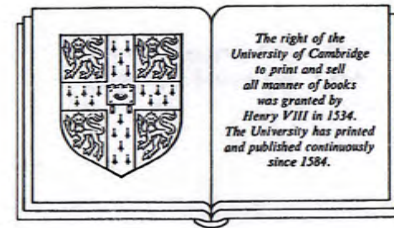

THE ILIAD:
A COMMENTARY

GENERAL EDITOR G. S. KIRK

Volume v: books 17–20

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE

NEW YORK PORT CHESTER

MELBOURNE SYDNEY

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1991

First published 1991

Printed in Great Britain at the University Press, Cambridge

British Library cataloguing in publication data

Edwards, Mark W.
The Iliad: a commentary.
I. Epic poetry in Greek. Homer
I. Title II. Kirk, G. S. (Geoffrey Stephen) 1921-
883.01

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Kirk, G. S. (Geoffrey Stephen)
The Iliad, a commentary.

Includes index.

Contents: v. 1. Books 1-4 v. 5. Books 17-20
Mark W. Edwards.

I. Homer. Iliad. I. Homer. Iliad. II. Edwards, Mark W.
PA4037.K458 1985 883'.01 84-11330

ISBN 0 521 30959 x hardback
ISBN 0 521 31208 6 paperback

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3. Similes

Homer's versatility and his inventiveness within the epic convention appear clearly in his similes.²⁸ As the following sections will show, the similes appear in different forms; the connexion between simile and narrative varies; although certain themes recur frequently, the phrasing is almost always different;²⁹ and the diction of the similes is formulaic, but with evidence of non-traditional usages and vocabulary. These features suggest a high degree of original composition.

Rare in Hesiod and the *Hymns*,³⁰ long similes of the Homeric type may have been most fully developed in the *Il.* and *Od.* Near Eastern antecedents are possible (see P. Damon, *Modes of Analogy in Ancient and Medieval Verse*, Berkeley 1961, 264–70). Totals given for similes by modern commentators vary, depending on the definition adopted and the treatment of multiple occurrences. Lee, *Similes* 3–4, counts 197 long similes ('Full', i.e. with a verb) in the *Il.* and 153 short ('Internal', i.e. without a verb), compared with 45 and 87 respectively in the *Od.*; Scott's listing, *Similes* 191–205, gives a total (for both types) of 341 for the *Il.* and 134 for the *Od.* A. Bonnafé, *RPH* 67 (1983) 82, counts 1,128 verses of simile in the *Il.*, or 7.2% of the total 15,693 verses.

²⁸ In the extensive bibliography, Fränkel, *Gleichnisse*, is still the fullest and best treatment. Lee, *Similes*, has useful lists, though most would find his theories unacceptable and his polemics against Fränkel displeasing. Scott, *Oral Nature*, studies the preferred context of similes of particular subject-matter, but does not exhaust his topic, which is more fully studied by J. C. Hogan, *The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile* (diss. Cornell 1966; *DA* 27, 1966, 1352A). Moulton, *Similes*, finds connexions between the similes and the narrative structure of the poem. S. A. Nimis, *Narrative Semiotics in the Epic Tradition: the Simile* (Bloomington and Indianapolis 1987) 23–95 makes many perceptive observations from the viewpoint of semiotic theory. M. Mueller, *The Iliad* (London 1984), O. Tsagarakis, *Form and Content in Homer* (Wiesbaden 1982), and Edwards, *HPI* 102–10, devote sections to the topic.

²⁹ In the *Il.*, five long similes are repeated verbatim: 5.782–3 = 7.256–7; 5.860–1 = 14.148–9; 6.506–11 = 15.263–8; 9.14–15 = 16.3–4; and 13.389–93 = 16.482–6. In addition, 11.548–55 ≅ 17.657–64 (see note *ad loc.*; there is variation only in the first two verses). In the *Od.*, 4.335–40 = 17.126–31 (this is within a longer repeated speech) and 6.232–4 = 23.159–61. C. F. Beyce, *Studies Presented to Sterling Dow* (ed. K. J. Rigsby, Durham, N.C. 1984) 7–13, suggests that in many cases the repetition is significant, recalling the circumstances of the first appearance; but it is hard to accept this entirely.

³⁰ Examples occur at *Theogony* 594–601, 702–4, 862–6; *Erga* 304–6; *HyDem* 174–7; *HyHerm* 43–6, 55–6, 66–7, 349. There are seven in the *Aspis* (42–5, 374–9, 386–92, 402–4, 405–12, 426–34, 437–42); they show one obvious point of comparison, and are very simple by Homeric standards.

Similes

(i) Form

Similes are introduced by a variety of different words, the commonest being *ὡς*, *ὡς* (δ') *ὅτε*, *ἥντε*, *ἔοικώς*, *ἴσος*, and *οἷος* (there is a list in Lee, *Similes* 62–4). There are short forms (i.e. without a verb expressed), and several types of long form.

(a) The short simile

Many of these, such as *δαίμονι ἴσος* (9 × *Il.*), *ἥντε νεβροί* (-οὺς) (3 × *Il.*), *θηρί εἰκώς* (2 × *Il.*), *ἥελιος ὡς* (1 × *Il.*, 2 × *Od.*), have much in common with formulaic epithets. Like the latter, they convey emphasis and some decorative value, and often they end the verse after the bucolic diaeresis. Occasionally they may have a strong significance (see 24.572–5n.). There is a good deal of variety; Scott, *Oral Nature* 128, lists 13 short similes of this metrical shape, of which only *δαίμονι ἴσος* occurs more than 3 ×. Short comparisons like these are common in oral epic in other cultures (see C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, London 1952, 266–7).

Again like other end-of-verse formulae, such similes can be expanded to suit metrical convenience. *νεκτὶ εἰκώς* can be preceded by *ἔρεμνῆ* (*Od.* 11.606, *Il.* 1.47), and the familiar *λέων* (λύκοι) *ὡς* can be replaced by *θηρί κοκόν ῥέξαντι εἰκώς* (15.586). Automedon darts in *ὡς τ' αἰγυπιὸς μετὰ χήνας* (17.460), a longer form of *αἰγυπιὸς ὡς* (13.531). *ἴσος* (-ον) *Ἄρηι* and *λαίλαπι ἴσος* also probably served to end a verse without further extension, though in Homer the former is always preceded by *βροτολογιῶ* (4 × *Il.*, 1 × *Od.*) and the latter by *κελαινῆ* or *ἔρεμνῆ* (3 × *Il.*).

A similar metrical flexibility is apparent in conventional comparisons of other metrical shapes. The poet may or may not precede *ἀτάλαντος* (-ον, -οι) *Ἄρηι* (11 × *Il.*) by *θοῶ*, and may or may not follow *δέμας πυρὸς* (17.366) by *αἶθομένοιο* (3 × *Il.*). Andromakhe dashes to the wall of Troy either | *μαινομένη εἰκυῖα* (6.389) or *μαινάδι ἴση* | (22.460). | *λαμπέσθη ὡς εἴ τε πυρὸς σέλας* (19.366) is a version of *ὡς εἴ σέλας ἐξεφάσθην* | (19.17), and *ἔρνεϊ ἴσος* | (18.56 = 437, *Od.* 14.175) is virtually repeated in the next verse as *φυτὸν ὡς γουνοῦ ἄλωης* |. The common idea 'like a flame' can appear as *φλογὶ εἰκελὸς* after the mid-verse caesura (3 × *Il.*), or the verse can be completed by *Ἥφαιστοιο* | (17.88); when the phrase occurs a foot later, the poet completes the verse with *ἄλκην* | (13.330, 18.154). He uses another version of the phrase, *φλογὶ ἴσοι*, before the mid-verse caesura (13.39). *κόμα Χαρίτεσσιν ὁμοῖα* | (17.51) also appears in the longer form *κόμας ὑακινθίνω ἄνθει ὁμοῖα* | (2 × *Od.*). Once the poet expands *λέων ὡς* into *αἰματτοῖς ὡς τίς τε λέων κατὰ ταῦρον ἐδηδῶς* (17.542), which is like an abbreviation of the common long lion-bull simile (cf. 17.657–64 etc.). He illustrates the glare of Akhilleus' armour by a succession of short comparisons of different form:

σέλας... ἤϋτε μήνης | (19.374), ἀσπὴρ ὡς ἀπέλαμπεν | (19.381; cf. the fuller version at 22.317-19), and παμφαίνων ὡς τ' ἠλέκτωρ Ὑπερίων | (19.398).

(b) *The long simile*

The characteristically Homeric long simile appears in three main forms.

(1) *Extensions of the short simile*

The poet may expand a short phrase of comparison by adding an enjambling clause, connected usually by a relative pronoun: ἤϋτε νεβροῖ (-οὺς) |, standing alone at 21.29 and 22.1, continues αἶ τ'... | ἐστᾶσ' at 4.243-5. The relative clause is often preceded by a runover adjective: λέων ὡς |, which occurs in short form at 11.129, continues at 20.164ff. into | σίντης, ὄν τε..., developing a picture which extends for 9 verses. λύκοι ὡς, occurring 3 × *Il.* at the end of the line, once continues in similar detail ὠμοφάγοι, τοῖσιν τε..., | οἷ τ'... (16.156-66). Idomeneus at 4.253 is simply σὺ εἶκελος ἀλκῆν |, but for Aias at 17.281 the poet continues | καπρίῳ, ὅς... for two further verses. ὄρνιθες (-ας) ὡς | is followed by amplification at 3.3-7, and at 2.765 by two descriptive epithets and a participial phrase (without relative clause); in the form ὄρνιθι εἰοικώς | it is extended by a relative clause at *Od.* 5.51-3 (it is interesting that Sleep's metamorphosis takes the slightly different form | ὄρνιθι λιγυρῇ ἐναλίγκιος, ἦν τ' ἐν ὄρεσσι | ..., 14.290-1). A similar kind of extension follows ὡς τε γυναικάς | at 20.252-5. At 17.133-6 a short simile expands first into a qualifying phrase and then into a clause: ἐστήκει ὡς τίς τε λέων περὶ οἷσι τέκεσσιν, | ᾧ... The comparisons | οἶμα λέοντος ἔχων, ὅς... (16.752-4) and the longer | αἰετοῦ οἶματ' ἔχων μέλανος, τοῦ θηρητῆρος, | ὅς... (21.252-4) do not occur without the extending relative clause but could clearly be used in shorter form.

The characteristically Homeric long simile may have originated in such extensions of a short simile, but in our poems they make up only a small proportion of the total number of long similes. For this reason I here avoid the possibly misleading term 'extended similes' for similes containing one or more verbs.

(2) *Other postpositioned long similes*

In the category just mentioned the simile, like a relative clause, follows the reference to the thing to which the comparison is made. In another type of long simile the statement in the narrative is followed by an adverbial clause, or a new sentence, usually beginning with ὡς τε, ὡς (δ') ὅτε, or οἷον (the *Wiesatz*). At the end of the simile the correlative to the introductory adverb marks (in ring form) the return to the narrative (the *Sosatz*). Euphorbos falls dead, his braided hair blood-bespattered; and the statement is then

illustrated by the picture of a cherished and beautiful olive sapling thrown to earth by a storm, beginning οἷον δὲ τρέφει ἔρνος ἀνὴρ ἐριθηλὲς ἐλαίης... and ending τοῖον... (17.53-60).

It is not easy to find a simple example even of this very common type of simile, for Homeric flexibility is such that the form is often varied slightly in one way or another and the connexion with the narrative may be more or less close (see ii below). For instance, consider 17.262-6:

Τρῶες δὲ προὔτυψαν ἀολλέες ἦρχε δ' ἄρ' Ἐκτωρ.
ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐπὶ προχοῇσι διηπετέος ποταμοῖο
βέβρυχεν μέγα κύμα ποτὶ ῥόον, ἀμφὶ δέ τ' ἄκραι
ἠιόνες βοόωσιν ἐρευγομένης ἀλὸς ἔξω,
τόσση ἄρα Τρῶες ἰαχῆ ἴσαν.

The comparison begins with ὡς δ' ὅτε, as if to introduce a parallel to Hektor's leadership of the Trojan charge; but as the description of the swollen river and stormy sea progresses βέβρυχεν and βοόωσιν bring in the idea of sound; and this, instead of the forward rush, becomes the main point of comparison in the concluding τόσση... ἰαχῆ. One must watch for this kind of additional colour in any simile that follows the illustrated item, however simple the comparison may seem at first sight.

(3) *Pre-positioned long similes*

The tendency for a new idea to appear in the simile and then carry over into the narrative, as shown in the last example, attains its most obvious form when a simile begins the sentence and introduces the point of comparison before the narrative has yet reached it. Usually such a simile begins with ὡς δ' ὅτ(ε), which occurs 34 × *Il.* (ὡς ὅτ(ε) occurs 28 × *Il.*). There is a straightforward example at 17.520-2. Aretos is wounded by a spear in the belly:

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ὄξυν ἔχων πέλεκυν αἰζήϊος ἀνὴρ,
κόψας ἐξόπιθεν κεράων βοὸς ἀγραύλοιο,
ἴνα τάμη διὰ πᾶσαν, ὁ δὲ προθορῶν ἐρίπησιν,

and Aretos, like the bull, springs forward and collapses:

ὡς ἄρ' ὁ γε προθορῶν πέσεν ὕπτιος.

This repetition of the same word τὸ to indicate the point of comparison is common in similes. There is another instance at 19.356-60:

... τοὶ δ' ἀπάνευθε νεῶν ἔχέοντο θοάων.
ὡς δ' ὅτε ταρφειαὶ νιφάδες Διὸς ἐκποτέονται...
ὡς τότε ταρφειαὶ κόρυθες λαμπρῶν γανόωσα
νηῶν ἐκφορέοντο...

A longer phrase is repeated, no doubt for pathetic effect, in the moving simile at 23.222-4, as Akhilleus mourns his dead companion:

ὡς δὲ πατήρ οὔ παιδὸς ὀδύρεται ὀστέα καίων,
 νυμφίου, ὅς τε θανῶν δειλοῦς ἀκάχησε τοκῆας,
 ὡς Ἀχιλεὺς ἑτάροιο ὀδύρεται ὀστέα καίων.

Several of the most notable similes in the *Il.* are of this pre-positioned type, including Akhilleus' likening himself to a bird suffering hardship to bring back food for its young (9.323-7), and the description of men stretching an oxhide (17.389-93), which is not closely connected with the preceding account of the sweating, weary warriors but introduces the following picture of the two sides tugging vainly at Patroklos' body. The agglomerated similes which introduce the Catalogue of Ships (2.455-83) and the double similes at 20.490-2 and 495-7 are also of this type.

Homer's most splendid exploitation of the long simile appears when the illustration is so powerfully integrated into the narrative, looking both forward and backward, that its removal would be impossible. In the lion-simile at 17.61-7, Menelaos has killed Euphorbos and is stripping off his armour: ὡς δ' ὅτε a lion has seized the best cow of a herd, breaks its neck, and gulps down the blood and entrails, while the dogs and herdsmen make a great noise from a safe distance but fear to confront (ἀντίον ἐλθέμεναι) the beast; ὡς the Trojans fear to confront (ἀντίον ἐλθέμεναι) Menelaos. The first parallel is between the lion's kill and Menelaos', continuing into the lion's killing and eating of its victim and Menelaos' stripping of Euphorbos' corpse; then the focus shifts to the frightened dogs and herdsmen, and as we return to the narrative their reluctance is transferred to the Trojans. The simile is thus actually both postpositioned and pre-positioned (see also p. 32).

(4) Unusual forms

There are two major examples in the *Il.* of the use of a negative to produce an intensifying effect, turning the simile into a kind of priamel. At 17.20-3 this takes the form of a triple disjunction:

οὔτ' οὖν παρδάλιος τόσσον μένος οὔτε λέοντος
 οὔτε σὺς κάπρου ὀλοόφρονος, οὔ τε μέγιστος
 θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι περὶ σθένει βλεμεαίνει,
 ὅσσον Πάνθου υἱὲς εὐμμελῖαι φρονέουσιν.

At 14.394-9 (see note *ad loc.*) we find a similar but even more formal triple example, where the disjunctions are amplified into separate couplets comparing the clash of the two armies successively to the roar of the sea, to that of a forest fire, and to that of a wind storming through oak trees. The

three repeated | οὔτε's conclude ὅσση ἄρα Τρώων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν ἔπλετο φωνή. The form of these similes resembles the priamels where Hektor tells Andromakhe his concern is not so much for the Trojans, or for Priam and Hekabe, or for his dying brothers, as for her (6.450-5), and where Zeus recites the names of his conquests who moved him less than Here does at the present moment (14.315-28).³¹

Glaukos' famous simile of the leaves is complete in sense within a single line: οἴη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν (6.146). Then the poet repeats the main word of the simile and expands the sense (φύλλα τὰ μὲν..., 147-8), and returns to the narrative, repeating here the item to which he has compared the leaves (ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεή..., 149). He is expanding and artistically reworking the short comparison φύλλοισιν εἰκότες (21.464). An even more sophisticated form of comparison appears in Odysseus' famous comparison of Nausikaa to a palm tree, which begins with no specification at all (*Od.* 6.160-1):

οὐ γὰρ πῶ τοιοῦτον ἐγὼ ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,
 οὔτ' ἀνδρ' οὔτε γυναῖκα· σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντα

then introduces paratactically the vehicle of the simile (6.162-3):

Δήλω δὴ ποτε τοῖον Ἀπόλλωνος παρὰ βωμῶν
 φοῖνικος νέον ἔρνος ἀνερχόμενον ἐνόησα

and only later reaches the point of comparison, repeated in both simile and narrative (6.166-8):

ὡς δ' αὐτως καὶ κείνο ἴδων ἐτεθήπεα θυμῶ
 δὴν, ἐπεὶ οὔ πῶ τοῖον ἀνήλυθεν ἐκ δόρυ γαίης,
 ὡς σέ, γύναι, ἄγαμαί τε τέθηπά τε...

Twice the rare figure *anadiplosis* is used with a simile; once at 22.127-8:

ἄ τε παρθένος ἦϊθέος τε,
 παρθένος ἦϊθέος τ' ὀαρίζετον ἀλλήλοισιν

and at 20.371-2, where a further comparison follows immediately:

εἰ πυρὶ χεῖρας ἔοικεν,
 εἰ πυρὶ χεῖρας ἔοικε, μένος δ' αἰθῶνι σιδήρῳ.

Occasionally it is not quite clear whether the poet intends a simile or a divine metamorphosis. There is a simple instance at 19.350-1, where

³¹ See W. R. Race, *The Classical Priamel from Homer to Boethius* (Leiden 1982) 34-41. The only other negative simile in Homer is at *Od.* 13.86-7, οὐδέ κεν ἴρηξ | κίρκος ὀμαρτήσειεν, ἰλαφρότατος πεπενηῶν. On such similes see R. J. Schork, *AJP* 107 (1986) 263 n. 8 and *APA Abstracts* (1989) 20. He says that apart from these three Homeric examples, the figure is found in Greek lyric, elegiac, and iambic only occasionally in Theocritus, Moschus, and Callimachus, and is common only in Propertius and Horace.

Athene swoops down from heaven like a hawk (ἄρπη εἰκνῖα ταυπιτέρυγι λιγυφώνω) to infuse nectar into Akhilleus. εἰκνῖα usually implies a metamorphosis, but her purpose and action suggest that the poet intends only to emphasize her speed.³² This is very obviously the case with ἴρηξ ὤς at 18.616, where Thetis is burdened with Akhilleus' new armour.

(ii) Connexion of simile and narrative

Ancient scholars perceived that besides the primary point of comparison between narrative and simile other parallels might be developed in the course of the simile-description and add to the effect. For example, when Athene brushes Pandaros' arrow aside from Menelaos 'as when a mother brushes aside a fly from her infant, when it is lying in sweet sleep' (4.130-1), the scholia comment 'The mother <corresponds to> the good disposition <of Athene to Menelaos>; the fly to the ease with which it is scared away and darts off to another place; the <child's> sleep to <Menelaos'> being off guard and to the weakness of the blow' (bT on 4.130-1; cf. K. Snipes, *AJP* 109, 1988, 220-1). They see many parallels in the famous simile which compares Aias, reluctantly withdrawing from the onslaught of the Trojan spears, to a stubborn donkey in a cornfield, long ignoring and then at last yielding to the sticks of children:

The simile <represents his> scorn of the Trojans, in that he yields not to them, but to Zeus; the animal's greediness in cropping the plentiful pasture <represents> the hero's immovability. The grazing donkey is a much better parallel than a pack-animal, for it is hard to move a pasturing beast. And heightening <the parallel> he calls the donkey lazy and used to many blows (11.559); many men have broken sticks on his back before this, and now he says that not men are beating him, but children. (bT on 11.558-62; see N. J. Richardson, *CQ* 30, 1980, 279-81)

On the other hand, schol. T on 12.41-8 insist that the simile here comparing Hektor to a boar or lion at bay illustrates only his being surrounded by the Trojans, and that the death of the beast (ἀγνωρίη δέ μιν ἔκτα, 46) and the spears hurled at it (43-5) are only ποιητικός κόσμος. Certainly Hektor does not die here, as the beast does, but it is hard not to recall Andromakhe's first words to him, φθίσει σε τὸ σὸν μένος (6.407), and there can be little doubt that the similar idea in the lion-simile for Patroklos, εἴ τέ μιν ὤλεσεν ἀλκή (16.753), foreshadows that hero's death (bT *ad loc.* make this point). A few modern scholars have denied that there is ever more than one point of comparison (e.g. D. L. Page, *CR* 10, 1960, 108; G. Jachmann, *Der homerische Schiffskatalog und der Ilias*, Opladen 1958, 267-338), but most

³² On other instances of this ambiguity see 4.78-84n., 7.59-60n., 13.62-5n., and 17.547-52n., and in general H. Erbse, *Hermes* 108 (1980) 259-74; H. Bannert, *WS* 12 (1978) 29-42; F. Dirlmeier, *Die Vogelgestalt homerischer Götter* (Heidelberg 1967); de Jong, *Narrators* 134-5; and M. Coffey, *AJP* 78 (1957) 120 n. 29.

follow Fränkel, *Gleichnisse* 1-16 and *passim*, in accepting that further ideas significant for the narrative occur in the course of the simile. As Fränkel says, *Gleichnisse* 5-6, it would be foolish to restrict the parallel in the famous simile applied to the Trojan watchfires (8.555-61) to the number of fires and the number of stars, when the pictures also have in common the glittering points of light, the stillness, and the joy in the hearts of the shepherd and the victorious Trojans. One often feels, especially with similes which begin ὡς (δ') δε... , that the poet is drawing a general illustrative picture rather than making a direct comparison between one item and another. The familiarity of pre-positioned similes (above, i (b) 3) makes this view even more probable. For other examples of multiple points of comparison see 13.795-9n. and 20.164-75n.

Often a repetition of the same word links narrative and simile. Fränkel however correctly insists that such a word (the *Kupplung*) is not necessarily the main point of comparison. One of his prime examples (*Gleichnisse* 8-9) is 7.4-7, where, like weary oarsmen *longing for* (ἐλδομένοισι, 4) a wind, the Trojans have been *longing for* (ἐλδομένοισι, 7) the return of Hektor and Paris; but the most striking point of comparison is not the realization of the men's hopes but the vividly described exhaustion of the oarsmen (5-6) and so too (by implication) of the Trojans (see also 18.318-22n). Occasionally the linking word recurs in a slightly different sense; in 16.428-30 κλάζειν is used in the simile for the screeching of fighting birds, in the narrative for the battle-cries of Sarpedon and Patroklos.³³ In the vivid comparison of men dragging at Patroklos' body to workers stretching an oxhide (17.389-95), the simile's key-words ταύειν, ταύουσι, τάννται (390, 391, 393) are picked up in the narrative by εἴλακον (395), but recur a little later in τοῖον Ζεὺς... |... ἑτάλυσε κακὸν πόνον (401; see note *ad loc.*).

Sometimes the ideas introduced in the course of the simile, though not directly relevant to the immediate action, serve to foreshadow the future.³⁴ Two instances have been referred to above (12.41-8, 16.752-3; see also 13.471-5n.). A simile comparing Sarpedon to a marauding lion concludes with alternative endings, perhaps foreshadowing Zeus's later uncertainty whether to save his son (12.299-306; cf. 16.431-61). The full-fed wolves to which the poet compares the battle-starved Myrmidons before they set off for the battle (16.156-63) may look forward to their coming victory under Patroklos' leadership (see note *ad loc.*).³⁵ In the simile describing Akhilleus'

³³ The example is given by M. S. Silk, *Interaction in Poetic Imagery* (Cambridge 1974) 16; on the theoretical background of Silk's work see the review article by J. M. Mueller in *CP* 72 (1977) 146-59.

³⁴ This is often mentioned in the scholia; see K. Snipes, *AJP* 109 (1988) 213-14.

³⁵ S. A. Nimis however has made the attractive suggestion that the wolves' eating and drinking represent and replace the communal meal usually shared by an army before battle (*Narrative Semiotics in the Epic Tradition: the Simile*, Bloomington and Indianapolis 1987, 23-33).

anguish over his dead friend there is a prediction of his subsequent pursuit of the Trojans (18.318–22, see note *ad loc.*), and two similes foreshadow the burning of Troy (21.522–5; 22.410–1). Conversely, as Akhilleus advances for his first duel in the *Il.* an effective simile includes a reminder of the way the hero has withdrawn from the war up to this point (20.164–75, see note *ad loc.*).

Sometimes the connexion between simile and narrative can best be described as elliptical.³⁶ Thus at 16.364–7, just before Hektor's retreat:

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἄπ' Οὐλύμπου νέφος ἔρχεται οὐρανὸν εἴσω
αἰθέρος ἐκ δίης, ὅτε τε Ζεὺς λαίλαπτα τείνη,
ὥς τῶν ἐκ νηῶν γένετο ἰαχὴ τε φόβος τε,
οὐδὲ κατὰ μοῖραν πέραον πάλιν.

Here the parallel seems to be not between the movement of the cloud from Olumpos and the retreat of the Trojans, which is not close, but between the noise, fear and confusion aroused by the hurricane (which is not explicitly mentioned) and that prevailing here amongst the Trojans as the result of Patroklos' charge. Similarly, at 10.5–10 Agamemnon's agony of mind is compared not exactly to the storm of rain, hail, or snow which the simile describes, but rather to the deep concern caused to humans when Zeus sees fit to display his awful powers, though the simile does not explicitly mention this. See also 19.356–64n.

Especially interesting are the instances (mentioned above, p. 28) where an idea introduced in the simile anticipates its appearance in the narrative, so that the simile plays an essential part in the sense and cannot be removed. Aias advances through the foremost fighting-men like a boar, which turns at bay and easily scatters (ῥηϊδίως ἐκέδασσεν ἐλιξάμενος) the dogs and hunters; so Aias charges and easily scatters (ῥεῖα μετεισάμενος... ἐκέδασσε) the Trojan ranks (17.281–5), where the essential action is repeated by the same word. The technique appears twice in close succession at 15.622–37, where first the Greeks are standing firm against the Trojans (622); Hektor falls upon them like a storm-driven wave which strikes fear of death into the sailors; so the hearts of the Greeks are torn with fear (629). Then Hektor advances like a fierce lion which springs upon a herd and eats an ox as the rest dash away in fear (630–6); so the Greeks were put to flight by Hektor and Zeus (637). Other examples appear at 15.381–3, 17.263–8, 17.725–34, and 17.737–41 (see notes *ad locc.*, and also Fränkel, *Gleichnisse* 6–7 and 104–7, and Edwards, *HPI* 107–8).

³⁶ This term, and the following analyses, are those of D. Petegorsky, *Context and Evocation: Studies in Early Greek and Sanskrit Poetry* (diss. Berkeley 1982; *DA* 44, 1983, 162A) 9–74.

Occasionally the description in a simile appears to take on a life of its own, and to continue in a direction which veers away from the narrative. Menelaos looks everywhere for Antilokhos, like a sharp-eyed eagle, which spots a hare cowering in the undergrowth, seizes it, and kills it (17.674–8); but Antilokhos is not hiding, and Menelaos' intentions are not hostile. The Trojans surround the wounded Odysseus as scavenging animals press upon a wounded stag, consuming it until a lion drives them off and eats the carcass itself (11.474–81); Aias, like the lion, arrives and drives off the Trojans (486), but Odysseus is of course not killed and eaten (for other examples see Fränkel, *Gleichnisse* 106; Edwards, *HPI* 106–7). A certain shock when the simile ends and the narrative restarts may be intentional, as when the long description of a quiet snowstorm that muffles even the sea-surf contrasts violently with the thundering din of flying stones (12.278–88; see P. Damon, *Modes of Analogy in Ancient and Medieval Verse*, Berkeley 1961, 261–71; Edwards, *HPI* 106).

Conversely, in a few cases a simile is shaped to suit the narrative context rather than the realism of the scene it depicts. Two lions unrealistically carry off a goat, 'holding it high above the ground in their jaws', because the Aiantes are lifting up a body to strip off the armour (13.198–202). Scirois the dog-star, which rises at dawn at harvest-time, hardly shines then πολλοῖσι μετ' ἀστράσι (22.28, see note *ad loc.*). There is an egregious example at *Od.* 4.335–40, where the doe has been much criticized for her bizarre behaviour in leaving her fawns in a lion's lair (cf. S. West, *Odyssey ad loc.*) by those who have not seen that the poor animal's unnatural action results from the poet's desire to make it correspond to that of the suitors, who κρατερόφρονος ἀνδρὸς ἐν εὐνή | ἦθελον εὐνηθῆναι ἀνάκτιδες αὐτοὶ ἔοντες (4.333–4; the poet is also punning on ξύλοχος, the lion's den, and συν- + λέχος, λόχος, cf. σύλλεκτρος, ὄλοχος).³⁷

Similes are usually related from the narrator's viewpoint, which is sometimes quasi-Olympian; I. J. F. de Jong, *Mnemosyne* 38 (1985) 263, following Fränkel, notes that the similes at 8.555–9, 12.278–89, 16.633–7, and 19.357–8 are seen from the gods' perspective. Sometimes, however, the simile embodies the thoughts and emotions of a character; Priam's seeing the approaching Akhilleus as the sinister dog-star is a superb example (22.26–32).³⁸ More complex is the simile at 4.275–82, where the Greeks around the Aiantes are compared to a black cloud which frightens a shepherd (the Trojans' viewpoint), but delights the heart of Agamemnon (4.283; see de Jong, *Narrators* 272 n. 73). Even a formulaic short comparison may show this perspective, as when the Trojans see Akhilleus τεύχεσι

³⁷ Fränkel, *Gleichnisse* 105, lists other improbabilities in the behaviour of animals in similes.

³⁸ De Jong, *Narrators* 123–36, has a detailed study of this phenomenon; see also J. M. Bremer, *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar* 5 (1985) 367–72.

λαμπόμενον, βροτολογῶ ἴσον Ἄρηϊ (20.46). A close identification between listener and character results, as the former looks at the scene through the latter's eyes.

The emotional impact of the scene a simile portrays can be transferred to the narrative passage, with powerful effect. The immortal horses standing over Patroklos' body are compared to a grave monument for stillness, but it is the funereal association which is significant (see 17.434–6n.). The many points of comparison between Euphorbos and the uprooted young tree include a reminiscence of the care showered upon him by his loving parents, whom he mentions in his last speech (see 17.53–60n.). The fire-similes so frequent for Akhilleus in the later books include sinister forebodings of doomed cities (see 18.207–14n., 219–21n., 22.410–11n.). Akhilleus' shield shines like a fire which gives hope to sailors borne on unwillingly by a storm and far from home – and the Greeks too feel hope when they see it, and are likewise unwillingly far from home (19.375–8). Here, and in many other similes, the poet suggests much more than a single, simple point of comparison, and thus enriches both the visual and the emotional impact upon his audience.

(iii) The subject-matter of the similes

Though very few extended similes are repeated verbatim (see above, n. 29), many share common subject-matter. But just as different examples of the same type-scene vary greatly in length and in elaborative detail, so too similes with common content vary greatly in phraseology, the details emphasized, and the application to the narrative context. Among the commonest subjects of similes in the *Il.* are (as listed by Lee, *Similes* 65–73): lions (40 similes, plus seven of an aggressive θήρ which is probably a lion; see 15.586–8n.); birds (22); fire (19); cattle (18); wind and wave (18); and boars (12). On the other hand, Lee lists 31 subjects of *Il.* similes which do not recur in either poem,³⁹ and these are usually the most evocative and memorable. Their uniqueness makes it likely that they were composed especially for their context, and many of them are unforgettable: Apollo, leading the Trojan attack, overturns the Greek rampart like a boy kicking over a sandcastle (15.362–4); the weeping Patroklos looks up imploringly at Akhilleus like a little girl tugging at her mother's skirt and begging to be picked up (16.7–10); Athena turns Pandaros' arrow aside from Menelaos as easily as a mother brushes away a fly from her sleeping child (4.130–1);

³⁹ The unique subjects, as listed by Lee, are: mules, asses, worm, rainbow, wheatfield, dew, beans, milk, lead, oil, ivory, top, trumpet, stake, threshing, reapers, child and sandcastle, mother and child, woodcutters, potter, trick-rider, boy swineherd, husbandry, land-dispute, fishing and tanning. There are also (among Lee's 'Miscellaneous') five different similes expressing 'as far as'.

Aias, defending the ships, leaps from one to another as a trick-rider jumps from horse to horse (15.679–84). Within books 17–20 we find the unique pictures of the workmen stretching a hide (17.389); the mourning horses standing like a grave monument (17.434–5); weary mules struggling to drag a tree-trunk down a hill (17.742–5); a potter spinning his wheel (18.600–1); a light shining for frightened sailors (19.375–8); women quarrelling in the street (20.252–5); and oxen threshing grain (20.495–7).

The purpose of a simile is to encourage the listener's imagination by likening something in the narrative of the heroic past to something which is directly within his own experience; and so the majority of Homeric similes are drawn from everyday life.⁴⁰ This means that they, like Akhilleus' shield, give us a view of the world lying beyond the war, the world that existed in the poet's own day and long after him. The subjects may be grouped as follows (the division is largely that of J. M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*, Chicago 1975, 188–9):

- (a) Weather and other natural phenomena, including storms at sea, flooding rivers, snowstorms, forest fires, thunderbolts, a dust storm (13.334), an earthquake (2.781), and lightning and thunderbolts. Most of these recur frequently; nature is thus most often presented as violent and hostile to humankind.
- (b) Hunting and herding, usually involving aggression by wild animals against domestic animals (the largest group). Here again the natural world is usually dangerous and destructive and must be confronted by humans, often without success. There is also a small number of similes depicting wild animals (especially birds) without human involvement; usually they are killing each other.⁴¹
- (c) Human technology, including carpentry, weaving, threshing grain, irrigating a garden, and similar activities, showing mankind working productively with nature. Most of these peaceful subjects appear only once.

Thus the majority of *Il.* similes contain recurrent subject-matter depicting mankind in a losing struggle with nature. Such subjects refute the old idea that similes are introduced to give the listener relief from the relentless violence of the battlefield, for most of them depict conflict and suffering. In most of the similes, the departure from the narrative brings not a change

⁴⁰ As Aristarchus noted: ὁ γὰρ Ὅμηρος ἀπὸ τῶν γνωσσομένων πᾶσι ποιεῖται τὰς ὁμοιώσεις (Arn/A on 16.364). See also K. Snipes, *AJP* 109 (1988) 214–15. Long ago Robert Wood observed that descriptions in the similes show that Homer must have lived on the west coast of Asia Minor, because at 9.4–7 and elsewhere the west wind blows ashore (*Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer*, Dublin 1776, 16–24).

⁴¹ On Homer's treatment of animal subjects see most recently A. Schnapp-Gourbeillon, *Lions, héros, masques: les représentations de l'animal chez Homère* (Paris 1981), and S. H. Lonsdale, *Creatures of Speech* (*Beiträge zur Altertumskunde* 5, 1990).

from violence to peacefulness, but a change from the Trojan plain to hill, lowland, farmer's sheepfold, forest or sea, from nobly-born chiefs to farmers and shepherds, and from conflict brought on by human folly to that arising from mankind's unending struggle to survive in an often hostile world. The predominance of harsh subjects is to some extent, of course, due to the mainly martial subject-matter of the *Il.*; but it is also reminiscent of the uncomfortable and uncooperative world of Hesiod, 'a fallen and fundamentally alien environment in which we can survive as humans only in the protective bubble of that which finally defines us as human: our own creation, justice'.⁴² Since this kind of subject-matter is so abundant in Homer it is likely to be traditional.

A minority of similes depict the peaceful activities of the domestic life of men and women, and their subjects appear only once in the *Il.* and *Od.* This peaceful domestic world of harvest, vintage, fishing, irrigated gardens, and working women is the same as the world of the pictures on Akhilleus' shield, and thus these similes are likely to be the poet's innovation. One often feels that the poet is describing, within his heroic frame, a little vignette that recently caught his attention as he went about the ordinary business of life.

The restriction of the similes to ordinary experience – for attacks on domestic animals by a big feline predator must be considered a regular part of life, as can be deduced from the scene on Akhilleus's shield (18.579–86)⁴³ – is confirmed by the virtual absence of comparisons with the battles of divinities, the Titanomachies and Gigantomachies which appear in Hesiod and are reflected in *Il.* 20–21. In one exceptional case, the earth shakes

beneath the feet of the marching Greeks as it does when Zeus angrily lashes the ground around the prostrate Tiphoeus (2.781–4, see note *ad loc.*, and cf. 20.54–66n.).⁴⁴ There are, of course, many instances where great men are glorified by comparison to Ares or Zeus, beautiful women to Artemis or Aphrodite; but such expressions evoke our personal imagination in the present, not the mythical world of the past.⁴⁵ There is a notable reversal of this principle in the description of the dancing-floor of the young folk on the shield of Akhilleus, which is dignified by a comparison to that built for Ariadne in the heroic past (18.590–2).

A number of similes make alternative comparisons. In the washing-pools before Troy there are two springs; one is hot, ἡ δ' ἐτέρη θέρεϊ προπέει ἔικνικα χαλάζει, | ἡ χιόνι ψυχρῆ, ἡ ἐξ ὕδατος κρυστάλλω (22.151–2). Sarpedon falls ὡς ὅτε τις δρυὶς ἤριπεν ἢ ἀχερωῖς, | ἢ ἐ πίτυς βλωθρῆ (16.482–3). A simpler alternation of lion(s) and boar(s) occurs at 5.782–3 ≅ 7.256–7, 8.338, 11.293, 12.42. In a little-known dissertation J. C. Hogan examines these 'disjunctions' or 'multiple-term' similes in detail (he finds 44 of them in *Il.* and *Od.* combined), and suggests that formulaic and metrical considerations are the essential cause.⁴⁶ This may well be correct in some instances; certainly the disjunction ἀνέρος... ἢ ἐ γυναικός | in the simile at 17.435 is based on the formula ἢ δὲ (οὐδὲ, ἢ τε) γυναικίς | (etc.). In most cases, however, it seems more likely that the extra terms of comparison are added to strengthen the essential idea of the comparison – coldness, aggressive violence, headlong fall – by treating it as the common feature of any number of occurrences, rather than of just one particular scene.

(iv) Language and style

Similes speak of the world of familiar and recurrent events, and this is reflected in their syntax and vocabulary. The particle τε, generalizing the statement of a familiar action, is very common, often repeated several times (6 × at 5.136–42; see 5.137–42n., and Chantraine, *GH* II 240–1). The time is always the present; verbs may be in the present (or occasionally perfect) indicative, the timeless aorist indicative, or the generalizing subjunctive, and a combination of these may appear in the same simile (e.g. 16.259–65, 18.318–22; at 17.58 two aorists after several present indicatives suggest the sudden violence of a windstorm).⁴⁷ In shorter similes the verb is frequently

⁴² R. Lambert, *Hesiod* (New Haven and London 1988) 124–5. The hostility of nature in Homer is well brought out in A. Bonnafé, *Poésie, Nature et Sacré* (Lyon 1984), especially 86–8. The climax is Akhilleus' battle with Skamandros (21.233ff.), in which the hero compares himself to a boy swineherd swept away while trying to cross a river (21.282–3). V. Leinicks, *Classica et Mediaevalia* 37 (1986) 5–20, suggests that when the same subject-matter recurs in similes, an experienced audience would feel overtones (e.g. of destructiveness) even if they are not explicitly mentioned in a particular instance.

⁴³ There is evidence for lions in Greece at least down to the classical period; see P. Warren, *JHS* 99 (1979) 123, S. West, *Odyssey on Od.* 4.335–40, and 15.586–8n. Probably this was not like the African lion, but a short-maned or maneless species which did not roar; lions do not roar in Homer, unless στενάχων conveys this (18.318 and 324), but cf. βαρυφόγγων τε λεόντων at *HyAphr* 159 (see 10.485n.). G. E. Markoe, *CA* 8 (1989) 86–115, demonstrates that the attack of a (maned) lion on its prey is very common in Near Eastern and archaic Greek art (as it is on Mycenaean daggers), and holds that in Homeric similes too the lion symbolizes 'divinely conceived heroic triumph' (p. 89); but it is safer to make a distinction between the maned lion presumably hunted by kings for sport (the type of visual art) and the lion of the similes, which usually attacks domestic animals and is pursued by villagers and dogs. In *Il.* lion-similes where the prey or circumstances are identified, 21 × the lion is attacking a domestic animal or a herdsman (or the place is identified as a σταθμός), compared with 7 × that the scene is one of huntsmen or of a wild victim. (The count is based on Markoe's list, *op. cit.* 115, with the addition of 17.109ff., 17.133ff., and 18.317ff. Instances of θήρ should probably be included, as Markoe does at 15.323ff., in which case add also 10.183ff., 15.586ff.; in all three cases the victim is domestic.)

⁴⁴ S. A. Nimis, *Narrative Semiotics in the Epic Tradition* (Bloomington 1987) 73–9, suggests a parallel is intended between Zeus and Akhilleus, each establishing his honour.

⁴⁵ The lists of similes with gods or goddesses as subject given in Lee, *Similes* 68, are badly incomplete; add (partly from M. Coffey, *AJP* 78, 1957, 122 n. 36) 3.158, 3.230, 8.305, 11.638, 24.699, *Od.* 3.468, 4.14, 4.310, 8.14, 23.163.

⁴⁶ *The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile* (diss. Cornell 1966; *DA* 27, 1966, 1352A) 131–51.

⁴⁷ Cf. Chantraine, *GH* II 185–7, 245 and 253. On possible imperfect tenses in similes see 15.272n. and Chantraine, *GH* II 187.

omitted. Parataxis is especially common (e.g. 3.33–7 and note *ad loc.*, 18.207–14, 20.164–75, and 22.26–32; cf. Chantraine, *GH* II 355–6).

Short similes often have formulaic metrical variants (see above, section i (a)). In one instance forms were also developed for long similes; besides λέων (δ') ὦς (4 × *Il.*), there are ὦς τε (ὦς δὲ) λέων (7 × *Il.*), ὦς (δ' ὄτε) τίς τε λέων (ὄρεσίτροφος) (4 × *Il.*, 2 × *Od.*), and ὦς τε λῆς (ἠϋγένειος) (3 × *Il.*; see 17.133–6n.). J. C. Hogan's study (see above, n. 46) has shown that long similes employ the formulae of ordinary narrative when the sense allows, e.g. when actions such as fighting, throwing, and hunting are described. This results in a very close connexion between the narrative and the simile, for the actions of human warfare are illustrated by the behaviour of animals or natural phenomena, which are in turn described in the language of human action (see 14.16–19n., 15.323–5n., 20.164–75n.).⁴⁸ Because of the often mundane subject-matter, however, the vocabulary of the similes is rather closer to the *Od.* than to the *Il.* narrative, and almost certainly closer to that of everyday life. There is naturally a high proportion of *hapaxes*; N. J. Richardson, in Bremer, *HBOP* 172, finds that 32 of the 151 *hapaxes* in books 21 and 22 occur in similes, six of them in the simile describing the irrigation of a garden and five in that depicting the melting of lard in a cauldron (21.257–64 and 21.362–5, see notes *ad loc.*). Hogan, *op. cit.* 3, also notes five *hapaxes* in 13.588–90 (threshing beans and chick-peas). There are, however, a few archaisms (see Shipp, *Studies* 146–7). As with the subject-matter of the similes, the poet is making use of the traditional language and formulae in innovative ways, and adding to them new elements from his everyday experience.

(v) Function, distribution, and arrangement

The scholia consider the similes contribute αἴζησις (fullness), ἐνάργεια (vividness), σαφήνεια (clarity), ποικιλία (variety) and κόσμος (decoration).⁴⁹ Occasionally they remark that they give relief from the battle (διαναπαύουσι δὲ τὸν πόνον αἱ παραβολαί, T on 15.362–4). Among modern scholars, M. Coffey, *AJP* 78 (1957) 118, has categorized their functions as illustrating the movement of an individual, a group, or a thing; the appearance of a hero, group, or thing; noise; measurement of time, space, and numbers; a situation; and psychological characteristics, including decision-making. W. A. Camps, *An Introduction to Homer* (Oxford 1980) 56, sums up the uses: to suggest inward feelings and states of mind; to illustrate the distinctive

⁴⁸ W. B. Ingalls, *TAPA* 109 (1979) 87–109, using a very small sample, also finds little difference in formulaic density between similes and narrative in the *Il.* The very different results of M. W. M. Pope, *AC* 6 (1963) 14–18, are based on too limited a definition of formula.

⁴⁹ See K. Snipes, *AJP* 109 (1988) 208–9 (on Eustathius), 215–17, and N. J. Richardson, *CQ* 30 (1980) 279.

qualities of things, actions, or processes; and to render effects of multitude and mass. More specifically, M. Mueller, *The Iliad* (London 1984) 108–24, notes that a simile marks a passage as worthy of special attention, slowing down the narrative as expansions and digressions do: 'Similes occur predominantly in battle scenes. Here they articulate change and are found when a warrior joins or withdraws from battle, defeats his opponent or is defeated by him' (109, with good examples; see also Scott, *Oral Nature* 12–55). In sum, we can say that a simile produces a pause in the action, prolongs the tension, and draws the audience's attention to an important point. Like the expansion of a type-scene, it adds colour and a new dimension to whatever is the focus of attention. Besides this, because of its characteristically everyday content the Homeric simile for a moment unites narrator and audience in *their* world, not that of the heroes, as together they marvel at the mighty deeds of the past.

In practice, in the *Il.* similes often occur during descriptions of general battle movement, and when a hero enters or leaves battle, or has a success or a disaster. Three-quarters of the long similes in the *Il.* occur in battle-scenes (Moulton, *Similes* 382–3); the proportion relative to the total lines in each book varies from 0% in book 1 to 15.6% in book 17, other high proportions occurring in books 12 (14.4%), 16 (13.7%), 11 (12.1%), and 15 (11.3%). Books 3, 4, 13, 21, and 22 are also above the norm.⁵⁰

Similes are much less common in direct speech, and so books consisting largely of direct speech have low ratios (especially books 1, 6, 9, 18, and 24). In common with the usual vividness of his diction, Akhilleus has more than anyone else (four long and four short), and his long similes are all strikingly original in content and highly effective (the mother bird feeding its young, 9.323–5; the crying child clinging to her mother's skirt, 16.7–10; the boy swineherd drowned crossing a river, 21.282–3; the wolf and the lamb *not* lying down together, 22.262–5).⁵¹ Other fine similes occur in speeches by Agamemnon (3.243–5), Poseidon (13.101–4), Aineias (20.252–5), and Asios (12.167–70; see also 13.102–4n.).

Similes often occur in groups; C. Moulton, *Hermes* 102 (1974) 387 n. 38, says that about 70 of the roughly 330 similes he counts in the *Il.* are successive, i.e. 'similes occasioned by the same event in the narrative, without more than one or two lines of recapitulation between them'. We may distinguish the following.

(1) Balancing pairs of similes. Similes for each side illustrate the two armies marching to battle at 3.3–7 and 3.10–14, 4.422–8 and 4.433–6; two especially powerful examples contrast the optimism of the Trojans after

⁵⁰ The figures are taken from A. Bonnafé, *RPh* 67 (1983) 82–6.

⁵¹ See J. Griffin, *JHS* 106 (1986) 53; Moulton, *Similes* 100–1; Scott, *Oral Nature* 50–1.

their first success and the despair of the Greeks (8.555-9 and 9.4-7; the pairing is now obscured by the book-division). The same balance occurs in similes for warriors preparing for a duel: Paris and Menelaos (3.23-6 and 3.33-5), Akhilleus and Hektor (22.26-32 and 22.93-6). See also 15.263-70 and 15.271-8, 16.352-6 and 16.364-6.

(2) Two similes coupled together, or occurring in close succession, to describe different aspects of the same thing. A magnificent pair describes Akhilleus' charge; he sweeps against the enemy like a forest fire, and the dead are crushed beneath his chariot like barley threshed by oxen (20.490-9). Even better known is the pair in which Aias is described first as a lion balked of its prey and then as a donkey stubbornly ignoring the sticks of children (11.548-61). Sarpedon falls like a tree, and faces his death as furiously as a bull attacked by a lion (16.482-9). Polupoites and Leonteus are like firm-rooted oaks as they stand fast (12.131-4), and like boars when they begin to advance (12.146-51).⁵²

(3) A series of consecutive similes. These are reserved for especially impressive effects. The most prominent of them heralds the mighty march of the Greeks to battle (the Catalogue of Ships; 2.455-83, see note *ad loc.*), where (with gradually narrowing focus) the gleam from their armour is compared to fire, their numbers to wildfowl, leaves, flowers, and insects, and their marshalling by the leaders to goats divided up by goatherds; finally their leader Agamemnon is singled out for comparison to the gods in physique and to the leading bull of the herd for prominence. At the end of the long struggle over the body of Patroklos five similes follow each other in a more flexible technique, in which the action of the similes is each time carried back to the narrative before the next simile follows (17.725-59; see note *ad loc.*); then this climactic flourish is summarized in a final short simile, ὧς οἱ μὲν μάρναντο δέμας πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο (18.1), before the scene abruptly shifts to Akhilleus and Antilokhos. Zeus's glorification of Hektor before the firing of the ships invokes a series of similes, as the hero is compared to Ares (15.605-6), the opposing Greeks to a sea-cliff (618-21), and Hektor again to a storm battering a ship and a lion attacking cattle (624-36).

Sometimes similes not directly juxtaposed may nevertheless produce a cumulative effect. In different ways, Akhilleus is repeatedly compared with fire (especially fire burning a city) as he prepares to rejoin the battle, beginning with his terrifying appearance to the Trojans (18.207-14) and continuing at 19.375-80, 21.522-4, 22.135, and 22.410-11 (see also

⁵² See also Moulton, *Similes* 19-27, and T. K. Hubbard, *Grazer Beiträge* 10 (1981) 59-67.

22.317-21n.). As Akhilleus dons his armour, the poet compares (in short similes) the gleam from his shield to the moon, that from his helmet to a star, and Akhilleus himself, fully-armed, to the sun (19.374, 19.381, and 19.398). The struggle by the Greek heroes to protect the body of Patroklos is illustrated by similes likening them to animals guarding their young (17.4-5, 17.133-6, 17.757 (possibly; see note *ad loc.*), and 18.318-22). These can be associated with other similes in which Akhilleus compares himself to a parent (9.323-7, 16.7-10, 23.222-4 and note *ad loc.*; Moulton, *Similes* 27-49 and 101-6, is not always convincing). M. Baltes, *Antike und Abendland* 29 (1983) 36-48, finds interconnexion in the similes of book 16; R. Friedrich, *AJP* 102 (1981) 120-37, and W. T. McGrath, *CJ* 77 (1982) 205-12, find the same effect in the lion-similes of the *Od.* See also 2.394-7n., 4.422-8n.

The largest number of *similes* in the *Il.* are drawn from a relatively few subjects depicting the harshness of the natural world; but the greatest number of *subjects* are used once only, in unique similes based on the commonplace and peaceful events of everyday domestic life (see section iii above). It is natural to suppose that the former group are traditional in content (though just as in repeated type-scenes, the expression is almost always different), while the latter result from Homer's own observation and creativity, and show his own choice of subject-matter, his unlimited inventiveness, and (like Akhilleus' shield) his totally un-Hesiodic enjoyment of ordinary life. In all cases, the interaction of simile and narrative is complex and rewards the listener/reader's closest attention. The Homeric long simile is a masterpiece of poetic art, and brings us as close as we can hope to get to the perceptions and sensitivities of the genius who constructed the monumental poem.