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Celebrating Homer's Landscapes: Troy and Ithaca Revisited

J. V. Luce

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In this text, an authority on Homeric texts takes us on a tour of the main localities that Homer paints in his "Iliad" and "Odyssey". Providing numerous photographs of the terrain and quoting liberally from the two epics, J.V. Luce argues that Homer's descriptions of the ancient landscape, far from being poetic fantasies, are accurate in every detail. Luce surveys what Homer tells us about the environs of Troy and Ithaca, applying the developing science of narratology to Homeric depiction of landscape. He also incorporates information about Troy that has been obtained in the past two decades, in particular geophysical information about the alluviation of the Trojan plain and archaeological data about Troy that reveals that the fortified area of the city was ten times as large as previously supposed. Tracing the ebb and flow of the battle as described in the "Iliad", Luce shows how Homer's account is consistent with this picture of the plain. He also demonstrates that the topography of Ithaca is sketched with such accuracy that Homer must have had firsthand knowledge of the terrain. Luce's book offers a contribution for specialists and a companion for readers of Homer or visitors to the ancient sites.

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