



A Companion to The Iliad (Phoenix Books)

Malcolm M. Willcock

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Those who are able to read Homer in Greek have ample recourse to commentaries, but the vast majority who read the *Iliad* in translation have not been so well served—the many available translations contain few, if any, notes. For these readers, Malcolm M. Willcock provides a line-by-line commentary that explains the many factual details, mythological allusions, and Homeric conventions that a student or general reader could not be expected to bring to an initial encounter with the *Iliad*.

The notes, which always relate to particular lines in the text, have as their prime aim the simple, factual explanation of things the inexperienced reader would be unlikely to have at his or her command (What is a hecatomb? Who is Atreus' son?). Second, they enhance an appreciation of the *Iliad* by illuminating epic style, Homer's methods of composition, the structure of the work, and the characterization of the major heroes. The "Homeric Question," concerning the origin and authorship of the *Iliad*, is also discussed.

Professor Willcock's commentary is based on Richmond Lattimore's translation—regarded by many as the outstanding translation of the present generation—but it may be used profitably with other versions as well. This clearly written commentary, which includes an excellent select bibliography, will make one of the touchstones of Western literature accessible to a wider audience.

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