CHAPTER

4

And they came back in disgrace…

Modern Troy is rich in tourist attractions. Those bored with studying ruins and constant looking on information stands and Korfmann's guidebook can still gain many unforgettable impressions by taking part in a fancy-dress show or climbing into the belly of a two-storied wooden horse. Almost nobody refuses the last amusement, though. Everyone would like to feel like a brave warrior ready to bring all the fury of his sword on the sleeping opponent.

Perhaps, the wooden horse is the most popular character of the Achaean Victoria. Even those who confuse Odysseus with Jason[1] know that this horse helped the Greeks to capture the unapproachable Troy. This is the elementary truth: the Sun rises in the East; the Volga falls into the Caspian Sea, Homer's *Iliad* glorifies the famous victory of the Hellenic weapon. However, nothing is as simple, is it?

---

[1] In the Crimean stores you can buy a movie about Balaclava, where "Odysseus and his Argonauts stayed on their way to Colchis."

Fig. 29. The wooden horse is a favourite attraction of visitors to the Trojan archaeological reserve.

Let's begin with the fact that the *Iliad* describes neither the capture, nor the destruction of Ilion. The poem ends with Hector's funeral. The coming victory of Greeks is mentioned only briefly and only in the sixth canto, where Hector shares his presentiment with his wife Andromacha:

> For of a surety know I this in heart and soul:
> the day shall come when sacred Ilios shall be laid low.
>
> *Iliad. VI. 448–449.*

In the twelfth canto, where Poseidon and Apollo decide to destroy a defensive wall the Achaeans have erected around the camp:

> And the city of Priam was sacked in the tenth year,
> and the Argives had gone back in their ships to their
> dear native land, then verily did Poseidon and Apollo

> take counsel to sweep away the wall, bringing against
> it the might of all the rivers that flow forth from
> the mountains of Ida to the sea.
>
> *Iliad. XII. 15–19.*

And indirectly in the fifteenth canto, where Zeus assures Hera:

> ...Until the Achaeans shall take steep Ilios through
> the counsels of Athene. But until that hour neither
> do I refrain my wrath, nor will I suffer any other
> of the immortals to bear aid to the Danaans here,
> until the desire of the son of Peleus be fulfilled.
>
> *Iliad. XV. 70–74.*

To prove that tragic fate of Ilion was predestined, they often refer to the soothsayer Calchas, explaining predictive signs of a dragon devouring sparrows:

> Even as this serpent devoured the sparrow's little ones
> and the mother with them—the eight, and the mother
> that bare them was the ninth—so shall we war there for
> so many years, but in the tenth shall we take
> the broad-wayed city.
>
> *Iliad. II. 326–329.*

and the episode of the *Iliad* where the lord of Olympus learns the outcome of the battle between the Greeks and Trojans, weighing applicable lots on the gold balance:

> Then verily the Father lifted on high his golden scales, and
> set therein two fates of grievous death, one for the horse-tam-
> ing Trojans, and one for the brazen-coated Achaeans; then
> he grasped the balance by the midst and raised it, and down

> sank the day of doom of the Achaeans. So the Achaeans' fates settled down upon the bounteous earth and those of the Trojans were raised aloft toward wide heaven.
>
> *Iliad. VIII. 69–74.*

However, in Homer's poems, many things happened "despite destiny", and one can hardly expect that events would go rights as weighed and measured.

> Outstanding Russian philosopher Alexei Losev paid attention to the fact that Homer had often used this expression and expressed an opinion that this formula "is reflection of a quite definite stage of human historical development, when he starts to lift his head proudly and does not prostrate in front of the destiny anymore, as he did before in the primitive times and when he was completely helpless"[1].

Another great poem by Homer—the *Odyssey*—about the long return of the war hero Odysseus, the son of Laertes, to his native Ithaca, tells about Greeks having won the victory over Ilion as about an accomplished fact. In the third canto, the elder King of Pylos Nestor tells Odysseus' son Telemachus, worried about his father's fate, about the events that immediately followed the fall of Troy:

> But when we had sacked the lofty city of Priam, and had gone away in our ships, and a god had scattered the Achaeans.
>
> *Odyssey. III. 130–131.*

---

[1] V. Ryabtsev, "Troy. Collapse of the myth?", *Technika—Molodezhi,* #8 (1998); p. 388.

As folklore requires it, Odysseus retold this episode to his loyal servant Eumaeus practically verbatim, and the "godlike swineherd" heeded him:

> There for nine years we sons of the Achaeans warred, and in the tenth we sacked the city of Priam, and set out for home in our ships, and a god scattered the Achaeans.
>
> *Odyssey. XIV. 240–242.*

In the eighth canto, Homer again returns to this subject. At the Games arranged by King Alcinous in honour of a stranger, who actually was Odysseus, the blind Homeric bard Demodocus sings about the military feats of the King of Ithaca.

> And he sang how the sons of the Achaeans poured forth from the horse and, leaving their hollow ambush, sacked the city....
>
> *Odyssey. VIII. 514–515.*

And finally, in the twenty-second canto, Athena, having put on Mentor's robes, reminds aged Odysseus indecisive of whether he should put a fight with Penelope's grooms about his past acts of bravery:

> Many men thou slewest in dread conflict, and by thy counsel was the broad-wayed city of Priam taken.
>
> *Odyssey. XXII. 229–230.*

The detailed story about events of the Trojan War is told in the poems of the so-called Trojan epic cycle. Only its fragments and a brief summary, included into The Anthology of Proclus and Bibliotheca (The Mythological Library) of Apollodorus remain till nowadays. These poems accurately embrace the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, not interfering with them,

which can be explained by Homer's indisputable authority and the ancient rhapsodies unwilling to multiply entities. Why should you sing something that someone has already sung better than you can?

The reasons for the war and its start are presented in the *Cyprian Songs*, named after their legendary author Stasin Cyprian[1]. Zeus decided to inflict this war, as he wished to protect the Earth against overpopulation. The poem describes The Judgment of Paris, his embassy to Lacedaemon and abduction of Helen, and the countless treasures of Menelaus in addition. Together with his brother, Menelaus planned a campaign against Troy.

An interesting thing is that according to the *Cyprian Songs* the Achaeans lost their way and started a war in Teuthrania (Mysia), having mistaken it for Ilion. However, under pressure of the Mysian troops, headed by Heracles's son Telephus, they had to recede. According to Apollodorus, "Telephus [...] armed the Mysians and chased the Hellenes until reaching their ships harbour"[2].

> Let's recall that the name of Mysian King Telephus, according to A. Volkov and N. Nepomnyashchy, corresponds to the Hittite name Telepinu. If this fact is considered along with the aforementioned war between the Hittite and the Assuva alliance, that might explain why ancient writers distinguished Asia Minor Teuthrania (Mysia) from Asia,

[1] Ancient tradition considered Stasin to be Homer's son in-law. According to Aelianus, Homer was rather poor and portioned his daughter with the poem *Cyprus*. (Claudius Aelianus, *Various History*, IX, 15.)

[2] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, Epitome, III, 17.

> which in their opinion was where all its neighbours resided. So, in *The Mysians* Sophocles says, "The whole country is called Asia, stranger, and the Mysians' community is called Mysia"[1].

Other sources also refer to the Greeks being smashed at Mysia. So, *The Catalogue of Women, or Ehoiai*, said to be written by Hesiod, says:

> Telephus turned back the hosts of the Achaeans in cooper armour which arrived one day on the black-sided vessels to the man parent solid earth...[2]

In the *Olympic songs*, Pindar explicitly affirms:

> ...Mighty Danaus's men was turned back by Telephus and thrown to the saline ship sides[3].

Strabo tells us the same: "Agamemnon with his fleet devastated Mysia, having mistaken it for the Trojan area, and came back in disgrace"[4].

The fact that later Pergamon was the main city of Teuthrania is of special interest. This is another name often used by Homer for this legendary city, apart from Ilion and Troy.

American historian Rhys Carpenter became interested why there were three different names for the same geographic ob-

---

[1] Sophocles, *Mysoi (Mysians)*, 396–397 (411–412).

[2] Hesiod, *Megalai Ehoiai (Catalogue of Women)*, 57 (165).

[3] Pindar, *Olympian*, IX, 73–74.

[4] Strabo, *Geography*, I, 17.

ject and found some parallels and suspicious coincidences in the history of the Mysian and Trojan Wars[1]:

1. In both cases, everything begins with meets on the Aulis Peninsula.
2. In both cases, they could not sail due to bad weather. In both cases, the soothsayer Calchas had to fortune-tell.
3. In both cases, upon landing, the local leader (in Teuthrania it was Telephus, and in Troy it was Hector) killed the Achaean hero.
4. Then, in both cases, the Achaeans devastated the surroundings.
5. In both cases, the battle happened in the river valley (in Teuthrania in the Caic River valley, and in the Troad, it occurred in the Scamandra River valley).
6. In both cases, initial success was followed by defeat, and the Achaeans had to run to their vessels.
7. In both cases, Patroclus tried to prevent defeat but was unsuccessful and got wounded in Tefrania; in the Troad, he was killed.
8. Out of revenge, "light-footed" Achilles attacked the enemy leader (Telephus here and Hector there) and pursued him, but didn't manage to catch him.
9. The runaway was stopped by a trick of the god assisting Achilles. In Teuthrania it was Dionysus, and in the Troad it was Athena.

---

[1] R. Carpenter, *Folk tale: Fiction and saga in the Homeric epics,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946).

10. In both cases, Achilles defeated the leader of the locals: he wounded Telephus badly, and he killed Hector.

11. In both cases, a storm broke the vessels down on their way back.

12. After the campaign was finished, in both cases a person of royal lineage from the enemy's camp appeared in Argolida at Agamemnon's. In the first case, it was Telephus; in the second case, it was Cassandra, the daughter of Priam.

"Carpenter rather logically concluded that these rather were two versions of the same story, not two different stories. Not having caught it, but having seen actions of the same heroes in different lands, the ancient author of *Cypriot Songs* decided that these were two different episodes of the Trojan War and placed them one after one, the Trojan one before the Teutranic one (as some of the heroes were killed in Troy), and he found a reasonable explanation saying they had got lost on their way"[1].

Thereby, according to Carpenter, the Trojan War was a full-fledged twin of the war in Teuthrania, which according to ancient sources had ended with shameful flight of Greeks. Could it have happened that during a historically insignificant period in two absolutely identical wars had occurred the same area, with the very detailed episodes repeating? Or should we use our "Occam's razor" to cut off the historical gnarls off this plot for the benefit of a more authentic version? Having done so, we shall conclude that both the *Cypriot Songs* and the *Iliad* refer to the same military campaign, which ended

[1] L.S. Klein, "Was Troy discovered?", *Znanie—Sila,* #3 (1985); p.42.

with the Achaeans' defeat[1]. A little later, we shall see that there are many other extremely powerful arguments in favor of this version.

The *Cypriot Songs* describe the military campaign in Teuthrania that finished with the Achaeans' defeat and is similar to the Trojan War up to the smallest episodes.

Having hastily evacuated the Greeks from Teuthrania, the writer of the Cypriot Songs left them unattended for 8 years, but after that he once again rigged them out for a new campaign. Having sharpened their silver-nailed swords and scrubbed the decks of multi-oar vessels, the Achaeans suddenly discovered that they had no leader capable of pointing out the true marine way to the Troad. The Mysian King Telephus, whom Achilles had cured from the wound he himself had inflicted, volunteered to lead the way. On the way, the Greeks visited the island of Tenedhos, where Achilles killed the local King Tenes, and they also visited the island of Lemnos, where they debarked the great archer, Argonaut, and a personal friend of Heracles—Philoctetes, who smelled badly because of a wound he had received.

Thereby, at last we learn where those ten years went, which passed between Helen's abduction and start of the siege of Troy, and what caused the mismatch in time between the

[1] It is interesting here to return to the hypothesis of Volkov-Nepomnyastchy of the Trojan War as a clash between Greeks and Hittites. And whether the Achaeans fled from the Hittites led by Telephus-Telepinu?

20 years that Menelaus' wife stayed in Paris' palace that she speaks of in the end of the *Iliad*, and 10 years of the city siege.

It is remarkable that the Achaeans, who learned from their experience with Mysia, did not attack Troy off-the-cuff, but tried to resolve the matter amicably. Having anchored in the harbor of the Troad, they sent Menelaus and Odysseus as ambassadors to the Trojans to offer that the latter returned Helen and the riches stolen with her, without fighting. Only upon being refused, they landed from their vessels and began the war.

> Warriors have lost their lives near Troy: Zeus's will has come true[1].

The Cypriot Songs tell the story about the war to the point, where the plot of the *Iliad* starts, which is sharing the living booty, when Achilles got Briseis, and Agamemnon took Chryseis. And this where Homer stepped in...

It was noticed a long time ago that heroes practically never smile within all 15,700 hexameters of the *Iliad*. Almost all the time they are sad and concentrated aware of their destinies, often tragic and unfair. Death was over Achilles, over Hector, and over the city of Troy itself—and for us who know the end of this story, this is not surprising. It is weird, though, that more than once in this poem we read phrases prenominating of the on-coming the Greeks' defeat! Here are just a few.

In the eighth canto, at the meeting of the gods before throwing lots on the golden balance, Zeus warns those at the meeting not to help people in the Greek-Trojan confrontation. On behalf of the whole pantheon, Athena assures him:

> All of us [...] shall refrain from [this], if you shall do;

[1] Cypria, 1 (1).

Fig. 30. The Trojan valley, which was the major events venue, is well within a few-kilometer view from the western fortress wall.

However, she notes:

> So have we pity for the Danaan spearmen who now shall perish and fulfill an evil fate. Yet verily will we refrain us from battle, even as thou dost bid; howbeit counsel will we offer to the Argives which shall be for their profit, that they perish not all by reason of thy wrath.
>
> *Iliad. VIII. 33–37.*

Hera repeats the same words after Athena.

In the ninth canto, Agamemnon decides to test the mood of the Achaean soldiers and offers them a chance to return home. He proclaims:

> My friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, great Zeus, son of Cronos, hath ensnared me in grievous blindness of heart, cruel god! seeing that of old he promised me, and bowed his

> head thereto, that not until I had sacked well-walled Ilios should I get me home; but now hath he planned cruel deceit, and biddeth me return inglorious to Argos, when I have lost much people.
>
> So, I ween, must be the good pleasure of Zeus supreme in might... For no more is there hope that we shall take broad-wayed Troy)!
>
> *Iliad. IX. 17–23, 28.*

Noble Diomede wishing to fight against Troy until the final victory, even if all other soldiers would leave the battle field, objects to Agamemnon. However, Achilles offended by Agamemnon does not wish to battle to the benefit of the Atrides states:

> Aye, and I would counsel you others also to sail back to your homes; seeing there is no more hope that ye shall win the goal of steep Ilios; for mightily doth Zeus, whose voice is borne afar, hold forth his hand above her, and her people are filled with courage.
>
> *Iliad. IX. 417–420.*

According to Leo Klein, it is usually treated as "art methods intended to highlight fearlessness of Diomede, objecting to Agamemnon, as well as Achilles' worth. A reasonable explanation, and it would be both sole and sufficient, if the vestiges of the future defeat were not so numerous and did not form a system encompassing everyone's thoughts in the *Iliad*: those of heroes, gods and destinies. This underlying system appears through the glorification of the Achaean heroes and the lists of their victories"[1]. Thus, foreboding of the Acheans' defeat

[1] L.S. Klein "Who won in the Iliad?", *Znanie—Sila,* #7 (1986); p. 43.

in the *Iliad* might be the trace of the most ancient rhapsodies, being closer to the historical truth.

There are a few phrases in the *Iliad* foreshadowing the future defeat of the Greeks. These are probably traces of the most ancient rhapsodies, being closer to the historical truth.

The *Iliad* ends with the scene of Hector's burial. The following poem of this cycle, The Ethiopica, was named so after the locality from where Memnon's reinforcement arrived to support the Trojans. Memnon killed many Hellenes, but also ended up having been killed by Achilles. In turn, Achilles was killed with an arrow, directed by Paris' patron Apollo. In the heat of the battle, Ajax Telamonid and Odysseus took the body of their murdered comrade back. Achilles was buried on White Island (Levkas) together with Partoclus, and their bones were mixed in accordance with their will. The Trojans handed the hero's weapon to Odysseus, in their opinion, the most valiant of the remaining Achaeans.

Ajax took offence because he also counted on receiving a similar honour, so he quarreled with Odysseus and went off to cut the Trojan cattle and shepherds, after which he committed a suicide. Agamemnon prohibited committing the body of this suicide victim to fire, and Ajax, the only one killed near Ilion, was buried in a coffin, instead. But that is another story, already, and now we have to proceed to giving a synopsis of the next cyclic poem, *The Little Iliad*. In this work, Philoctetes appears again, whom the Achaeans had debarked on a habitable island of Lemnos. Philoctetes proves his indispensability by killing Paris, whose surviving

spouse Helen immediately marries Priam's next eldest son Deiphobus.

Meanwhile, fresh forces arrive to Troy: the Achaean troops get reinforced by Achilles' son Neoptolemus, and the Trojan troops are reinforced by Telephus' son and Priam's nephew Euripilus, bringing an army from Teuthrania. Euripilus kills Asclepius' son Makhaon[1], a renowned army doctor, but falls on Neoptolemus' brilliant sword, and, as we have already noted, all his Keteans also fell around the young leader. Odysseus changed into a tramp's clothes and went to Troy[2], where he confided in Helen. She counsels her former fianc and the former ruler of Ithaca on how to capture the city and helps him steal the Palladium—a sacred image of Athena, which Zeus once had thrown down to Earth from the sky to provide a sign for Ilus, the legendary founder of Troy. Ilus erected a temple for Palladium, and the magic statue became a lien of the city's might and inaccessibility.

Having been deprived of the Palladium, Troy lost all chances. All the more since Epeius came in; he was not only a famous fist-fighter but also a skilled builder. On Odysseus' order, he built a huge wooden horse that could hold from fifty to three thousand people. Everyone knows what happened next, don't they?

---

[1] Widely known butterfly of the family Papilionidae was named by the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus in honor of this Homeric hero.

[2] In Sophocles, Odysseus and Diomedes make their way to Troy through the "underground channel cramped and fetid" (Sophocles, *Lacaenae (Lacaenian Women)*, 276 (367)). According to our observations, this description is well suited to the man-made grotto, which was found by Korfman expedition.

From the side of history, it looks as if it would have to the inhabitants of Troy, who found the "gift" of Danai at their gate. Having become exhausted by the 10-year fruitless war and the loss of their best soldiers, the Achaeans were unable to see any good prospects; they collected their belongings and departured for home. But before that, they made a proper sacrifice to the gods[1]. In this case, the victim was symbolical. They could not find a horse of appropriate size to match magnitude of this event, and therefore, they built a huge votive animal of either maple or cornel wood and inscribed the following on it: "Safely having returned home, the Hellenes have devoted this grateful gift to the goddess Athena"[2].

It is interesting who exactly from the Achaean's camp could have made the inscriptions on the horse. When reading Homer, it seems that all Greek soldiers having arrived at Troy were completely illiterate. Everyone except for King Proitos of Tirinthos. His wife slandered young handsome Bellerofontis, and Proitos sent him to his father-in-law Iobatos with some letter of recommendation, asking the King of Lycia to kill Bellerofontis.

[...] he sent him to Lycia, and gave him baneful tokens,
graving in a folded tablet many signs and deadly, and bade
him show these to his own wife's father, that he might be
slain.

Iliad. VI. 168-17.0

[1] According to Polybius, "almost all barbarous nations, in any case, most of them, kill and sacrifice a horse in the beginning of the war, or before the decisive battle, to read in the fall of the animal the sign of the near future." (Polybius, *The Histories*, XII, 4b).

[2] Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, Epitome, V, 15.