

Disunity

3.42-58

Kirk, G.S., The Songs of Homer.

(cont'd)

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9. The Cultural and Linguistic Amalgam

- p. 180 Thus it is legitimate to conclude that datable subject-matter, sparse as it is, at least provides a strong argument for certain passages in the poems having been composed at widely different dates.
- p. 184 Thus writing was unknown in the crucial formative stage of the Ionian epic, and so the epic world is made illiterate.
- p. 219 10. Structural Anomalies in the Iliad
Athenian editors may or may not have had something to do with the events of our seventh book; but in any case it seems reasonable to conjecture that there had been at least two poetical versions of the Trojan fighting, in one of which the wall was an important factor and in the other of which it was not.
- p. 220 Another case where the singer seems to have imperfectly conflated two versions, or where an additional theme has been only incompletely assimilated, is Patroclus's wearing of Achilles's armour in xvi. . . . There is no glaring inconsistency in all this, merely a leaving of loose ends and a failure to work out a theme that has been foreshadowed. This is just the sort of thing that oral poets do, and it can be paralleled in many Yugoslav versions; but they do not do it as a result of free composition, but because they are conflating different songs or different versions of the same song. There is no need to look to textual corruption as the culprit, or to assume some kind of mechanical blunder by a redactor. This was the Analysts' cure; but in fact Homer himself could have sung xvi exactly as we have it, even with this slight imperfection.