

## §15. Adjustments



... under the boss of his shield, he smote with his spear on the navel;  
Down he fell in the dust, and clutched at the ground with his fingers.

These he left lying, and Hippasus' son with his javelin he wounded,  
 – *Iliad 11:424-426 (Aristeia of Odysseus)*

In agreement with many, we find that the Menis was formed at a time when the 24-letter alphabet was known. We further posit 24 books as the original form of the Menis. The Iliad has that form now, but there are reasons (noted in previous chapters) for regarding three of those books as post-Menis additions. We should then have  $24 + 3 = 27$  books, *but we don't*. What has happened?

One possibility is that two original books were pushed together to make a long single book – not once, but three times. This device of pushing together is seen in many ancient texts, to keep an original count against late additions.

- The Sündž Art of War had 12 chapters. In presenting that text to the ruler, the presentation letter (giving some general maxims, and assuring the ruler that the military will always be subject to civil authority) was added as a first chapter. To save the number twelve, two earlier chapters, on maneuvering in difficult terrain, were pushed together. To this day, Sündž 9 is twice as long as the average, and a reader will find that halfway through, it starts again to list types of difficult terrain, but not the same ones as in the previous text.

*Much later, a chapter on spying was added at the end, and this time, no adjustment was made. Our present text thus has 13 chapters.*

- The Shř Jì was planned by Sžmă Tán to have  $60 + 60 = 120$  chapters. Then the Emperor enfeoffed some of his sons, creating a need for a new Hereditary House chapter. The original total was preserved by pushing together the previous Gwăn and Tsài chapters as our present Shř Jì 35.

*Tán's son Sžmă Chyěn added ten new chapters to the Biographies series. No adjustment was made, and our present Shř Jì thus has 130 chapters.*

- The Psalter had stabilized at a canonical form of 150 psalms. Then it was desired to add four psalms composed in response to the crisis of 000, when Antiochus IV Epiphanes defiled the Temple by setting up an altar to Zeus and sacrificing unclean animals on it. Room was made for those four psalms by pushing together previous psalms – differently in the text that lies behind our Septuagint, and in the later Masoretic version.<sup>1</sup>

Has something like this happened in the Iliad, to preserve its original 24 books?

<sup>1</sup>For details, see Brooks **Psalms 114-116**.

We think this is the answer. To preserve it as a possibility, we need to find three long chapters which can be divided into two narratively plausible books.

First, what are the candidates? Some long books have already been reduced, by removing interpolations, into modules performable in less than 60 minutes. Our table of book lengths as so far **modified**, omitting the added chapters, is:

01 <b>553</b>	05 <b>588</b>	09 <b>502</b>	13 837	17 761	21 611
02 <b>484</b>	06 529		14 522	18 609	22 515
03 461	07 482	11 848	15 746	19 424	
04 <b>506</b>	08 565	12 471	16 867	20 503	

Only three (11, 13, 16) are long enough to yield two segments of at least 400 lines when divided. The others (15 and 17) must be otherwise dealt with.<sup>2</sup>

Second, what do we expect of the join, when two consecutive books are pushed together? Our model for this is the separate books 20-21, the only two consecutive Iliad books which have a Low D value ( $D = 0.45$ ). If these were joined as one, the transition at the point of juncture would look like this:

. . . under the boss of his shield, he smote with his spear on the navel;

Down he fell in the dust, and clutched at the ground with his fingers.

These he left lying, and Hippasus' son with his javelin he wounded, . . .

That is, *the end of any complete paragraph* can serve as the transition point. The paragraphs can even be parts of the same narrative, as is the case here.

### Iliad 11

This is a clean chapter, with no obvious interpolations.<sup>3</sup> Its middle comes somewhere in the aristeia of Odysseus. It would be nice to put Odysseus on one side of the division line, but this cannot be done. Of several arguable division points, we like the one at the end of the minor slayings, when Odysseus meets a pair of brothers who, as he himself says to them, will end his killing spree. The point of juncture was given at the head of this chapter. Here it is again:

. . . under the boss of his shield, he smote with his spear on the navel;

Down he fell in the dust, and clutched at the ground with his fingers.

These he left lying, and Hippasus' son with his javelin he wounded . . .

Dividing Iliad 11 at that point would give us 11a (425 lines, 43 minutes) and 11b ( $848 - 425 = 423$  lines, 42 minutes). The thing is at least possible.

It is natural to ask, thinking of Id 20-21, how stylistically similar are these proposed narratively consecutive books? The answer is,  $D = 0.00$ .

[Comment]

<sup>2</sup>This we attempt to do in §21 and §22, below.

<sup>3</sup>Leaf **Companion** 201, "From this point the narrative flows on without break or serious difficulty through the book, and the story of the "Wrath" is developed with the splendid vigor and dramatic speed which are characteristic of the work."

## Iliad 13

This is a slightly shorter book of 837 lines (84 minutes).<sup>4</sup> The halfway point would come between the triumph of Deiphobos over Hypsenor and the return of Idomeneus. Specifically, at Id 13:422-424, we would have

. . . under the boss of his shield, he smote with his spear on the navel;

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These he left lying, and Hippasus' son with his javelin he wounded . . .

The resulting books would be 13a (423 lines, 42 minutes) and 13b (837 - 423 = 414 lines, 41 minutes). The stylistic similarity between them is  $D = 0.00$ . [Comment]

## Iliad 16

The present Id 16 has 867 lines (87 minutes). Its exact midpoint would be at line 433, the approaching death of the Trojan warrior Sarpedon. At 419, Sarpedon appeals to his Lycians to enter the fight; he himself goes to meet Patroclus. At 431, the gods argue whether to let him die. At 452, we rejoin the fight, and Patroclus kills Idomeneus. Any of these three is a possible candidate. Of them, the best break (if not the one that divides the book most evenly) is the one reintroducing Sarpedon at 419. That gives 16a (419 lines, 42 minutes) and 16b (448 lines, 45 minutes). The  $D$  value for the two is 0.00 (Comment).

If the other long books (15 and 17) can be brought within our suggested performance module (about 50 minutes), our proposal is technically possible

## Retrospect

Assuming that *can* be done, just look at what we would have. The Odyssey poet has been praised for the smooth way her material lies, in 4-book groups, on the 24-book form. By comparison, Homer comes across as a literary clunk. But the 24 books of *our proposed original Menis* arrange themselves thus:

01. <b>The Quarrel</b>	09. <b>Offer to Achilles</b>	16a <b>Patroclus</b> enters war
02. First fighting	11a. Indecisive fighting	16b Patroclus kills Idomeneus
03. Paris	11b. Odysseus leaves	17. Patroclus' body saved
04. Paris	12. Hector breaks through	18. Achilles' new armor
05 Diomedes	13a. Trojans reach wall	19. <b>Achilles</b> enters
06 Hector	13b. Idomeneus returns	20. <b>Achilles</b> fights
07 Hector	14. Greeks succeed	21. <b>Achilles</b> fights
08 <b>Zeus intervenes</b>	15. <b>Hector</b> reaches ships	22. <b>Achilles</b> kills <b>Hector</b>

Maybe, after all, Homer is *not* such a clunk. Maybe she got it from him.

<sup>4</sup>Leaf 224, "We now come to the great retardation in the plot of the Iliad. . . From the beginning of xiii till we come again on the story of the "Menis" near the end of xv, the action does not advance; every step gained by either side is exactly counterbalanced by a corresponding success on the other . . . Such is Homer's artistry: action must be indecisive until the arrival of Achilles on the scene. The story is waiting for its hero.