June 2002

The Sources of Iliad 7

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By MARGALIT FINKELBERG

1. At the beginning of Iliad 7, in a speech addressed to both the Trojans and the Achaeans, Hector challenges an Achaeans champion to a single combat. He proposes the terms of the duel: if he himself is slain by the Achaean, the victor will take the armor but will give the body back to the Trojans; if the Achaean perishes, Hector in his turn will take the armor as spoil. As to the body:

τὸν δὲ νέκυν ἔπι νῆς ἔυσσελίμους ἀποδώσω, ὁφρα ἰ ταρχύσεια κάρη κομφώνεις Ἀχαιοί, αἰμα φείς ἕπι πλατέι Ἐλλησπόντῳ, καὶ ποτὲ τις ἐπιτηρεῖ καὶ φυγόνων ἀνθρώπων, ὦτε πολυκλήθη πλέων ἔπι οἴνωτα πόντου ἀνθρώπος μὲν τόδε σήμα πάλαι κατατεθήκωτος, ὀν ποτ’ ἀριστεύοντα κατέκτας φαίδημος Ἐκτώρ. ἐως ποτὲ τις ἐρέει, τὸ δ’ ἐμὸν κλέος’ οὐ ποτ’ ὀλεῖται.

(II. 7.84-91)

"But his body I shall return to the well-bench vessels, so that the long-hair Achaeans can give him the rites of burial and heap a mound for him by the broad Hellespont. And people will say, even men of generations not yet born, as they sail by over the sparkling sea in their many-benched ships: ‘This is the mound of a man who died long ago. He was one of the best, and glorious Hector killed him.’ That is what they will say: and my glory will never die.”

Nine Achaeans heroes volunteer to meet Hector on the battlefield. They draw lots, and Ajax son of Telamon is selected. The duel that follows comes to no definite conclusion. Nobody is killed, and Hector’s vision of an Achaean tomb over the Hellespont remains unfulfilled. At the same time, Homer’s description of this tomb is so concrete that it is small wonder that attempts have been made to identify it with a real monument of the Trojan War. Thus, P. von der Mühl suggested that the Homeric lines were inspired by the Aianteion, “the tomb of Ajax” near Rhoeteum on the Hellespontine

shore of the Troad, whereas G.S. Kirk proposed Beşik Tepe on the Aegean shore, identified by some scholars as "the tomb of Achilles." However, the Aianteion theory is implausible simply because Ajax did not fall by Hector's hand, so that his tomb could hardly be envisaged by Homer as contributing to Hector's glory, whereas the main difficulty of Kirk's identification is that Beşik Tepe is not situated "by the broad Hellespont." This objection was seen by Kirk himself, so that he suggested that "there may, of course, have been other early tumuli that have not survived, even perhaps along the strictly Hellespontine shore."3

The Hellespont, however, is not confined to the Troad alone, and the fact is that as soon as we look across the straits we shall be able to find a tomb which would closely correspond to the Homeric description. I mean the famous heroon of Protesilaus at Elaeus in the Thracian Chersonese on the European side of the straits. Elaeus, an Athenian foundation, dominated the southern entrance into the Hellespont, and Protesilaus' shrine, situated in its precincts (actually, a prehistoric tomb contemporary with Troy I), undoubtedly was the most important Hellespontine landmark during the whole of antiquity. Thucydides' description of how an Athenian ship which tried to escape the Peloponnesian fleet was wrecked under the temple of Protesilaus clearly indicates that this temple was located so as to overlook the straits, and the same conclusion follows from the fact that Strabo treats it as part of a periplous.4 Herodotus testifies to its wealth: "For at this place [Elaeus] is the tomb of Protesilaus, surrounded by a sacred precinct; and here there was great store of wealth, vases of gold and silver, works in brass, garments, and other offerings"; the plundering and desecration of the tomb by the Persians and the subsequent vengeance of the divine hero are well known from Herodotus' History.5 The heroon of Protesilaus was widely known and venerated throughout antiquity: Alexander the Great offered sacrifices to it on crossing to Asia; in late antiquity, Protesilaus was already venerated as a god, and the temple, famous for its oracle and the miracles that took place in its precincts, was reckoned as one of the most important of its kind in the entire Greek world.6

Although in the Homeric Catalogue of Ships Protesilaus, the first Achaean to lose his life at Troy, is said to have been killed by an unidentified Δάρδανος ἄνηρ, the Cyclic Cypria, where the episode was described in

4. Thuc. 8.102; Str. 7.51 (52), cf. 7.55 (56).
6. Arr. Anab. 11; Paus. 1.34.2; 3.4.6; Philostr. Heroica 3.1.
full, explicitly mentioned Hector as responsible for Protesilaus' death.\textsuperscript{7} It is the $Cypria$ version that became predominant in the later tradition. Note indeed that, although it is obvious that there was more than one version of the name of Protesilaus' slayer,\textsuperscript{8} Hector is mentioned not only by Proclus but also by Apollodorus, in scholia on Lycophron, in Ovid's $Metamorphoses$ and, by implication, in $Heroides$.\textsuperscript{9} The fact that Demetrius of Scæpsis in his emendation of $I l. 2.701$ changed τὸν δ' ἐκτανε Δάρδανος ἀνήρ of the vulgate into τὸν δ' ἐκτανε φαίδιμος Ἐκτώρ proves conclusively that the tradition of Protesilaus having been slain by Hector was the dominant one.

Thus, the tomb of Protesilaus matches all the essentials of the Homeric description: it is a tomb of an Achaean hero slain by Hector; it could be seen by those who sailed through the Hellespont, and it was famous enough to bestow everlasting glory on the person responsible for this hero's death.\textsuperscript{10} All but one: at the moment of Hector's pronouncing his speech Protesilaus had been dead and buried for almost ten years, and Homer is well aware of this fact.\textsuperscript{11} Accordingly, Hector's imagining the tomb of a man killed ten years earlier as belonging to the future appears contradictory. The fact, however, is that, incongruous as it may seem from the general standpoint of the $Iliad$, the identification of the tomb by the Hellespont with Protesilaus' heroon fits in well with the context of $Iliad$ 7.

2.

The general plan of $Iliad$ 7 can be outlined as follows. On Hector's return from his visit to Priam's palace, Athene and Apollo plan a single combat between Hector and an Achaean champion; this plan becomes known to Helenus the soothsayer, and he communicates it to Hector. Hector's challenge and the unresolved duel with Ajax come next. During the subsequent feast Nestor suggests a truce, in the course of which the Greeks would be able to bury their dead and fortify the camp. Simultaneously, the Trojans discuss Antenor's suggestion to restore Helen to the Greeks, as well as Menelaus' possessions that Paris had taken off with her; Paris agrees to give back the possessions but he is not ready to part with Helen. His terms

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\textsuperscript{7} Il. 2.701; Allen (1912) Vol. 5. (henceforth, Allen) 105.1.

\textsuperscript{8} See Eusth. on $I l. 2.701$ and Od. 11.521.

\textsuperscript{9} Apollod. $Ept.$ 3.30; Schol. on $Ilychr$ phr. 245; Ov. $Met.$ 12.67-68; $Her.$ 13.65-66 (Laodomia to Protesilaus).

\textsuperscript{10} Note Homer's use of the verb ταρπεστειν in connection with the funeral of Hector's antagonist (1.85). This is a rare word whose only other occurrence is at Il. 16.456=674, where it appears in connection with the death of Sarpedon and seems to imply the heroic honors which were paid to the deceased, see Chantraine (1968), s.v. ταρπεστειν, and Schein (1984) 48. This being so, it would be reasonable to suggest that the tomb described by Hector was supposed to involve a hero cult.

\textsuperscript{11} Cf. Il. 2.698-99; 15.705-06.
are adopted by the Trojans and communicated to the Greeks; in addition, the Trojan messenger proposes a truce for the sake of burial. The Achaeans reject the Trojan terms concerning Helen and the possessions but welcome Zeus’ promise to Poseidon that the wall will be destroyed after the Achaean departure from the Troad, and by the night-feast in the Achaean camp.

The fortification of the camp in the tenth year of the war is surprising, to say the least: it would have been much more natural if the fortifications had been built at the very beginning of the campaign. The same holds good of the negotiations concerning the return of Helen and the possessions. It is no wonder, therefore, that older scholars often regarded the second part of Iliad 7, which treats these events, as an interpolation modeled upon an earlier poem which dealt with the beginning of the Trojan war.\[12\]

The beginning of the Trojan war was the subject of the cyclic Cypria. According to Proclus’ account of this poem, the sequence of the relevant events was as follows:

Then the Greeks tried to land at Ilium, but the Trojans prevent them, and Protesilaus is killed by Hector. Achilles then kills Cycnus, the son of Poseidon, and drives the Trojans back. The Greeks take up their dead (καὶ τοὺς νεκροὺς ἄναψαντοι) and send envoys to the Trojans demanding the surrender of Helen and the treasure with her. The Trojans refusing, they first assault the city, etc.\[13\]

Three episodes can be discerned in this account: (1) the death of Protesilaus; (2) Achilles’ victory over Cycnus and the subsequent burial of the dead; (3) negotiations with the Trojans concerning the restoration of Helen and the possessions. Neither the forming of the camp, nor the building of the fortifications, nor even the landing itself are mentioned by Proclus, but it is reasonable to suppose that the burial of the dead which followed the victory over the Trojans implied at least the latter.

Our only source in which the forming of the camp constitutes part of the narrative sequence suggested by the Cypria is Herodotus:

After the rape of Helen, a vast army of Greeks, wishing to render help to Menelaus, set sail for the Teucrian territory; on their arrival they disembarked, and formed their camp (καὶ ἔφυγον τὴν στρατηγόν κτλ.), after which they sent ambassadors to Ilium, of whom Menelaus

\[12\] See e.g., Bethe (1914) 120-43; v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1916) 50-59, 313-15; Bolling (1925) 91-100; von der Mühll (1952) 129-43.

Both the general context of Herodotus' discussion and the order of the episodes strongly suggest that his description of the Greek arrival ultimately goes back to a *Cypria*.\(^{15}\) It can be suggested, therefore, that the forming of the camp, with or without fortifications, omitted though it was in Proclus' account, was nevertheless described in his source as part of the landing.

It is against this background that the following much discussed passage from Thucydides should be read:

> After their arrival at Troy, when they had won a battle (as they clearly did, for otherwise they could not have fortified their camp) (το γὰρ ἔριμα τῷ στρατοπέδῳ οὐκ ἦν ἔτειχοντα) ...\(^{16}\)

Since the passage emerges in the context of the discussion of the Homeric Catalogue of Ships, it has been suggested that the text of the *Iliad* used by Thucydides was different from ours, which places the fortification of the camp in the tenth year of the war.\(^{17}\) An alternative suggestion, namely that Thucydides' source for this specific passage was the Cyclic *Cypria*, is rendered implausible by the fact that the fortification of the camp is taken by Thucydides as conclusive proof that the Greeks won a battle on their arrival: since this can only mean that no such victory was explicitly found in Thucydides' source and since at least the *Cypria* used by Proclus clearly described one ("Achilles then kills Cynus, the son of Poseidon, and drives the Trojans back"), it is unlikely that Thucydides' account descends directly from the *Cypria*.\(^{18}\) In other words, we have to conjecture a source in which the landing of the Greeks is immediately followed by the forming of the camp and the building of the fortifications, with no Greek victory in battle between.\(^{19}\) As far as I can see, Herodotus 2.118 as adduced above ("on their arrival they disembarked, and formed their camp") is just such a source. Although Herodotus does not mention the fortification of the camp as such, it is reasonable to suppose that, being after all the normal Greek practice after a

\(^{14}\) Hdt. 2.118.

\(^{15}\) Cf. Bolling (1925) 93.

\(^{16}\) Thuc. 1.11; trans. B. Jowett (1942).


\(^{18}\) See Page (1959) 317-18. Cf. Gomme (1945) 115: "...the picture of the Trojan war which Thucydides has in mind is as follows: the Greeks won the first battle on land (this was not expressly told in the epic, but it must be inferred; for otherwise they would have had no fortified στρατόπεδον, and could not have carried on the war at all: hence it cannot be, as the schollast thinks, the battle in which Protesilaus fell; Thucydides is only inferring the victory). ..." (Gomme's italics.) Cf. also West (1969) 256-57.

\(^{19}\) Cf. Davison (1965) 12: "In any case it is clear that, whatever poem it may have been that Thucydides had in mind, it was not one which described the initial landing, or the events which followed immediately upon that. In any detail, if at all."
landing, the building of the fortifications was seen as inseparable from the forming of the camp and therefore taken for granted by Thucydides. It can be suggested, therefore, that what Thucydides had in mind was neither a different Iliad nor a version of the Cypria but Herodotus’ History, and that his parenthetic “as they clearly did, for otherwise they could not have fortified their camp” is polemical in respect of this source. Since, as we saw, Herodotus 2.118 most probably goes back to a Cypria, we have to conclude that Thucydides’ account has no independent value.

The same cannot be said, however, of the account of the same events found in Apollodorus’ Bibliothèque:

Putting to sea from Tenedos, they made sail for Troy, and sent Odysseus and Menelaus to demand the restoration of Helen and the property. But the Trojans, having summoned the assembly, not only refused to restore Helen, but threatened to kill the envoys. These were, however, saved by Antenor; but the Greeks, exasperated at the insolence of the barbarians, stood to arms and made sail against them, . . . Of the Greeks the first to land from his ship was Protesilaus, and having slain not a few of the barbarians, he fell by the hand of Hector. . . . On the death of Protesilaus, Achilles landed with the Myrmidons, and throwing a stone at the head of Cynus, killed him. When the barbarians saw him dead, they fled to the city, and the Greeks, leaping from their ships, filled the plain with bodies. And having shut up the Trojans, they besieged them; and they drew up the ships (ἀνελκοῦσι δὲ τὰς ναῦς).

Comparison of Apollodorus’ account with that of Proclus shows that although the episodes adduced by the two are the same, the order in which they emerge is different: in Apollodorus, the embassy precedes the landing rather than, as in Proclus, following it. This seems to indicate that the Proclus version of the Cypria was not the only version of this poem that circulated in Greek tradition.

Like Proclus, Apollodorus does not mention the building of the fortifications, but it is reasonable to suggest that the drawing up of the ships that he describes amounts to much the same. Compare indeed Iliad 14.30-32: πολλόν γὰρ ἐπὶ ἄπανευθε μάχης εἰρύατο νῆς / θιν ἐφ ἀλὸς πολιῆς· τὰς γὰρ πρῶτας πεδίονε / εἰρυσαν, αὐτάρ τεῖχος ἐπὶ πρύμνησιν ἐδείμαν (Where their ships had been pulled up on the shore of the grey sea far away from the fighting, as the first ships in had been hauled right inland, and the wall built along their sterns.) This passage was often adduced as

21. On Thucydides’ use of Herodotus see esp. Hornblower (1996) i:9-38 and 122-45. If my inference is correct, the passage under discussion would fall into Hornblower’s category of “the kind of Thucydidean text which positively assumes knowledge of Herodotus, and reads awkwardly or even mystifyingly without such knowledge” (p. 125).
envisages the building of the fortifications as having taken place at the very
proof that the fortification of the Achaean camp as described in Iliad 7 is an
interpolation: there can indeed be no doubt that the passage in question
fluctuation, so conspicuous in our sources, between the forming of the camp,
fortification of the camp, and ignored the Achilles-Cycnus duel which made
He might be suggested that both Proclus and Apollodorus omitted the description of the fortification of the camp as part of the landing episode because such a description would have been at variance with the text of the Iliad, cf. Bolling (1925) 93. Note indeed that in his account of the subsequent events Apollodorus follows Homer closely, relating the Hector-Ajax duel and the building of the wall exactly as they are described in Iliad 7, see Epit. 4.2-3.
Achilles killed him by strangling him with the thongs of his own helmet. Proclus' account of the Cypria does not detail the circumstances of Cycnus' death, but Apollodorus has Achilles kill Cycnus by throwing a stone at his head. This seems to suggest that it was Cycnus' invulnerability (known also to Aristotle, see Rhet. 1.396b16-18) that caused Achilles to kill him by stone in Apollodorus' source. Hector's immediate recovery from Ajax' terrible blow, although explained by that he was instantly raised by Apollo, is unconvincing, and the same is true of the conclusion of the duel as a whole. In view of this, it may be suggested that the Hector-Ajax duel ended as it did because the entire episode was modeled by the poet after another one, which made no provision for a recovery from the stone-hit.

As far as we know, the only traditional source which treated the beginning of the Trojan war was the Cypria. This seems to indicate that all the variants mentioned above, including those that do not detail their source, ultimately stem from different versions of this poem. Accordingly, we may suggest the following table of correspondences:

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<tr>
<td>Achilles-Cycnus duel</td>
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<td>negotiations about Helen</td>
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We can conclude, therefore, that Iliad 7 does not simply evoke some episodes properly belonging to the Cypria but, rather, consistently adapts for its own purposes the entire cluster of subjects associated in Greek tradition with the initial stage of the Trojan war. The Cypria material thus acts as a blueprint, as it were, of Iliad 7.29

3.

It has long been recognized that many episodes of Books 2–7 of the Iliad, which form a digression from the narrative succession of the story of the Wrath of Achilles, are associated with the beginning of the Trojan war. Odysseus' reminiscence of the mustering of the troops at Aulis and the Catalogue of Ships in Book 2; the Teichoscopia, the duel of Paris and Menelaus and the Helen-Paris encounter in Book 3; Agamemnon's

28. Note also the prominence of Antenor in both Apollodorus' version of the Negotiations about Helen (above, with n.22) and the one given in Iliad 7.345-64.

29. A similar situation can be observed in Iliad 2, where the mustering of the troops described toward the end of the book is preceded at some distance by Odysseus' reminiscence of the departure from Aulis and the omen of the snake and the sparrows by which it was accompanied. As can be learnt from the Cypria, both belong to the same cluster of subjects: "All the leaders then meet together at Aulis and sacrifice. The incident of the serpent and the sparrows takes place before them, and Calchas foretells what is going to befall." Allen 104.1-3, cf. Il. 2.299-332, 441-785.
inspection of the troops in Book 4; the Trojan scenes in Book 6 and, finally, the negotiations about Helen and fortification of the camp in Book 7—each of these episodes evokes one of the initial stages of the war, which must have been well known to the Homeric audience from traditional sources other than the Iliad.

The beginning of the war can be evoked in a direct reminiscence, as in Odysseus’ reminiscence of the Aulis episode in Il. 2.284-332 or in Antenor’s reminiscence of the embassy of Odysseus and Menelaus in Il. 3.204-24. But more often than not Homer adopts a different strategy, in that he reshapes episodes properly belonging to the beginning of the war so as to make them fit the chronological and narrative setting of its last year. Thus, the seduction of Helen by Paris and Aphrodite in Book 3, rather than being simply a reminiscence, provides, as was aptly put by Mark Edwards, “a reenactment of the original seduction” the proper context of which is the Cyclic Cypria, and the same holds good of other episodes of this kind. In the second half of the poem the same narrative strategy of reshapement and adaptation or, to borrow the expression coined by Wolfgang Kullmann, “an imitation of a narrative known to us from one of the Cyclic epics,” is employed to evoke the last stages of the war which, again, are not described directly in the Iliad. It goes without saying that the Cypria episodes discernible in Iliad 7 should be accounted for along the same lines.

When approached from the standpoint of the theory of oral composition, the parallels between Homer and the Epic Cycle should be regarded as independent variants of a common tradition. Consider for example the duel of Patroclus and Sarpedon in Iliad 16 which, as the Neoanalysts have shown, has its close parallel in the Achilles-Memnon duel as described in the Cyclic Aethiopis. While in the Neoanalysts’ opinion this fact would suffice to regard the Aethiopis as one of the sources of the Iliad, the representatives of the oral approach would interpret the same phenomenon in an entirely different way. Thus, according to Seth Schein,“While there can be no doubt that some of the scenes and speeches in the Iliad must resemble those that occurred in the Aethiopis, it is best to consider these scenes and speeches of the two epics as variants of the same fluid oral tradition rather than as dependent the one upon the other.” Or, to quote what Laura Slatkin wrote in her pioneering application of the methods of oral approach to the Homeric

Iliad, "... the Cycle poems inherit traditions contingent to our Iliad and the Odyssey and preserve story patterns, motifs, and type-scenes that are as archaic as the material in the Homeric poems, to which they are related collaterally, rather than by descent. The Cycle poems and the Iliad offer invaluable mutual perspective on the recombination of elements deriving from a common source in myth."

It seems, however, that the relationship of Iliad 7 to the Trojan tradition can hardly be satisfactorily accounted for along these lines. The manner in which it handles other Trojan subjects shows clearly enough that, rather than presenting yet another variant of the common tradition, Iliad 7 is possessed of a special status, in that its existence is predicated on that of other traditional poems dealing with the Trojan war. Needless to say, this is not how oral poetics is supposed to work.

One of the effects that the Parry-Lord hypothesis has had on Homeric scholarship is the emergence of a tacit assumption that, in so far as the oral traditional background of the Homeric poems can be seen as firmly established, nothing remains to be explained about the mode of their functioning. It is doubtful, however, whether the comparative evidence of other oral poetries or, for that matter, of other poems within Greek epic tradition itself, is as relevant to Homer as many wish to assert.

E.L. Bowie’s warning against uncritical application to the Homeric poems of the evidence offered by the SouthSlavic tradition seems to be appropriate in this connection: “We should also take account of the fact that the poems we have must stand at the end of a tradition of which they themselves and their creator(s) cannot have been entirely typical. In many details of their handling of their story and characters, both the Iliad and the Odyssey are very self-conscious poems; and some awareness of the processes that created them should not be denied to their poet merely on analogy with other cultures.”

That Homer, as we have seen, often worked by reshaping and adaptation of other Trojan subjects shows clearly enough that, at least in the cases for which this practice can be shown to be relevant, he treated the Trojan saga as raw material for the Iliad, thus elevating the latter to the unique status of a metaepic. This seems to indicate that the Iliad cannot be unreservedly approached as just one traditional poem among many: the traditional poetics

35. Slatkin (1991) 11-12. Cf. ibid., 5-6: “if one suggests that modifications of formula, phrase, or type-scene find an analogy in the poem's handling of mythological variants, it is important to stress that no aboriginal prototype of a myth exists that can claim priority over other versions.”


is applied in this poem side by side with a nontraditional one, and our task is to take account of both.  

40 I am grateful to the editors of this volume for their helpful suggestions.