

Cold Calls: the penultimate instalment of Logue's Homer

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In 2005, Christopher Logue published *Cold Calls*. It announced itself on its dust jacket as “the fifth and penultimate instalment of Logue's Homer”. But Logue died in 2011, before a sixth volume appeared. In the absence of a posthumous publication as yet (April 2014), it seems that the volume intended to be penultimate may end up being the last.¹

The purpose of this essay is three-fold. Firstly, I want to give a descriptive account of *Cold Calls* in its own right. This will be the first (to my knowledge) since the initial reviews. In this section, also, I want to try to locate it against the Homeric source text, as far as this is possible. Secondly, I want to read it against the distinctive stylistic features which colour the previous instalments of Logue's Homer. Is the work consistent over time, or does it shift significantly? Thirdly, I want to signal some of the wider issues to which it gives rise, as a basis for further explorations of Logue's Homer.

One question I will *not* be addressing in this essay is whether Logue's Homer counts as translation. Logue does not claim that it does. In an interview in the *Paris Review* in 1997 he said:

“... when talking about *War Music* and *Kings* to myself, I call them my ‘Homer poems’. But in public I call them ‘an account’, a word I chose because it has a neutral, police-file air to it” (Guppy, 253)

To put down my own marker on this issue: this question seems to me sterile and an obstacle to our appreciation of the work. Part of my interest in Logue's Homer is that it exposes the weaknesses and inadequacies of the efforts to define ‘translation’. As I hope to show in this essay, there are other ways of reading it.

I

Following the pattern of Logue's earlier works, *Cold Calls* comes in three sections, pp. 3 – 20, 21 – 33, and 35 – 44. They are roughly equal in length: although the first section takes up 17 pages as against 12 and 9 for the second and third sections respectively, it also features more typographical gaps as it has more frequent scene changes than the other two.

The first two sections comprise material which is based on incidents in *Iliad* 5 and 8, though in no particular order. In the earliest published sections of Logue's Homer it is possible to locate his text quite closely against the Homeric text over extended stretches. Writing in 1962 about the *Patrokleia*, Carne-Ross divides book 16 of the *Iliad* into four main sections and then says “Logue retains this design, and within each section substantially follows the sequence of incident and episode, here and there transposing, adding and cutting” (Carne Ross, 29). Having carried out a similar analysis myself of other early works, I can confirm that the description Carne-Ross gives of Logue's approach works for the early, anthologised version of the fight with the river Scamander² and for *Pax* (1967) as well as for *Patrokleia*. *GBH* (1981) is the first instalment of Logue's Homer to which Carne-Ross's description cannot be applied; and by the time we reach *Cold Calls*, textual alignment of this kind is long gone.

The first two sections feature great waves of fighting, with the Greek army pressing close to the Trojan walls, and then the Trojan army, with the blessing of Zeus, besieging the Greek fleet. Although most of the main heroes of the *Iliad* make an appearance, the main protagonists are Diomedes and Hector. There is action on Olympus, too, with Hera, Athena and Aphrodite seeking the support of Zeus for their sides, and then taking an active part in the fighting. In the second section the river Scamander is seduced by Aphrodite to intervene by flooding out the Greek army and then letting the Trojan army through. This section ends at a point shortly before the end of Book 8, with an oration by Hector to his army at the end of the day's fighting equivalent to 8.497-541.

I have not attempted a more detailed account of the fighting because, frankly, Logue's account is confusing. In part, this is because of his device of using names for his characters of his own devising – Quinamid, Lutie and Chylaborak from the first four pages alone. It is usually, though not always, clear which side they are on, but the effect is to reduce familiarity and orientation. Similarly, in the following passage, without visibly changing subject, Logue appears to move from apostrophising Diomedes ("... my Diomed,/You ...") to apostrophising Hector ("He kept his eyes on you ..." -- the "Prince God loves" in Logue is shorthand for Hector):

While everywhere, my Diomed,

You beat your fellow Greeks
Back down the long incline that leads to the Scamander's ford,
Surely as when
Lit from the dark part of the sky by sudden beams,
A bitter wind
Detonates line by line of waves against the shore.

No mind. Even as Teucer backed away
He kept his eyes on you, hearing you roar:
'You feel the stress? You feel the fear?
Behold your enemy Greece! the Prince God loves! ... [pp.16-17]

The first part of this appears to be based on material from *Iliad* 5, line 84-94. The second part leads on to the death of Hector's trumpeter at the hands of Teucer, and thus can be set against a similar scene involving the death of Hector's charioteer at the hands of Teucer at *Iliad* 8, 309-316.

Another moment of de-familiarisation, at least to the reader who knows the Greek original, comes from the inversion of a scene involving Nestor and Diomedes. In Homer's account Nestor is in trouble. A horse on his chariot has reared and has thrown the others into confusion; Nestor is trying to set it free, but Hector is bearing down on him. Diomedes comes to his rescue and transfers Nestor into his own chariot. Logue inverts both the scene and the compliment:

... certainly
Queen Hera's human, Diomed,
Would stand and die, except:
'Arms up, young king –' Nestor, full tilt,
Reins round his tummy, leaning out ' – and
Jump ... ' wrists locked ' ... You young are just ...'
Swinging him up onto the plate '... too much.' [p.18]

I take this confusion and de-familiarisation to be an intentional comment on the nature of warfare. In another passage in these sections, Aphrodite poisons Diomedes and turns him into a robotic killer: 'He killed and killed and killed, Greek, Trojan, Greek./Lord/less, shame/fame, both gone' [p.16, perhaps prompted by *Iliad* 5.85-6]. Logue's point seems to be that in such extreme fighting – 'All time experts in hand-to-hand action – /Fricourt, Okinawa, Stalingrad West --/Could not believe the battle would gain.' [p.10] – violence is indiscriminate and the identity of killer and killed is irrelevant.

The third part of *Cold Calls* is recognisably based on the first part of Book 9 of the *Iliad*. It starts in the Greek camp. Agamemnon is feeble in the face of imminent defeat. Diomedes offers some pithy advice – 'King Agamemnon of Mycenae,/ God called, God raised, God recognised,/You are a piece of shit' [p.35]. Nestor suggests that Agamemnon should appease Achilles, and Agamemnon then itemises the reparations he is prepared to offer for the purpose. The scene then switches to Achilles' tent. The Greek embassy arrives and offers the reparations. But Achilles refuses them. Although there is no paratextual evidence to explain the book's title 'Cold Calls', it is possible that it derives from this section: the

embassy is a kind of 'cold call', like doorstep salesman or Jehovah's Witnesses; and like most cold calls, it is unsuccessful.

Although Logue seems to be working close to the grain of Homer in this section—or, at least, closer to the grain than in the other two sections – there are some differences. The personnel of Logue's embassy comprises Ajax and Nestor only. Phoenix does not feature, which means that Logue does not replicate the lengthy set piece speech Phoenix makes about Meleager. Also, Odysseus does not feature; so there is no equivalent of the scene at the end of book 9 where he reports back on the failure of the embassy. Although, again, there is no paratextual evidence to explain these differences, their effect is to make the embassy scene much briefer and more focused than in the Homeric original.

This part of *Cold Calls* is almost entirely in the form of set piece speeches, and three of them are especially noteworthy.

The speech in which Agamemnon itemises the reparations he is prepared to offer Achilles is disaggregated into six separate sections. In them, egged on firstly by silence and then by the Greek army, he successively ups his own offer, moving from Briseis and a suit of Corfiot armour at the start to the whole of the Eastern Peloponnese by the end. As he does so, his language grows ever more lavish:

“...A'kimi'kúriex,
My summer palace by the Argive sea,
Its lawns, its terraces, its terraces in whose depths
Larks dive above a field of waving lilies
And fishscale-breakers shatter on blue rocks.” [p.38]

As the bidding process gathers momentum, it is accompanied by a commentary – “Oh, very well then: ...”; “Plus -- /Though it may well reduce your King to destitution ...”; and between the fifth and sixth iterations ‘Lord Ajax almost has to hold him up’. It is a dramatic tour de force.

The speech in which Achilles rejects the reparations and spurns the embassy is, by contrast, almost completely flat. Bainbridge describes it as “overwhelming in its icy clarity and mercilessness” (2005). It seems to me to be least Logue-like section in the whole of Logue's Homer – or, at least, the five volumes we have of it. The reply spreads over more than three sides. There are no ebbs and flows in the argument or the texture over this lengthy period. Instead the rhythm and dynamic are clipped and monotonous – at one point nine successive lines of poetry end with full stops. The language is almost entirely devoid of colour or ostentation. It features several different types of prosy clichés: “My record is: 10 coastal and 10 inland cities/Burnt to the ground”³; “I will not fight for him./ He aims to personalise my loss”; “You have disintegrated as a fighting force”.

“But you have not come here as friends.
And you have not come of your own accord.
You came because your king told you to come.
You came because I am his last resort.
And, incidentally, your last resort.” [p.42]

And so on, without let up. Logue's aim seems to be to remove syntactical complexity, repetition and wordiness in the interests of clarity. The clarity of the diction mirrors the clarity of the position Achilles is taking in rejecting the embassy.

The third speech I want to discuss is the one with which *Cold Calls* ends. It is spoken by Ajax and runs, in its entirety,

“Lord, I was never so bethumped with words
Since first I called my father Dad.” [p.44]

The notes ascribe this to Shakespeare's *King John*, Act 2 scene 1, lines 466-7⁴. But there may also be another, playful allusion, this time to recent literary translation. The use of a dialect word "bethumped" and the reference to the speaker's father evoke the early poetry of Tony Harrison, as in the sonnet sequence *Continuous* (1981). If this is right, there may be a private joke in that Logue places this text in the mouth of Ajax, who has been one of the butts of his humour since some of his first writings⁵.

II

It is possible to offer a description of Logue's approach to his version of Homer which remains constant throughout the 50 years he worked on it. In an obituary in the *Independent* Ramsden says "Vivid incident, colour, linguistic assurance, energy and crispness are the keynotes": and it would be hard to argue against this list, at least as a starting-point.

But the academic writing about Logue has focussed more closely on a range of specific stylistic effects: and I want to examine his version of Homer at this more granular level to get a sense of whether it changes over time and if so in what ways.

The use of **typographical effects** which was a striking feature of the early versions fades away over time. The very early Logue, possibly under the influence of the poster poetry which was in vogue in the 1960s and 1970s⁶, used type for effect, notably italics for marking off similes or prayers, or variations in type size – so in the 1981 *War Music* the word 'Apollo' appears across a double page spread, almost as a warning to Patroclus shortly before his death. In *Cold Calls*, by contrast, there is a small amount of use of italics, mainly for short prayers (Diomedes, Lord Panda, Nestor and Achilles on pages 13, 15, 26 and 40 respectively). This follows the pattern of the more recent volumes, including its immediate predecessor *All Day Permanent Red*, though the italicised material is possibly shorter and more intermittent. And that is all that remains by way of this kind of visible effect.

But another typographical feature does survive. Greenwood has written: "The layout of [Logue's] poem is often likened to a script, with the very deliberate alternation of text and blank space controlling the pace at which the reader moves through the text, signalling performance." (2009: 508). Elsewhere Greenwood has said: "Review discussions are quick to remind readers that Logue has written screenplays himself, and to compare the layout of the text on the page to a screenplay." (2007: 161-2). In *Cold Calls*, this effect is very much in evidence. In typographical terms the main signal is a standard device: the initial letter of each scene within the sections is printed in twice the size of the rest of the text, probably to distinguish the start of the scene from the start of the paragraphs within it. Also, it is possible to see white space as a marker, as for example where it isolates the silences in Agamemnon's speech about reparations (I will return to this shortly) – by contrast there is very little white space in the long speech by Achilles at the end of the volume.

The main subject of Greenwood's 2009 essay is Logue's use of **auditory effects**. She focuses on two main areas:

(a) The first is the grounding of Logue's Homer in the potential of poetry to function as public performance. This is where the enterprise started – the very first versions were written for performance on radio. As Greenwood puts it, "Logue's Homer has a rich performance history, ranging across radio, CD, and stage. ... As with Homeric epic, so with Logue, the poet's verbal art cannot be disentangled from performance" (p. 508). There is nothing to suggest that, in this respect at least, *Cold Calls* is conceived differently from the earlier works. But this makes the long speech by Achilles in the third section even more striking. Read aloud at a reasonably steady pace, this lasts around four minutes. That is a long time by the standards of modern radio drama. Over all this time there is little variation of pace or dynamic or texture. This speech departs from Logue's previous norms both on the page and when set against his normal performative mode.

(b) Greenwood also points to an aural dimension within Logue's poetry: "sense follows sound throughout Logue's Homer" (p.506). One of her main examples is drawn from *Cold Calls* – in fact it is one of the few slightly wordy moments in Achilles' speech. In railing

against Agamemnon Achilles says: "I did not/ Applaud his sticky fingers on my she's meek flesh" (p. 43). Greenwood sees this in terms of onomatopoeia: "The sound effects in this line make the image of Agamemnon pawing Briseis tangible, as the consonance of "sticky" and "meek," and of "she" and "flesh," suggest the friction of contact. Phonetically, the effort of articulating this line (the plosive phonemes in "applaud" at the beginning of the line, and the fricative phonemes s and h) re-creates the tension between the two men and Achilles' distaste at envisaging Agamemnon with Briseis" (p.506).

I want to expand Greenwood's interest in auditory effect in two directions.

Firstly, although Logue's battle scenes are undoubtedly very noisy with human shouting and groaning, he also features the actual music of his "war music". So in *All Day Permanent Red* we have as accompaniment to the advancing Trojan infantry "Flutes !/Flutes !/Screeching above the grave percussion of their feet" (p.12) or "Raising their ox-horns to their lips/The trio sent a long deep even note/Over that dreadful world" (p.29). But there are none of these effects in *Cold Calls*. This may fit in with a changed poetic where, as with Achilles' speech, clarity takes priority over colourful but extraneous effect.

Secondly, in such a noisy and/or musical environment, silence becomes a significant device. In *Cold Calls*, Logue uses it specifically to punctuate the pauses in Agamemnon's speech in the final section about reparations. This is the second of the six iterations:

Silence.

The sea.

Its whispering.

'To which I add: a set of shields.

Posy, standard, ceremonial.

The last, cut from the hide of a one ton Lesbian bull.'

Silence.

The sea. (p.37)

The effects make the lavishness of Agamemnon's speech stand out even more prominently.

It has been a staple observation in both the academic and other writings on Logue that his Homer makes extensive use of **visual stylistics**, and especially effects drawn from cinema. In an interview in the *Observer* in 2006, Hoggard cites Logue as saying: "Cinema has always had a very powerful effect on me. I find that its way of handling narrative, the technical language of scriptwriting, is a very good way of keeping the events going forward." Or again, a comment in an interview with *Oxford Poetry* makes this area slightly more specific: "There is another strength to which I aspire. The warm, plain directness of feeling that John Ford invented in his greatest movies." (the interview is referenced under Leith in the bibliography). There is an illuminating discussion of this in Greenwood's 2007 essay, where she uses what she calls "film syntax" as a means for "clarifying aspects of the techniques and perspectives of narration" (2007: 163) both in Logue and in the *Iliad* itself.

Much of this is intact in *Cold Calls*. So, for example, as a specific visual and filmic feature, *Cold Calls* shares with its readers some very detailed visualisations of the topography around Troy which are in their way wide lens scanning shots. Towards the start of the first section, we find the following description:

See,
Far off,
Masts behind the half-built palisade.
Then
Nearer yourselves

Scamánder's ford
 From which the land ascends
 Then merges with the centre of the plain –
 The tower (a ruin) its highest point. (p.4)

This is an effect which is consistent throughout Logue's work. He has always shown a sense of topography and geography. In the consolidated *War Music*, the preamble/proem, which appears to have been written specifically for the volume, begins:

Two limestone plates support the Aegean world.
 The greater Anatolian still lies flat,
 But half an aeon since, through silent eyes:
 'Ave !
 God watched the counterplate subside, until
 Only its top and mountain tops remained
 Above His brother, Lord Poseidon's, sea:
 'And that, I shall call Greece. And those,
 Her Archipelago,' said He. (p.3)

In a not dissimilar vein, *All Day Permanent Red* finishes with a panning shot from the Trojan Plain across Europe to "the Islands of the West", i.e. Britain (p.50-1). There is no change here: the reader remains encouraged to join Logue in visualising the location in which the action is taking place.

But one filmic device seems to have gone. In earlier volumes, Logue occasionally includes short imperatives which read as orders to his cameraman. In *All Day Permanent Red*, for example, he writes "Go there" (p.14) and "Go left along the ridge" (p.38). But this particular effect has disappeared from *Cold Calls*. If the text, as I suggested earlier, resembles a film script, the embellishments on it are fewer than previously.

In writing about Logue in 1998 I used the term '**anachronism**' or 'time travelling collage' to describe the effect where Logue puts post-Homeric references or apparatus into his Homeric world. In a more recent article, Taplin prefers the phrase "time-tension"; and he comments that "'anachronism' is not the proper word" (2007: 182). His point is that Logue's Homer straddles different time zones, without being fixed in a specific time, so the concept of anachronism does not apply: and this seems to me to be valid.

Cold Calls is as full of time tensions as the earlier volumes. On the first page alone, in the course of 17 lines a taxi and Primrose Hill make an appearance (p.3). Some examples are filmic: at the start of section 3 Agamemnon and his leading generals are described as "dark glasses in parked cars" (p.35). An especially striking example takes the form of a narrative digression: after Nyro, "the handsomest of all the Greeks, save A." (p.11), has been killed, we cut to his mother mourning his death (of which more later) and then we cut again:

'I saw her running round.
 I took the photograph.
 It summed the situation up.
 He was her son.
 They put it out in colour. Right?
 My picture went round the world.' (p.12)

As in the earlier volumes, time-tensions cluster around the gods. As we have seen earlier, Aphrodite injects Diomedes with poison: it is specifically baby cobra poison, and at the time she injects him she is 'dressed/In grey silk lounge pyjamas piped with gold/And snakeskin flip-flops' [p.15]. Later she complains to Zeus about an injury inflicted on her by Diomedes in the following terms: "Human strikes god! Communism! The end of everything!" (p.27). Shortly afterwards she describes Hera to Zeus as "Your blubber-bummed wife with her gobstopper nipples" (p.27).

So this too is an area where Logue's poetic approach remains unchanged.

Taplin also provides a succinct but rich account of Logue's use of **simile** (2007: 181-4). In it he says that *All Day Permanent Red*, the work immediately preceding *Cold Calls*, is "thickly set with similes". Also, "... generally they continue and develop the characteristics of the earlier volumes" (183). For Taplin, those characteristics are: "the evocation of modern technology with a pointed 'time-tension'; "the 'buttonholing' use of the second person"; and "the appeal to the exotic non-European setting", though this is "less ubiquitous" (all 182). For Greenwood, Logue's similes "mark a change of pause or lull in the narrative ... a pause for breath that allows the listener to gather their senses and to punctuate the narrative with a vivid interlude" (508).

Cold Calls has only four similes which are longer than one line, and even then not by much:

See an imperial pig harassed by dogs.
How, like a masterchef his crêpes,
He tosses them; then as they paddle back
Eviscerates, and flips them back again.
Likewise Chylábborak the Greeks who rushed. (p.7)

(of Diomedes as killing machine attacking his fellow Greeks)
Surely as when
Lit from the dark part of the sky by sudden beams,
A bitter wind
Detonates line by line of waves against the shore. (pp16/17)

Recall those sequences
Where horsemen ride out of the trees and down into a stream
Somewhere in Kansas or Missouri, say.
So – save they were thousands, mostly on foot – the Greeks
Into Scamánder's ford. (p.23)

Then, with a mighty wall of sound,
As if a slope of stones
Rolled down into a lake of broken glass
We Trojans ran at them. (pp.29/30)

These just about meet the characteristics outlined by Taplin. I am not sure, though, that they meet Greenwood's, partly for reasons of length, partly because their inner content reflects the surrounding violence without being long enough to offer an abatement of it.

There are also some one line similes (e.g. p.8, 11, 15, 17, 24). In addition to being small-scale textually, they are all based on familiar objects. There is nothing exotic or disruptive about them.

In terms of the inner movement of *Cold Calls*, these similes appear at roughly even intervals through the first two sections. Possibly this serves to gesture to the reader, especially to one who is familiar with the earlier volumes, about the potentiality of simile without actually engaging in it to any great extent. But they have more or less disappeared by the third section. Along with the lengthy speech by Achilles, this adds to the feeling that this section is unusual within Logue's work. Again, clarity is given priority over effect and texture.

In describing the key features of Logue's similes, Taplin used the term "buttonholing" to describe what I have elsewhere termed **complicity** – Logue's direct engagement of the reader in his vision of Troy through instructions and imperatives. Thus on the first page of *All Day Permanent Red*, the reader is instructed: "Go back an hour./See what the Mousegod saw." (p.3) But even in *All Day Permanent Red*, Logue's use of the device is more sparing than in the earlier volumes: and he seems to me to make even less use of it in *Cold Calls*. This is in part because the device is entwined with some of the other effects I have touched on in this section, of which Logue has also made less use – the reduction in directorial orders where Logue is the director and the reader the cameraman, the reduction in the scale and

frequency of the similes. This evidence suggests that there may be a change of approach going on, both above and below the surface of the narrative.

III

So what would have happened next? *Cold Calls* is “the fifth and penultimate instalment of Logue’s Homer”: what might the sixth and last instalment have looked like?

In this essay I have tried to give an account of *Cold Calls* mainly in terms of Logue’s usage of what might be termed his trademark features. To summarise so far: *Cold Calls* is all recognisably Logue. Cumulatively it still could only be Logue. But there are tangible changes in the way he uses some of his trademark features; and in at least some areas, it is less Logue than the earlier volumes. The third section in particular, with its emphasis on clarity, is tantalising in being so very different from what has come before. Was this a one-off, a deliberate artistic device for a particular purpose, or was it a first example of a significant approach in technique which might have been taken further in a sixth and last volume?

This groundwork may prove useful as a basis for other, deeper analyses both of *Cold Calls* and of Logue’s Homer as a whole.

So, for example, there is scope for more attention to what Logue is writing about. His choices about the passages of the *Iliad* he has covered may also be his priorities. I would want to look in particular at his handling of the themes of violence and gender, which seem to me to dominate his reading of Homer. Given that he is not trying to produce a translation, these themes can be taken as illustrating his own approach and artistic strategy, rather than serving as a commentary on Homer.

Violence has always been an inescapable feature of Logue’s Homer, with its own rich vocabulary and almost comic book visualisation⁷. My sense is that the amount of it has grown in the more recent instalments. There are some notably gory passages in the first two sections of *Cold Calls*:

His head was opened, egglike, at the back,
Mucked with thick blood, blood trickling from his mouth. [p.17]

Then he punched Hoti in the face.
Then punched him in the face again.
And then again. And when he fell
King Agamemnon kicked him in the groin.
Kicking him in the groin with so much force
It took a step to follow up each kick.
Then pulled him up,
Then dragged him by his hair
This way and that,
Then left him, calling:
‘Finish him off.’
And someone did. [p.29]

At one point Diomedes is described as “brimming with homicidal joy” (p.14), a phrase which could serve as a summary for the first two sections of *Cold Calls*.

As a reader I find such writing troubling. As a reviewer it seems to me to open up at least two paths for further discussion: whether Logue’s personal history as a pacifist is undercut or even contradicted by his accounts of violence in his Homer; and whether we as readers should take this personal history into account in reading and reacting to his text. There is enough material on pacifism, warfare and violence in the various interviews Logue has given over the years and in the obituaries to sustain an exploration of this kind. On an initial reading, this evidence shows strong internal tensions on these issues in Logue himself, of a kind which can be traced throughout his poetry, from the earliest publications right through to *Cold Calls*. I hope to return to this in a future essay.

On the theme of gender, there can be little doubt that his descriptions of the goddesses coarsen over time. So in *Cold Calls*, they are described in terms of tacky, WAG-style fashion, as we have seen from the earlier description of Aphrodite entering battle or her description of Hera which I quoted earlier. Among the mortals, Briseis, the slave girl over whom Achilles and Agamemnon argue, has become a neutral, indeclinable "she", whether in the accusative case, as in "After he took my she", or in the genitive case, as in "... his sticky fingers on my she's meek flesh" (p.42 and 43). Beyond the poetry itself, the main source in which to locate a fuller discussion of Logue's approach to gender is in his autobiography.

But the area which might sustain the most interesting further analysis is the overall project. What does its trajectory look like? Does its end remember its beginning? There are three overlapping points I want to outline here, as a basis for further exploration.

Firstly, the publication history of Logue's Homer comes in two halves. The first lasts from 1959 to 1999. It is slow and halting, with long gaps between the major publications and also much publication in journals. Revision of existing work takes place alongside publication of new work. But this changes round the turn of the new millennium. The version of *War Music* in 2001 in effect consolidates much of the previous work into a single volume, and constitutes the first three instalments of the "official" version. It is followed in quick succession by *All Day Permanent Red* in 2003 and *Cold Calls* in 2005. And there it stopped.

In my discussion of the changes in *Cold Calls*, I have tried to assess whether they are to be seen as the outcome of gradual evolution over time or whether there is sudden change between *Cold Calls* and the earlier works. My broader hypothesis would be that the change in approach to alignment with the Greek text happened early but that most of the other changes I have described are a feature of the last two volumes – that there is less change between the 1959 beginnings and the 2001 consolidated *War Music* than there is between the 2001 consolidated *War Music* and *Cold Calls* only four or five years later. I have also suggested that in the speech by Achilles in the third section of *Cold Calls* Logue aspires to a clarity which is a distinct shift from his earlier poetic approach and may even have gone on to mark a new departure.

Secondly, it seems to me that Logue's self-consciousness about the significance of his Homer project grew over time. Perhaps this is to do with the publication of his *Selected Poems* (1996), his autobiography *Prince Charming* (1999) and the consolidated *War Music* (2001), all of them formal milestones in a career. For all the subversive radicalism described in *Prince Charming*, Logue received a Civil List pension in 2002 and a CBE in 2007. Perhaps his idea of the project changed over time too. The early publications seemed at the time deliberately fragmentary, in the manner of Modernist antecedents such as Pound and Bunting. By contrast, the phrase "fifth and penultimate instalment" implies a direction of travel towards an imminent completion: though without evidence from correspondence or other sources of this kind, it is not possible to say whether the completion derives from Logue's sense of his own mortality or whether he felt he was close to producing a complete work and/or to saying all he had to say.

Thirdly, his links with classical scholars seem to weaken over time. The whole enterprise started on a suggestion by Donald Carne-Ross, the scholar and broadcaster, who was a guide for and powerful influence on the earlier volumes. But the acknowledgements to *Kings* (1991) include one which reads "And last, though he is not speaking to me at the moment (and is therefore responsible for all that is wrong with what follows) Professor Donald Carne-Ross of Boston University". Although the acknowledgements in the consolidated *War Music* include not only Carne Ross but also scholars such as Charles Rowan Beye and Jasper Griffin, they do not feature in the acknowledgements for *All Day Permanent Red* and *Cold Calls*.

A final thought. Even though it is incomplete, Logue's Homer provides a strong base for thinking about the idea of a poet and the poetic career. It was produced over a period of almost fifty years; arguably, it is the only work of substance Logue produced. This gives us an exceptionally rich source to explore movement over time in the poetry against the poet's

sense of self. In his book *The Life of the Poet*, Lipking talks about "... the way that a poet comes into his own: in constant recoil from his earlier themes, in constant grasping toward the familiar ghost – that face like his but deeply lined – the future poet who has achieved his greatness" (p.10). On this account the developments and changes in textual effect and approaches to key themes in Logue's Homer which I have been discussing in this essay become part of a poetic whole – even if the final instalment never appears.

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¹ At a symposium in Bristol in November 2007, four years before Logue's death, his editor Craig Raine stated publicly that Logue had a plan for a last section of his Homer, which was to be on Hector's death (so presumably drawn, at least in part, from *Iliad* 22). At that time Logue was working on it "more slowly" because of illness. Comments in the obituaries and

other newspaper material published at the time of his death suggest that Logue had been encountering difficulties with his memory since about 2004.

² This is Logue's earliest Homer, and is quite closely drawn from book 21 of the *Iliad*. It has only appeared on radio and in anthology, in 1959 (radio version), 1965, 1970 and 1996.

³ Contrast for style a similar comment by Achilles in *Kings*: "Since I arrived, my Lord,/I have sent 20 lesser Ilian towns/Backwards into the smoke." (p.20)

⁴ The text in King John actually reads: 'Zounds, I was never so bethumped with words/Since I first call'd my brother's father dad'. (The speaker is Philip Faulconbridge, bastard son to Richard I.)

⁵ "Big Ajax is not one for thought./Monkeys and rats avoid his company." (*War Music* 1981, p.56)

⁶ In an obituary Logue wrote about his friend John Paul Getty Jnr, Logue recalls their first meeting: "... all over the bed in his hotel room were more books, gramophone records, the Time Literary Supplement and a roll of posters – posters were all the rage – among them one carrying a poem of mine. That was it. We were friends." (*Guardian* 20 April 2003). Internal evidence in the article dates this encounter back to 1955. Logue's obituary in the *Independent* states that he "invented" the poster-poem (Ramsden, *Independent*, 6 December 2011).

⁷ In the symposium referred to in footnote 1, Craig Raine commented that much of Logue's violence is done as hyperbole, slapstick, with comic strip effects in the style of the 'Tom and Jerry' cartoons.