



# The Making of the Odyssey

*M. L. West*

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## **The Making of the Odyssey** M. L. West

The poet of the Odyssey was a seriously flawed genius. He had a wonderfully inventive imagination, a gift for pictorial detail and for introducing naturalistic elements into epic dialogue, and a grand architectural plan for the poem. He was also a slapdash artist, often copying verses from the Iliad or from himself without close attention to their suitability. With various possible ways of telling the story bubbling up in his mind, he creates a narrative marked by constant inconsistency of detail. He is a fluent composer who delights in prolonging his tale with subsidiary episodes, yet his deployment of the epic language is often inept and sometimes simply unintelligible.

The Making of the Odyssey is a penetrating study of the background, composition, and artistry of the Homeric Odyssey. Martin West places the poem in its late seventh-century context in relation to the Iliad and other poetry of the time. He also investigates the traditions that lie behind it: the origins of the figure of Odysseus, and folk tales such as those of the One-eyed Ogre and the Husband's Return.

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