

The Three Movements of the *Iliad*

Bruce Heiden

THE *ILIAD* FOR US is a text to be read; for its composer, his audiences, and several generations of audiences after them, it was a live vocal performance. Scholars of Greek epic and related genres have become increasingly sensitive to the losses in affect and significance that occur when such a performance survives only in the form of its 'libretto'.¹ But for students of Homer the desire to recapture the power of the performed *Iliad* confronts the silence of the historical record: the first traces of performances of Homer date from the mid-sixth century, perhaps more than a century after the epic's composition.² Denys Page probably spoke for many in declining to speculate about how the questions concerning Homeric performance might be answered.³ Others have been less cautious. The issue of the performance structure of the *Iliad* has proven an especially fertile ground of speculation, because the evident

¹ For recent theoretical discussion of these losses and efforts to recuperate them, see J. M. Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington 1995) 1–59.

² The view that our *Iliad* is the result of a major revision that occurred in sixth-century Athens has gained adherents during the past two decades: M. S. Jensen, *The Homeric Question and the Oral-Formulaic Theory* (Copenhagen 1980); K. STANLEY, *The Shield of Homer* (Princeton 1993; hereafter 'Stanley') 279–93; R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual* (Oxford 1994) 144–90; G. Nagy, "Homeric Questions," *TAPA* 122 (1992) 52, describes the "textualization" of Homeric epic as a centuries-long process that entered a "definitive" stage in mid-sixth century Athens. For recent arguments against a late sixth-century Athenian recension, see R. Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary IV* (Cambridge 1992) 29–32; M. L. West, "The Date of the *Iliad*," *MusHelv* 52 (1995) 203–19, proposes 688 as a *terminus post quem* for composition; E. F. Cook, *The Odyssey in Athens* (Ithaca 1995) 128–70, argues that the *Odyssey* "acquired its present form in the region of the Saronic Gulf during the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E." The argument presented in this paper does not depend upon the date of the *Iliad*, but assumes that the composer established a relatively fixed text for performance. A. Parry (*YCS* 20 [1966] 175–216) compellingly explained why the question "Have we Homer's *Iliad*?" must be answered "yes."

³ D. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey* (Oxford 1955) 75 n.8.

coherent design of the poem indicates that its composer intended it to make a profound impression as a whole upon its audiences. Yet the immense length of the *Iliad* renders continuous performance a physical impossibility. Scholars have therefore tried to imagine a performance structure that might accommodate the necessary pauses but preserve unity of impact. This paper will review the proposals that have addressed this issue, evaluate their plausibility, and offer a new contribution to the discussion.

I

Three theories of Homeric performance structure may be dealt with briefly; these lack plausibility because they underestimate either the aesthetic importance of the epic's coherence or the requirement that its outstanding features be accessible in performance. According to A. B. Lord, Homer, like a South Slavic *guslar*, could have simply stopped whenever he got tired;⁴ this overly close identification of Homer with South Slavic singers has been criticized by A. Parry (*supra* n.2: 212) among others. Lord later suggested that the *Iliad* may have achieved its monumentality through the influence of the scribe who took it down from its oral composer-in-performance, who would never have intended it to be performed as a whole at all, at least not after the performance in which it was dictated.⁵ As poems until the late fifth century in Greece were heard and not read, Lord's theory would mean that Homer, or rather Homer's scribe, had knowingly created a poem whose most extraordinary effects he alone could appreciate: not likely, especially since Lord does not even suggest that an eighth century scribe could have had any poetic taste independent of the oral masters. Notopoulos argued that Homer's epics were designed for performance in short segments, probably corresponding to the 'books' transmitted in the manuscripts, over a period of several weeks at the private banquets of aristocrats.⁶ A performance so structured could not have made a coherent

⁴ A. B. Lord, "Homer and Huso I: The Singer's Rests in Greek and South-slavic Heroic Song," *TAPA* 67 (1936) 106-13.

⁵ A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge 1960) 149-57. Lord's scenario has recently been adopted by B. B. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge 1991) 228ff.

⁶ J. A. Notopoulos, "Studies in Early Greek Oral Poetry," *HSCP* 68 (1964) 1-18.

impact upon audiences. It is altogether possible that such performances, or performances even less coherent, did take place; but it is unlikely that the composer of the *Iliad* never intended his epic to be performed in a more coherent format.

More plausible is the view that the composer of the *Iliad* intended it to be performed in marathon sessions over a brief span of days, probably at a panhellenic religious festival. Only in such a performance could the epic have been appreciated as a whole.⁷ Wade-Gery's suggestion of a three-day division was inspired by the analogy of the competition in tragedy at the City Dionysia in Athens, which occupied three days, as well as by the three "movement" division of the *Iliad* previously proposed by Sheppard without reference to performance.⁸ The obvious basis for Sheppard's scheme is the flanking of the third day of battle (Books 11–18) by the many narrated days that precede and follow it. This three-part scheme was adopted with slight modification by Wade-Gery and continues to be influential in the recent new proposal of Taplin.⁹

The idea of a three-part performance does not necessarily entail the conclusion that the divisions in the performance were exactly determined by the composer in advance. The points at which a day's performance ended and the next day's began may have been variable. But this does not seem likely. Beginnings, pauses, and resumptions of performance can be moments of great emphasis, and one can hardly imagine that so skilful a conductor of his audience's feelings as Homer would have left the divisions in the performance of his epic to chance or failed to exploit their potential. Thus adherents of the three-part performance structure have maintained that the *Iliad* was designed to be performed with two specific, major internal pauses and

⁷ Cf. G. S. KIRK, *The Iliad: A Commentary I: Books 1–4* (Cambridge 1985: hereafter 'Kirk') 12f.

⁸ H. T. WADE-GERY, *The Poet of the Iliad* (Cambridge 1952: hereafter 'Wade-Gery') 13–16; J. T. SHEPPARD, *The Pattern of the Iliad* (London 1922); G. MURRAY, *The Rise of the Greek Epic*⁴ (Oxford 1934) 187–92, had earlier suggested a panhellenic festival as the occasion for which the *Iliad* might have been composed; M. BRÉAL, *Pour mieux connaître Homère* (Paris n.d.) 43ff, had linked composition and performance to the establishment of sacred athletic contests; before Sheppard and likewise without reference to performance, E. DRERUP, *Das fünfte Buch der Ilias* (Paderborn 1913) 364 with n.2, 428, suggested a three-part division of the whole epic.

⁹ O. TAPLIN, *Homeric Soundings* (Oxford 1992: hereafter 'Taplin') 11–31.

that the location of these pauses can be precisely identified in the text.¹⁰

Five different schemes for dividing the *Iliad* into three movements for performance have been proposed. They are summarized in the following table:

	I	II	III
Wade-Gery	1-9	10-18.353	18.354-24
Davison	1-8	9-16	17-24
Schadewaldt	1-9	11-18	19-24
Taplin	1-9	11-18.353	18.354-24
Stanley	1-7	8-17	18-24

These diverse schemes are based upon several aesthetic criteria. Davison's criterion is *length*: dividing the poem into six four-book segments yielded units of approximately equal length that might have been convenient for recitation by a team of

¹⁰ Wade-Gery 13-16; J. A. Davison, "Thucydides, Homer, and the 'Achaean Wall,'" *GRBS* 6 (1965) 23ff; W. Schadewaldt, *Der Aufbau der Ilias* (Frankfurt a.M. 1975) 24; Taplin 11-31; and Stanley 261-68. Davison's proposal receives acceptance and further argumentation from A. Thornton, *Homer's Iliad: Its Composition and the Motif of Supplication (=Hypomnemata 81* [Göttingen 1984]) 46-63. I do not include in this discussion the tripartite divisions proposed by C. M. Bowra, in A. J. B. Wace and F. H. Stubbings, *edd., A Companion to Homer* (London 1962) 43; Drerup (*supra* n.8); Sheppard (*supra* n.8); B. Andreae and H. Flashar, "Strukturaequivalenzen zwischen den homerischen Epen und der frühgriechischen Vasenkunst," *Poetica* 9 (1977) 217-64; and M. Silk, *Homer: The Iliad* (Cambridge 1987) 37, because these scholars do not claim that their schemes of division shaped *performances*. Sheppard divided the *Iliad* into three "movements" consisting of Books 1-10, 11-18, and 19-24; Andreae and Flashar divide it into three sections consisting of Books 1-7, 8-18, and 19-24; Silk prefers 1-9, 10-17, and 18-24. C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge 1958) 329 n.46, suggests that Sheppard's scheme was plausible for performance. Kirk (45f) endorses a rough three-movement division, without specific breaks and not tied to performance. Bowra's division, consisting of Books 2-8 (preceded by Book 1 as prologue), 9-15, and 16-22 (followed by Books 23 and 24 as epilogue) is the closest to what I shall suggest in the second part of this paper. For discussion of proposals to divide the *Iliad* into three movements for performance, see N. J. Richardson, *The Iliad: A Commentary VI: Books 21-24* (Cambridge 1993) 2ff. Stanley (265) suggests that his long middle movement might have been divided into two to create a four-day performance.

rhapsodes.¹¹ For Stanley the criterion is *formal*: his units of performance derive from and are identical to units that he argues are constituted through patterns of verbal, narrative, and thematic repetition in the text. Schadewaldt and Taplin base their performance divisions upon the *narrative* divisions of the text. As Taplin explains (18f, 26),

Once the handling of narrative-time is set out ... one feature stands out as by far the most remarkable: the huge central day lasts all the way from book 11 to book 18.... It is held together as a narrative unit by Zeus' promise of success to Hektor until the sun goes down.... From the appreciation of the massive structural unity of the central day follows the observation that the poem as a whole is constructed in three parts, or three movements.... My theory is, simply, that the three part structure matches and arises from Homer's own performance; and that the two clusters of forward-markers to 'tomorrow' in *narrative-time* also serve as forward-markers in *performance-time*.¹²

For Wade-Gery (16), the first to propose a three-movement performance, the explicit criterion was thematic, but his words indicate that he was thinking of narrative divisions as well:

The first performance ends with the fruitless embassy: the second, when the death of Patroklos has had its full reverberation: the third, with Hektor's ransoming. In the poem, thus articulated, the main theme is now seen clearly to be *Achilles*: at the end of each day's performance we have reached (and fully explored) a vital stage of his experience.

The common respect for prominent narrative divisions in determining the performance divisions may explain why the schemes of Wade-Gery, Schadewaldt, and Taplin, though not identical, are quite similar to one another.

None of the above schemes of performance division has won acceptance from a consensus of scholars—no doubt largely due to the aforementioned skepticism regarding any proposals for

¹¹ Kirk (44–47) skeptically discusses four-book divisions but without reference to performance.

¹² For Schadewaldt (*supra* n.10: 24) night in the narrative signifies the end of a day of performance: "Zweimal in dem Gedicht schliesst mit einer Nacht ... ein Stück der Handlung.... Danach mag die Ilias an drei Festtagen vorge-tragen worden sein.... Wenn ein Vortragstag zu Ende ging, war auch im Gedicht Abend geworden; wenn man morgens wieder begann, stieg auch in dem Gedicht wieder die Morgenröte auf."

fixed performance divisions. But among those who do feel that the investigation of plausible performance divisions is worthwhile, the lack of consensus would seem to indicate unease with the aesthetic and thematic implications of the divisions proposed. Perhaps the problem lies with the criteria used by the authors of these proposals to derive and support them. For none of these scholars have based their schemes on aesthetic principles peculiar to situations of performance. The narrative and formal divisions identified by Taplin, Schadewaldt, Wade-Gery, and Stanley, if for the sake of argument we grant their validity, can be found in the text regardless of how the text is performed or whether it is performed at all. Davison's divisions are indeed based upon considerations of performance, but only upon its mechanics (assignment of segments to rhapsodes, a matter about which we actually have no evidence whatsoever). Taplin alone has observed that the situation of performance makes special aesthetic demands. He does this when he claims that the performance divisions he has proposed would have stimulated audiences to return for the second and third days of recitation: "Anyone who had heard the *Iliad* up to book 9 or up to book 18 would be very reluctant to stop with the closure at those junctures."¹³ Nevertheless, Taplin has not undertaken a systematic analysis of beginnings and endings of performances, and he assumes that divisions in the performance coincide with those in the narrative.¹⁴

Once we turn full attention to the relationship between narrative divisions and performance divisions in performances with which we are familiar, it rapidly becomes apparent that although these two types of divisions may coincide, they need not do so, and that they are often found in tension with one another. The examples of motion picture serials and television soap operas

¹³ Taplin 26; Stanley (263) also briefly considers how his proposal would flow as a performance.

¹⁴ In the discussion that follows the terms "performance" and "narrative" roughly correspond to the terms "récit" and "histoire" in the fundamental narratological studies of G. Genette. Narratologists in fields other than classics usually translate these terms into English differently; I have maintained usage of "performance" and "narrative" in the senses familiar to classicists from existing treatments of Homer, especially that of Taplin. In narratology "histoire" (often translated by "story") denotes the actual or fictitious *events* that a story is about, "récit" (often translated as "narrative" or "discourse") the *telling* that signifies those events. See Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, tr. J. E. Lewin (Ithaca 1980) 27, and S. Richardson, *The Homeric Narrator* (Nashville 1990) 3, 209 n.4.

readily come to mind. In these dramatic formats a virtually unbreakable rule dictates that performances should end at a point that interrupts the movement of the narrative toward a climax, and begin again as the anticipated crisis is approached. For a paradigm closer to Homer, we can turn to Athenian tragedy, where choral interludes frequently interrupt the action at suspenseful points, such as Soph. *OT* 1086, when Jocasta has rushed into the palace and the arrival of the shepherd is awaited, and Eur. *Med.* 1250, when Medea rushes into the palace to kill her children. Similar phenomena may be found in the text of the *Iliad* itself. The ancient scholiasts often observed Homer's skill in creating an effect of suspense;¹⁵ such effects need not coincide with performance divisions, but they may at least indicate that pauses in performance could also have been suspenseful rather than clausal.

Yet two performance divisions in the *Iliad* can be determined with near certainty: the beginning of the first day's performance and the end of the last.¹⁶ Homer does not begin the *Iliad* with the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis, the birth of Achilles, the Judgment of Paris, the abduction of Helen, or the beginning of the Trojan War. As everyone knows, Homer plunges *in medias res*, in the tenth year of the war. Nor does he begin at sunrise, or offer any indication of the time of day. Homer begins the narrative of the *Iliad* at a moment of crisis, the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon (1.6f), from which he backtracks to an equally critical moment, Agamemnon's rejection of Apollo's priest Chryses (1.11f), and then finally to his extended narration of Chryses' supplication of Agamemnon.¹⁷ The abruptness of this beginning becomes the more apparent when we compare the way Achilles begins his account for Thetis of the quarrel with Agamemnon (1.366–69):¹⁸

¹⁵ For examples and discussion see N. J. Richardson, "Literary Criticism in the Exegetical Scholia to the *Iliad*," *CQ* n.s. 30 (1980) 269f.

¹⁶ Performances of Homer sometimes began with hymns to the gods, and may have been followed by recitations from the epic cycle. Such extensions of the performance, if they were actually contemporary with the composition of the *Iliad*, need not have obscured the points at which the performance of the *Iliad* itself began or ended.

¹⁷ On "epic regression" see T. Krischer, *Formale Konventionen der homerischen Epik* (=Zetemata 56 [München 1971]) 136–40.

¹⁸ J. Griffin and M. Hammond, "Critical Appreciations VI: Homer, *Iliad* 1.1–52," *GaR* 29 (1982) 128f, and I. J. F. de Jong, "*Iliad* 1.366–392: A Mirror Story," *Arethusa* 18 (1985) 13–16, have many illuminating observations about the differences between Achilles' narration and that of the Homeric narrator.

ὤχόμεθ' ἐς Θήβην, ἱερὴν πόλιν Ἡετίωνος,
 τὴν δὲ διεπράθομέν τε καὶ ἤγομεν ἐνθάδε πάντα.
 καὶ τὰ μὲν εὖ δάσσοντο μετὰ σφίσιν υἱὲς Ἀχαιῶν,
 ἐκ δ' ἔλον Ἀτρεΐδῃ Χρυσήϊδα καλλιπάρηον.¹⁹

Achilles begins at the beginning, the sack of Thebe, because otherwise Thetis might not understand why Chryses supplicated Agamemnon in the first place. But Homer, more interested in arresting his audience's attention, begins his performance at a critical moment well past the starting point of the story, and fills in the omitted narrative information later.

Likewise the *Iliad* does not conclude with the death of Achilles or the fall of Troy, although its narrative emphatically points ahead to these events. Nor does it end at sundown, bedtime, or any other point in time designated as a termination of movement in the narrative. On the contrary, the *Iliad* ends some time after sunrise (24.784–89):

ἐννῆμαρ μὲν τοί γε ἀγίνεον ἄσπετον ὕλην·
 ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ δεκάτῃ ἐφάνη φαεσίμβροτος ἠώς,
 καὶ τότε ἄρ' ἐξέφερον θρασὺν Ἑκτορα δάκρυ χέοντες,
 ἐν δὲ πυρῇ ὑπάτη νεκρὸν θέσαν, ἐν δ' ἔβαλον πῦρ.
 ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος ἠώς,
 τῆμος ἄρ' ἀμφὶ πυρὴν κλυτοῦ Ἑκτορος ἄγρετο λαός.²⁰

Homer does not allow even the cremation of Hector to appear as a point of rest in the narrative, although it is the point at which his performance stops. He reminds us not only that the battle will resume, but that it may resume at any time, despite the promise of Achilles to Priam (24.654–70) that the period of mourning for Hector and the resumption of the battle would be marked off from one another by a firm division (24.799f):

¹⁹ "We went to Thebe, the holy city of Eetion, and we sacked it and brought all the booty here. The sons of the Achaeans fairly distributed it among themselves, selecting Chryseis, whose cheeks are beautiful, for the son of Atreus."

²⁰ "For nine days [the Trojans] gathered a huge amount of firewood. But when dawn, which brings light to mortals, appeared on the tenth day, with tears streaming down their cheeks they carried out Hector, the brave. They set his body on the top of the pyre, and set fire to it. And when the rosy fingers of early-born dawn appeared, the people gathered around the pyre of Hector, the famous."

ρίμφα δὲ σῆμ' ἔχεαν· περὶ δὲ σκοποὶ εἴατο πάντη,
μὴ πρὶν ἐφορμηθεῖεν εὐκνήμιδες Ἀχαιοί.²¹

The Trojans' anxiety lest the fighting exceed the temporal frame assigned to it seems to project within the narrative Homer's own practice of running the story over the frame of the performance.

The examples of the only points in the *Iliad* where performances are certain to have begun or ended suggest that in this work Homer may have preferred a tension between the boundaries of the performance and those of the narrative.²² Of course this does not prove that the internal divisions of the three-day performance must have displayed the same tensions, but it strongly undercuts the assumption of Taplin and Schadewaldt that the breaks between the days of performance should have coincided with breaks in the narrative. On the contrary, it suggests that it would be worthwhile to seek plausible breaks in performance that interrupt the flow of the narrative and produce a sense of openness at both beginnings and endings.

Stanley's theory of performance division, like that of Taplin and Schadewaldt, assumes that openings and closures in performance would coincide with textual openings and closures of another type: patterns of repetition. Of course any validity Stanley's proposal may have must depend upon the validity of the

²¹ "[The Trojans] built the burial mound in haste. And sentries were posted on all sides, lest the well-greaved Achaeans attack too soon."

²² Examination of the beginning and end of the *Odyssey* reveals a somewhat different tendency. The *Odyssey* of course does not begin with the sack of Troy, although that is where Odysseus begins his own narrative of his wanderings (Ἰλιόθεν, 9.39). Homer's Muse begins "somewhere within the narrative" (τῶν ἀμόθεν, 1.10). The moment chosen is somewhere *between* Poseidon's departure for the Ethiopians and his return, in the window of opportunity when Athena and Zeus can plan the homecoming of Odysseus without interference. But because at this time the situations of Odysseus on Ogygia and Penelope in Ithaca have remained essentially unchanged for a long while, the beginning of the *Odyssey* is considerably less abrupt than that of the *Iliad*. The ending of the *Odyssey* has rather a stronger sense of closure than that of the *Iliad*, although it stops short of the end to Odysseus' wanderings and of his death, which were foretold by Teiresias (11.119–37). The termination in fighting at the end of the *Odyssey* occurs only because Athena intervenes to change the direction of the narrative: Odysseus and Telemachus would have killed all the allies of the suitors, if Athena had not shouted out and held back the whole host (24.528ff). Thus at the end of the *Odyssey* coincidence between narrative and performance closure is achieved by placing within the narrative a goddess who violently interrupts its forward movement, a *dea ex machina* as it were.

formal patterns he claims to have found, a matter which at this time remains controversial. But even if Stanley's formal scheme of the *Iliad* is correct, it does not go without saying that Homer's scheme of performance would have harmonized with this scheme rather than conflicted with it. It is true that formal links between Books 1 and 24 coincide with the beginning and end of the whole epic performance at these points. But the strong sense of closure thus achieved might have been permissible or desirable precisely because Book 24 ends the last day of performance, when the sense of continued forward momentum could be diminished. Such a sense of closure might not have been as desirable at the end of performance day 1 or day 2. Stanley himself has argued (260f) that closural elements are sometimes postponed beyond the book-end where regular patterning would place them. By the same logic it should at least be possible that larger design patterns as well might not exactly coincide with larger performance movements.

There are additional reasons to be skeptical of Stanley's scheme as well as the others. One of these concerns the lengths of the performances yielded by the various schemes of division. The following table shows the number of lines in each performance unit that has been proposed:²³

	I	II	III
Wade-Gery	5,691	5,984	4,018
Davison	4,978	5,583	5,132
Schadewaldt	5,691	5,669	3,754
Taplin	5,691	5,405	4,018
Stanley	4,413	6,909	4,371

A glance at the table reveals that in each scheme the third day of performance is much shorter than the second; Davison's is the only scheme in which the third day of performance is not the shortest. Our sense of Homeric aesthetics, however, should lead us to expect that Homer's last day of performance would have been his longest, for Homer characteristically creates emphasis in his compositions by expanding the dimensions of important segments. Thus although many a warrior's death in the *Iliad* is prepared for, described, and reacted to in only a few

²³ Line totals are based on the standard enumeration (*i.e.*, including bracketed lines), except that Schadewaldt and Taplin omit Book 10.

lines, that of Hector is developed to the scale of an entire book.²⁴ As the conclusion of the epic is its most emphatic point, here too one finds Homer at his most expansive; Book 24, one of the longer books at 804 lines, is entirely devoted to development of a single event, the redemption of Hector's body. Seven books have over 800 lines, but only two such books follow one another in sequence: Books 23 and 24.²⁵

We may also note that in classical poetics and rhetoric it is often (though by no means invariably) the case that in a series of three members the last is expanded to greater length than the first two and thus emphasized. In Homeric versification one observes this in the important verse-type that Kirk calls (20f) the "rising threefolder." Homer's use of such verse at positions of great emphasis (the ends of speeches, for example) indicates his conscious valuation of the three-part crescendo as an emphatic rhythmical cadence. A similar phenomenon in larger units of composition may be observed in Odysseus' narration of his adventures at *Od.* 9, 10, and 12. In each of these books Odysseus narrates three adventures, the first two of approximately equal length, the third much longer.²⁶ In Book 9 he relates his encounter with the Ciconians (22 lines), then the Lotus-Eaters (22 lines), and finally the island of the Cyclopes (461 lines). In Book 10 he narrates his encounter with Aeolus (79 lines), then the Laestrygonians (52 lines), and finally Circe (441 lines). In Book 12, after Circe warns him of the challenges to follow, he first encounters the Sirens (36 lines), next Scylla and Charybdis (59 lines), and finally he comes to Thrinacia, the island of the Cattle of the Sun (159 lines). The pattern is varied by a short coda when Odysseus, having lost his ship, is carried on a piece of debris back to Charybdis (21 lines). Homer's tendency to create emphasis through a rhythm of three mem-

²⁴ On emphasis through expansion see M. W. Edwards, *Homer, Poet of the Iliad* (Baltimore 1987) 74; R. P. Martin, *The Language of Heroes* (Ithaca 1989) 206-19, analyzes expansion of formulaic expressions in the great speech of Achilles to the Embassy.

²⁵ Many scholars doubt that the twenty-four "books" of the *Iliad* in the manuscripts correspond to units of the original composition. I retain the traditional designation of "books" for the sake of clarity and convenience. One could equally well say that the episodes of the funeral of Patroclus and the redemption of Hector are among the most amply expanded in the poem. For a recent defense of the traditional division into books, see Stanley 249-61.

²⁶ C. Rothe, *Die Odyssee als Dichtung und ihr Verhältnis zur Ilias* (Paderborn 1914) 72; for a recent discussion and bibliography see G. W. Most, "The Structure and Function of Odysseus' *Apologoi*," *TAPA* 119 (1989) 21.

bers, of which the last is the longest, therefore suggests that in a three-movement performance the last movement might well have been longer than either of the first two. We must feel uneasy with the short final movement implied by the performance schemes of Wade-Gery, Davison, Schadewaldt, Taplin, and Stanley.²⁷

Thematic significance is a final criterion that focuses unease with the proposed divisions. When we remember that in a three-day performance each day's recitation would itself have been monumental, it would seem desirable that the audience's thoughts and feelings be oriented toward the epic's most important themes at each beginning and end, lest they be lost from sight amid the excitement of the narrative and the mayhem of the battlefield. Although the proposed divisions do sometimes begin or (more often) end a day's performance on a thematically significant note, no coherent patterns of emphasis emerge. Even if we concede that Wade-Gery's endings at 9 and 18.353 focus upon the theme of Achilles, I fail to see that this or any other particular themes are emphasized in common by the episodes he proposes to start the second and third days of recitation, the Doloneia and the Shield of Achilles, in neither of which Achilles appears at all. Beginning the second day with Book 11 (the *aristeia* of Agamemnon, Patroclus' meeting with Nestor) offers little improvement in this respect. Stanley's endings at Book 7 (single combat of Ajax and Hector, building of Achaean trench and wall) and Book 17 (battle over Patroclus' corpse) likewise do not seem to offer audiences a coherent thematic orientation toward the massive poetic creation they were hearing; Stanley's beginnings at Books 8 and 18 are no better in this regard. Davison's scheme of eight book divisions yields an emphatic opening for the second day in Book 9, but this seems thematically uncoordinated with Book 17, which opens his third day. Of course no law of composition would have required Homer to emphasize important themes in the manner suggested. Nevertheless, the thematic incoherence of the beginnings and ends proposed cannot inspire confidence that they are Homer's.

²⁷ Cf. Richardson (*supra* n.10: 3): "One might object that division into books 1 to 9, 11 to 18, and 19 to 24 would make the last movement noticeably shorter than the other two, but that is not necessarily a drawback." The short final movement clearly makes him uneasy. I would agree, however, that it is not *necessarily* a drawback.

II

Perhaps the problem can be reformulated. If we adopt the hypothesis that the *Iliad* was performed over three days, then each day's performance had a beginning and an end. Let us call the three beginnings B_1 , B_2 , and B_3 and the three endings E_1 , E_2 , and E_3 . As each B must immediately follow the preceding E , the three hypothetical performances of the *Iliad* can be schematized as follows:

I	B_1 -----	E_1
II	$B_2 (=E_1 + 1)$ -----	E_2
III	$B_3 (=E_2 + 1)$ -----	E_3

Fortunately, two of these elements are already known, B_1 and E_3 , the points at which the entire epic begins and ends, Books 1 and 24. Perhaps the unknowns B_2 and B_3 can be extrapolated from the characteristics of the known B_1 , and the unknowns E_1 and E_2 from the characteristics of the known E_3 . Of course the composer may not have felt that he wanted to begin his second performance in a manner similar to that with which he began his first; he may have preferred to follow a principle of *poikilia* ("variation"). *Poikilia*, however, is not an especially evident feature of Homeric composition, which tends to repeat a limited repertoire of typical narrative situations with fairly subtle variations occurring within the basic formats.²⁸ So it is worthwhile to assume experimentally that the composer employed a typical format for beginning each performance and likewise a typical format for each ending. If he did, then perhaps the distinguishing features of each format may be discovered in the one beginning and one ending that we are sure of.

The results of this procedure can be considered more plausible than the previous proposals only if the following conditions are met. (1) The characteristics used to identify Books 1 and 24 as potentially typical of Iliadic beginnings and ends must be very prominent and distinguish these books from both one

²⁸ On typical motifs in the *Iliad* see G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary II: Books 5-8* (Cambridge 1990) 15-27; M. W. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary V: Books 17-20* (Cambridge 1991) 11-15, 19-23, 24-41. Of course Homer employs typical expressions for beginning speeches (e.g. τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων *vel sim.*) and ending them (e.g. ὡς ἔφατ' ἰφίσαν, κτλ.), as well as for beginning and ending scenes; on the latter see Stanley's discussion (249-61) of the formal characteristics of the traditional book-divisions.

another and almost all other books of the *Iliad* beyond any reasonable doubt.²⁹ The characteristics should not therefore be formal elements frequently repeated in early Greek epic composition, such as typical scenes and formulae, for these would not be peculiar to any given episodes and thus could not characterize them. Nor should they be details of debatable significance. Plausibly defining characteristics must be unusual, dominant features of the narrative that would be obvious to anyone who was following the story. (2) The number of books with which Book 1 shares its distinguishing characteristics must equal exactly the number of books with which Book 24 shares its distinguishing characteristics. Otherwise the procedure will yield an unequal number of beginnings and ends, which is impossible. (3) The beginnings extrapolated from Book 1 must interlock perfectly with the endings extrapolated from Book 24—*i.e.*, B_2 must equal $E_1 + 1$, *etc.*

The single most prominent characteristic of Book 1, I find, is Achilles' decision to withdraw from battle, followed by Zeus' promise to bring suffering upon the Greeks, thus setting the entire narrative on its course. All other events in the book provide a setting for Achilles' withdrawal. As the composer began the first day of performance with a crisis in which Achilles' decision determines the forward movement of the plot, the hypothesis is that the second and third days of performance began likewise. Of the twenty-four books, Achilles plays a major rôle in only ten: 1, 9, 16, 18–24. Achilles' absence from Books 2–8 is determined by his withdrawal in Book 1. His virtually complete absence from Books 10–15 is determined by his rejection of the embassy in Book 9. His frequent, almost constant involvement in Books 18–24 is determined by the death of Patroclus in Book 16, which results from Achilles' decision, narrated in that book, to send his friend into battle in the first place. Achilles' announcement in Book 18 that he will return to battle to take vengeance on Hector, and

²⁹ Again, I use the term "books" for the sake of convenience. It is clear that the epic begins and ends with coherent episodes devoted respectively to Achilles' angry withdrawal from the battle and his redemption of Hector's corpse. The dimensions of these episodes are identical to those of Books 1 and 24 in the manuscripts. Other coherent episodes, also identical to transmitted "books," can also be identified in the epic, *e.g.*, the embassy to Achilles (=Book 9) and the exploits of Patroclus (=Book 16). For the purposes of this discussion it is necessary to assume only that each day's performance began and ended with a coherent episode, by analogy with the coherent episodes with which the epic as a whole begins and ends.

his reconciliation with Agamemnon in Book 19, are not decisions of the same magnitude of effect as that taken in Book 16. In fact they are not decisions at all; once Achilles learns that Patroclus has been killed he feels compelled to return to the fighting. Thus the *Iliad* contains exactly three books in which Achilles makes a decision that determines the subsequent course of the narrative, Books 1, 9, and 16.³⁰ As Book 1 began the first day's performance, the process of analogy suggests that Book 9 began the second day's performance and Book 16 the third day's.³¹

The most prominent characteristic of Book 24, I find, is Zeus' decision to proclaim a decree that confronts and overcomes the wishes of Hera and, more importantly, those of Achilles; in so doing, Zeus determines the close of the narrative by arranging that the body of Hector should be returned to his people for burial, and he arranges the exchange of the body for ransom. It is true, of course, that Book 24 is the occasion of the most profound moments of human pathos and insight in the epic, the speeches of Priam and Achilles to one another and the lamentations of Andromache and Helen over the corpse of Hector. Nevertheless, these insights and the speeches that manifest them only occur because Zeus has created the conditions in which they can occur. There is no end in sight to Achilles' savagery when the Olympians debate the fate of Hector's corpse at the beginning of the book; that is why Zeus must intervene by sending Thetis to convey his will to her son. Moreover, Priam can appear in Achilles' lodge to deliver the ransom and receive the body only because Zeus has dispatched Iris to persuade him to go, has sent an omen to assure him that he will be safe, and provided Hermes to serve as his escort. Thus at the conclusion of the *Iliad*, Zeus appears as the force powerful enough to blunt the will of even the most powerful mortal, and as the force that furnishes mortals with the opportunity for their most profound emotions and insights.³²

³⁰ Cf. Janko (*supra* n.2: 311): "The poem's structure is based on advances and retardations: books 1, 9, 16, 22, and 24 are the main advances...."

³¹ Cf. Bowra in Wace and Stubbings (*supra* n.10: 43): Book 9 marks the transition to the second section of the epic and Book 16 the beginning of the third.

³² In this regard we want to remember that the suggested three-day performances may well have occurred at festivals sacred to the Olympians, and that Homer and his audiences thought of the Muses, Zeus' daughters, as indispensable to the existence of the poem. On the Muses see A. Ford, *Homer*:

Homer displays the power of Zeus in almost every book of the *Iliad*. Nevertheless, two points far exceed all others in the extent of power displayed: the two speeches in which Zeus foretells to Hera and to Homer's audience the chief events that he has decreed for the future course of the Trojan War and of the entire narrative to follow, *i.e.* the Διὸς βουλή. The power of these speeches is tremendous, because Zeus' word once spoken is irrevocable. In telling Hera what is to happen, Zeus' very act causes the events to happen, and Homer's audience hears his very words re-enacted by the rhapsode. And Zeus speaks these words without hesitation, deliberation, or such misgivings as he expresses before the deaths of Sarpedon and Hector. ὥς γὰρ θέσφατόν ἐστι. The critical provision that Patroclus must die is indicated only in a prepositional phrase and merely by the participle θανόντος, placed with subtle emphasis at the end of the hexameter (8.476). Such is the efficacy of Zeus' speech.

Achilles never learns of Zeus' plan. Nevertheless, as soon as Zeus proclaims to Hera that the Greek cause cannot prevail until Achilles returns to battle after the death of Patroclus, the audience instantly recognizes that Zeus' plan will destroy Achilles' most earnest hopes even as it fulfils the 'letter' of the agreement solemnized in Book 1. In the speeches proclaiming the Plan of Zeus, Homer first reveals the gap between what Achilles has proposed and what Zeus will dispose. Thus these speeches, like the events of Book 24, display the power of Zeus confronting and overwhelming that of Achilles.

The first of these speeches occurs in Book 8, the second in Book 15.³³ Therefore the process of analogy with Book 24 suggests that Book 8 concluded the first day of performance and

The Poetry of the Past (Ithaca 1992) *passim*. For discussion of the implications of the sacred occasion and divine inspiration of Homer's performances see B. Heiden, "The Ordeals of Homeric Song," *Arethusa*, forthcoming.

³³ These 'books', like Books 1, 9, 16, and 24, are coherent episodes of narrative. 'Book 8' begins when Zeus convenes the immortals on Olympus and forbids anyone from interfering with his plan for the battle. Zeus' resistance to interference from Hera remains the theme until a new one is introduced with Agamemnon's distress and the embassy to which it leads ('Book 9'). 'Book 15' begins when Zeus awakens from sleep to reassert his control over the battlefield. His supervision remains the theme until a new one is introduced when Patroclus arrives at the lodging of Achilles ('Book 16'). Thus 'Book 8' and 'Book 15' may be treated as coherent bodies of narrative that correspond with the coherent episode 'Book 24'.

Book 15 the second day.³⁴ This would give the following scheme of divisions:

I	1 ----- 8
II	9 ----- 15
III	16 ---- 24

It is readily apparent from the table that the process of extrapolation yields only two plausible beginnings and two plausible ends and that these interlock perfectly. Each day's performance would therefore have begun with a dramatic assertion of Achilles' will and ended with a dramatic counterassertion of Zeus'. Thus the proposal satisfies each of the three conditions we established for plausibility.

This division is extremely coherent thematically; the progression of the epic as a whole, and that of each of its three movements, would recapitulate that of the proem, where the statement of Achilles' wrath and its consequences (1.1-5) is abruptly concluded by the assertion that the will of Zeus was fulfilled ($\Delta\iota\omicron\varsigma \delta' \acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\epsilon\tau\omicron \beta\omicron\upsilon\lambda\acute{\eta}$, 1.5). But it also provides performances of aesthetically pleasing proportions (as determined by analogy with Homeric practice elsewhere) and at least moderately suspenseful performance breaks. This proposal yields performances of the following lengths:³⁵

I	1 ----- 8	4,978 lines
II	9 ----- 15	4,716 lines
III	16 ---- 24	5,999 lines

The third day's performance has the greater length desirable for a bravura climax. Performance would halt on the first day with the Trojans restlessly encamped on the plain and anticipating victory when battle resumes. Performance on the second day would begin immediately amidst the busy night that follows the second day of battle, at a critical juncture, just as it did on the first. The conclusion of performance on the second day would

³⁴ Cf. Bowra (*supra* n.31), who says nothing explicit about the ends of sections, but whose view that Books 9 and 16 began the second and third sections respectively implies that Books 8 and 15 ended the first and second sections.

³⁵ Line totals are based on the standard enumeration and assume the authenticity of Book 10. Exclusion of Book 10, however, would not affect my argument, which aims only at determining points at which the performances may be plausibly supposed to have begun and ended.

interrupt the narrative of the third day of battle just as the critical juncture, the firing of the Achaean ships, is about to be reached, with Patroclus left hurrying midway between the lodging of Eurypylos and that of Achilles (15.401–05). The third day of performance would begin immediately, as the first two had, at a moment of dramatic crisis, as Patroclus arrives at Achilles' lodge. Not only would audiences return for another day of performance after these breaks, they would be in their places for the very first lines of recitation.

The hypothesis that the characteristics of internal points of pause and resumption could be extrapolated from the characteristics of the whole epic's beginning and end, has uncovered a surprisingly clear and consistent articulation of episodes in which Achilles asserts his will with those in which Zeus asserts his. There is nothing implausible about a performance of the *Iliad* with major pauses after Books 8 and 15. Imagining such a performance enhances our sense of the epic's structure, drama, and significance. We shall never know for sure how the composer of the *Iliad* intended his masterpiece to be performed. But if we have found a unique way to structure performance of the *Iliad* that truly does it justice, we may at least conjecture that Homer could have had the idea first.³⁶

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
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