promised more hereafter. He has chosen the outstanding men among the Achaean people, the ones dearest to *you* of the Argives, and sent them to implore you. Do not make them ashamed that they came here and spoke to you. Before now, your anger was quite blameless (9.515–23).¹¹

¹¹ Socrates in the *Republic* (3.390E) censures Phoenix for advising Achilles to act on such mercenary grounds, but does not reprove Achilles' indifference to the suffering of the people. Greek morality did not insist that a man should, like Coriolanus (Livy 2.35–40, Dionysius *Ant. Rom.* 8.23 ff.) or Saul and David (I Sam. 23:1–24:1), rate the public need higher than his outraged feelings.

But Achilles remains unappeasable, even though he grants the justice of Ajax's remonstrances:

As you spoke, it all sounded to me like my own feelings. But my heart swells with gall whenever I recall how Atrides treated me with contumely before the Argives, as if I were some worthless newcomer. Go now and report my message. I will have nothing to do with bloody war until wise Priam's son, divine Hector, comes to the Myrmidons' huts and ships, killing the Argives, and burns the ships with fire. Around this hut of mine and my black ship Hector, eager as he is for battle, will halt, I think (9.645-55).

These splendid and revealing words were criticized by the greatest Greek thinkers either most indirectly or not at all. Aristotle, in enumerating the qualities of a magnanimous man, says he does not nurse grudges (*οὐδὲ μνησικάκος*, *Eth. Nic.* 4.1125A.3). On this point Achilles would deviate most from the type — but not too much at that, since what he will not forget is an outrage against his *honor*. Plato condemns the Homeric portrayal of Achilles for many other faults (*Rep.* 3.386B-391C), but does not complain that Achilles is obsessed with the memory of an insult or cares to fight only for his Myrmidons.

The most esteemed generals and statesmen in Greek history, almost without exception, shared one or both of Achilles' failings; and Greece suffered equally from continual war between the cities and vindictive factional strife within each. The most notorious example of spitefulness was Alcibiades, who went to unheard-of lengths during his first exile from Athens (Thucydides 6.74, 91-92, 8.6-26 *passim*; Lysias 14.30 ff.; Plutarch *Alc.* 22-24). Many other statesmen, while devoted to their own city, were incapable of enlarging their patriotism to include the rest of Greece; of these the wise Pericles and the noble Epaminondas are probably most responsible for neglecting the opportunity to build an enduring nation instead of a transient empire ruled by one city-state.

Achilles' indifference to Panachaeon loyalties foreshadowed the feebleness of Panhellenism in later times. Greece seems to have reproduced his type much more easily than Hector's. That final act of self-sacrifice, to which Hector is moved by guilt for having failed his people, was perhaps un-Greek:

Ah me, if I take shelter within the gates and walls, Polydamas will be the first to heap reproaches on me. He told me to lead the Trojans to the city last night, that dreadful night when divine Achilles was aroused;

but I did not listen. That would have been much better. Now that I have ruined the people with my recklessness, I cannot face the men of Troy and the long-robed Trojan women, for fear that another man worse than I may say, "Hector trusted in his own prowess and ruined the people." So they will say. It would be much better for me to face Achilles. Then I will either come home victorious or else die honorably by his hand before the city (22.99-110).

Herodotus tells of the Spartan Aristodemus, who was dishonored for being the only survivor of Thermopylae, and to redeem himself at Plataea outdid the bravest of his comrades who died with him (9.71.2-4). But to find not a soldier in the ranks but a leader and champion spurred on so by shame, we must turn to the legendary history of Atilius Regulus' death,¹² or of Samson's (Judges 16). Achilles does not rise above his wrath until it has cost his friend's life (18.90 ff.); only afterward does he mention what it has cost the *people* — and then with no great regret (19.61 ff.). He talks of public sorrow in order not to parade his personal grief for Patroclus before the whole assembly; and at the funeral he exhibits similar delicacy (23.152 ff.).

The Homeric age had the highest esteem for a great warrior; and Achilles was that, though he was no great patriot. Plato's age, as far as the evidence goes, was still less sensitive to this shortcoming, which mars him so in the eyes of modern readers. But we are influenced by Stoicism,¹³ and even more by Hebrew, Roman, and chivalric ideals of the soldier, all of which make Hector more appealing. Homer is again in between us and his audience of the Golden Age, but this time closer to them.

III. PERSONAL LOVE

Achilles in the *Iliad* is moved first by his own greatness, which can never be honored as much as it deserves; secondly by his love for Patroclus. In the scene where he sends Patroclus into battle, Achilles' passions are curiously mingled. Patroclus is to chase the Trojans from the ships but no farther, lest he gain glory at Achilles' expense, and lest a god favorable to Troy intervene — Apollo in particular (16.87-94). Observe which fear Achilles expresses first.

¹² E. Klebs, in *RE* s.v. "Atilius (51)," collects the traditions of Regulus and dismisses his heroic martyrdom as a fiction.

¹³ Not to mention Roman Stoics, Epictetus chides Achilles for being untrue to the purpose of the expedition: "What are you here for — to get yourself a sweetheart or to fight? 'To fight.' Whom, the Trojans or the Greeks? 'The Trojans.' So you let Hector alone and draw your sword against your king?" (*Dis.* 2.24.22).

The speech ends with four amazing lines:

O father Zeus, Athene, and Apollo, may none of the Trojans escape death — many as there are — and none of the Argives; but may we two survive the carnage, so that we alone may undo the holy diadem of Troy (97–100).

These lines are rejected by the scholia on the authority of Zenodotus and Aristarchus, and imputed to people who believed there was homosexual love in Homer; the scholia disagree whether those people considered Achilles or Patroclus the lover.¹⁴

To me it seems certain that such interpreters would have *cited* the passage (this accounts for the suspicions of the Alexandrian scholars), but unlikely that they interpolated lines which were sure to startle every reader and yet do not prove but only hint at the paederastic theory. However, I will not argue either way from a few lines; but the entire poem contains not one clear reference to paederasty.¹⁵ Still, many Greeks of later times found it there. In Plato's *Symposium*, Phaedrus takes such love for granted between the heroes and argues only which was the lover, Achilles or Patroclus; according to him, Aeschylus had wrongly assigned that role to Achilles (179E–180A). But Socrates in Xenophon's *Symposium* insists the two were just comrades (8.31).

We can derive a more valuable insight into the *Iliad* and its influence from Plato's error than from Xenophon's correction.¹⁶ In the heroic age, the most important deeds of men center around women. They fight the Trojan war to settle which man shall have Helen (cf. *Il.* 3.156–68; 9.337–39), just as the whole *Odyssey* tells how Odysseus was reunited with Penelope. Achilles' wrath too begins when Briseis is taken away from him.

Yet his later acts, while at first sight ambiguous, show how little any woman meant to him. He says to Agamemnon's ambassadors, "I loved her from the heart, even if she was a captive" (9.342–43),

¹⁴ See Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Die Ilias und Homer* (2d ed.; Berlin, 1920) 121–22.

¹⁵ David M. Robinson and Edward J. Fluck argue unconvincingly from certain passages in the *Odyssey* that "the Homeric Greeks knew it traditionally and entertained it" (*A Study of the Greek Love-names* [Baltimore, 1937] 18). E. Bethe goes perhaps a little too far on the other side: "Homer erwähnt niemals, auch nicht mit leiser Andeutung, ein päderastisches Verhältniss: also war bei den asiatischen Aeolern und Ionern die legitime Päderastie damals unbekannt gewesen" ("Die dorishe Knabenliebe," *RhM* 62 [1907] 441).

In regard to *Il.* 24.130, see note 19 below.

¹⁶ Plato's *Symposium* is probably earlier; Léon Robin, *Platon: Oeuvres complètes*, 42 (Paris, 1929) cix–cxv.

but he will not take her back although assured by an oath that Agamemnon stayed away from her bed (9.132–34, 274–76).¹⁷ “Let him sleep with her and have fun,” says Achilles bitterly (9.336–37); and while he is at the height of his wrath against Agamemnon, he can make Diomedes do instead of Briseis (9.664–65).

How differently he grieves for the loss of Patroclus! His grudge against Agamemnon vanishes. He wishes that Briseis had died before he brought her to the camp; then he and Agamemnon would not have quarreled (19.56–60, 67–68). He wants only to kill Hector along with a crowd of other Trojans, and give Patroclus a munificent funeral, including the sacrifice of twelve young Trojans (18.334–40; 19.151–52). He neither desires nor refuses the compensatory gifts which the chieftains insist he must receive (19.147–48). They importune him to eat, but he will not, even after he has discharged all his promises to his dead comrade¹⁸ (19.303–8; 23.55 ff.; 24.2–5).

His extravagant mourning does not stop until his mother lets him know sweetly but firmly that it has lasted long enough. She wants him to eat, sleep with a woman, and (on orders from Zeus) let go of Hector’s corpse at a profit — in other words, to put the whole mess behind him and from now on live while he can like a human being, instead of eating his heart out (24.128–37).¹⁹ He

¹⁷ An astounding oath, if he took her to replace Chryseis (1.29–31, 118 ff.). The scholiasts explain, “His self-control he displays if he appropriated her out of pride, not lust (διὰ φιλοτιμίαν, οὐκ ἀκράσιος ἔνεκεν).” Gilbert Murray’s theory that the Achaean warriors were sworn to continence (*The Rise of the Greek Epic* [3d ed.; Oxford, 1924] 133–34) will not hold; he lamely explains several “breaches” and neglects one passage which must presuppose no taboo altogether (24.128–31). Agamemnon’s forbearance remains a mystery.

¹⁸ Except for cutting off Hector’s head and feeding him to the dogs, which the gods prevent (18.334–36; 23.19 ff., 179–91; 24.18–21).

¹⁹ According to the scholia and Eustathius, the lines urging him to go to bed with a woman were athetized by the ancients (sc. Aristarchus) as inappropriate to a mother, especially a goddess addressing a hero, and also as bad advice to a warrior. “At illi *Critici* non bene advertebant, quod Mater *Thetis* esset, cui nec illum huic bello interesse placuit” (Joshua Barnes; Cambridge, 1711). “At nihil quod vel mater castissima improbaret eo aevo habebat viri — iuvenis praesertim caelibis — cum muliere captiva commercium” (J. van Leeuwen; Leyden, 1913).

The athetized lines are defended by Plutarch (*Mor.* 32F–33A) as well as the *Ars Rhetorica* ascribed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (9.4 [2]) and even the scholia themselves. We need not doubt their authenticity, but a difficulty remains which most scholars have avoided or overlooked — understandably either way: What does *περ* imply in *ἀγαθὸν δὲ γυναῖκί περ ἐν φιλότῃτι/μίσγεσθ'* (24.130–31)? It might well have been seized upon to support the pederastic interpretation of the *Iliad*: “It is good to be clasped in love, albeit with a woman” — Πατρόκλῳ γὰρ οὐκέρ' ἂν δύναιτο (cf. Murray,

obeys her, but the thought of Patroclus still sends him weeping (24.510–11, 591–95).

Achilles and Patroclus are by no means the only male pair in Homer, but only their comradeship is amply and movingly depicted. Although it seems not to be actual paederasty, it is much more precious to Achilles than love for any woman. He misses Patroclus so, that the death of Peleus, his father, or Neoptolemus, his son, could not afflict him more (19.319–27). In the Homeric atmosphere, Achilles is anomalous; but he anticipates the attitude of later Greeks much better than Hector and Odysseus do.

To follow the progress of homosexuality in Greece is distasteful, and superfluous here except in relation to the fame of the Homeric heroes. At bottom we cannot say what made men less interested in women, but we do know which *institution* encouraged their lust for boys. It was the gymnasium, which spread from the Dorians in Crete and Lacedaemon.²⁰ Homer tells of no nude athletics; note in particular that his wrestlers are girded (23.701, 710; cf. Plato, *Symp.* 217B–C). When paederasty and gymnastics became standard features of Greek life, it did not occur to critics of the former that the gymnasium too needed reform, even though the connection was perceived (cf. Plato, *Leges* 1.636B–C).

A disciple of Freud might amuse himself by speculating about the subconscious motives which first introduced nudity into athletics, and which maintained it even after paederasty had ceased to be a mark of the aristocrat. The Eros so brilliantly celebrated by Plato in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* did become less reputable during the Fourth Century, as Werner Jaeger remarks;²¹ but that does not mean less prevalent. Certainly as Greek civiliza-

op. cit., 125, note; seconded by G. M. Bolling, *The Athetized Lines of the Iliad* [Baltimore, 1944] 191). But J. D. Denniston regards *περ* as not concessive but "determinative" here (*The Greek Particles* [Oxford, 1934], 482); and I would rather leave out "albeit" or substitute "even" in its obsolete use — e.g. "I swear to thee, even by thine owne faire eyes" (*Merchant of Venice* 5.2.242). *περ*, like "even" in older English, may be employed with a word that fills in a detail of the picture; it implies something in contrast not necessarily to that one word, but to the whole sentence. The contrast here would be, "instead of tossing about by yourself" (cf. 24.4–5, 9–11).

²⁰ The relevant passages are assembled in W. A. Becker, *Charikles* 2 (rev. by K. F. Hermann; Leipzig, 1854) 203–10; cf. Robinson-Fluck, *op. cit.*, 24–25, and Rudolf Beyer, *Fabulae Graecae quatenus quave aetate puerorum amore commutatae sint* (Weida, 1910) 72.

²¹ *Paideia* 2 (Berlin, 1944) 253. Eros drops out of Mr. Jaeger's ken when it is no longer an *elevating* part of Greek culture. Yet every people has a lower tradition too, and propagates its vices as well as its virtues.

tion spread in succeeding centuries, paederasty went along, in close association with the palaestra.²²

Under the grip of this tenacious Eros, Greeks could hardly appreciate love as Homer presented it. Hector's conjugal affection left them cold, but they did find beauty and inspiration in the bond between Achilles and Patroclus. By a quirk, the *Iliad* became an incitement to paederasty. Its influence in that regard is hard to measure but shows up in Plato (*Symp.* 179E–180B) and Aeschines, who objects not to all paederasty but only to male prostitution, and attests that the Homeric pair was linked in honor with Aristogiton and Harmodius (*Tim.* 132 ff.).²³ The homosexual loves of Achilles, more than any other hero, were a recurrent theme of the tragedians;²⁴ but the plays have perished along with most other Greek literature that late antiquity considered unsuitable for school texts.

Between the Homeric and the Golden Age, sex habits and feelings changed radically in Greece; and when such a major part of man's life is transformed, every tie he has with the past must be disturbed. The old heroic type was not discarded but remodeled to satisfy and nourish the taste of later Greeks, who delighted in stretching and embroidering the Patroclus theme in Homer, while toning down the Hector theme. They took as many liberties with the *Iliad* and distorted it as much as readers today who slide over Patroclus and think of Hector and Andromache as a couple of romantic lovers.

The *Iliad* is not a poem of romance that dwells more on court-

²² The Romans coupled the two institutions as characteristically Greek (Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.70; Plutarch, *Mor.* 274D); and in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, pious Jews first became alarmed by Hellenism when a gymnasium was built in Jerusalem (I Macc. 1:13–14; II Macc. 4:9), before the introduction of pagan worship. E. R. Bevan's comment misses the point: "No doubt, in order to judge the attitude of the faithful fairly, it has to be remembered that when a tradition, like that of the Jewish people, combines elements of great spiritual and moral value with indurated conventions and taboos, it is not easy for contemporaries to distinguish clearly the valuable elements from the merely conventional ones" (*CAH* 8.502) — as though the historian were discussing a case of stupid but excusable bigotry. On the contrary, those who abhorred the gymnasium showed a perfect, if unconscious, grasp of an important sociological "law": that if you admit nude athletics, sodomy will follow. To underrate their moral discrimination is as much a scholarly error as to think that we now have better taste in art than the ancient Athenians.

²³ Thucydides coldly discredited the patriotism of the tyrannicides (6.53–59), and Aristotle the heroism of Aristogiton under torture (*Ath. Pol.* 18.4–6); but such scholarship made no dent in the popular reputation of the lovers.

²⁴ Fragments and references are collected by Beyer, *op. cit.* 52–53, 73.

ship than on married life. The little that Homer says about Hector's lavish courtship is not necessarily unromantic (6.394; 22.471-72); we must assume, however, that the suitor was accepted by Andromache's father, not by the lady herself. But that is all past when the *Iliad* begins. In the great scene where Hector avows that he is fighting more for her than for his father, mother, brothers, and countrymen (6.450-55), Homer strikes a note too universal to be called romantic.²⁵ Yet it did not echo through the poetry and philosophy of Greece.²⁶

If we can hear what the great age of Greece was deaf to, we may be thankful for those influences, religious and otherwise, which make us perceive this beauty in the *Iliad*. We should admit that they at the same time diminish somewhat, though not proportionately, our feeling for another beauty which has a *larger* place in the poem — the comradeship of Achilles and his friend. That comradeship and the love between Hector and Andromache may both have been amply prized in the Homeric age. At all times since, one of them is sure to be undervalued; and whichever it is, the other is liable to be elaborated into paederasty or romance, either of which can be read into the *Iliad* with ease and impertinence. The Greeks both enjoyed and befuddled Homer with their bias toward paederasty. Our approach is less hearty and may be less deceptive than theirs.

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

We may thus be encouraged to read Homer with the confidence that except for language difficulties he is no more inaccessible to us

²⁵ The overriding love of a man for his wife is regarded in the Bible as a profound fact, true of the whole human race (Gen. 2:23-24).

²⁶ In the *Ajax*, when the hero is shown with Tecmessa and their child Eurysaces, Sophocles brings in as many reminiscences (487-595 *passim*) of this scene from the *Iliad* as the dissimilar situation permits. But the idea of Ajax facing death for his concubine is wholly foreign to the play. Hector's vision of enemies gloating over Andromache as she does menial chores (6.456-65) has its counterpart in Tecmessa's own speech (496-504), not in any words of Ajax. His love for Tecmessa, which the chorus refers to earlier (211-12), is shown backhandedly when in moving language he pretends to be softened by her pleas (650-52); his secret purpose is to allay her vigilance so that she will not thwart his suicide (cf. 807-8).

Euripides, with his taste for the bizarre, makes Andromache recall how she endeared herself to Hector by suckling his bastards (*Andr.* 222-27). Imagine that in the *Iliad*! Such devotion on the woman's side, surpassing whatever the man does for her, is a theme attractive to Euripides and exemplified by his *Alcestis*, *Evadne* in the *Suppliants*, and even *Medea*. But the Homeric wife was not her husband's benefactor and expected of him something like equality, at least when he was at home (cf. 9.449-52; *Od.* 1.432-33).

than to Aeschylus or Isocrates or Plato. Even if we are overconfident, we may learn much by contrasting the *Iliad* as we think it *is*, with the misconstructions that great Athenians placed upon it. In our effort to make sense of the difference, we are bound to penetrate into the obscure and poorly documented moral history of Greece. We can expect to see some important connections.

One impression abides for all readers of the *Iliad*, that Achilles is the mightiest of heroes. Everyone — Achaean or Trojan, including Hector — knows it well (2.769; 9.110; 20.434; 22.40), galling as it is to proud men on both sides. The whole epic springs from it; and when we examine what the *Iliad* meant to any age after Homer, our starting point must be the glory of Achilles. The earliest monuments of a civilization always reveal important qualities in the people which lose hold later on, and other qualities which are only adumbrated, but adumbrated in the most memorable scenes, and somehow become the chief marks of the civilization in its maturity. Of all things in the *Iliad*, the Greeks best remembered a few scenes of Achilles, and were molded by them more and more as long as their culture flourished.