AFTER SCHLIEMANN

J. LATACZ: *Troy and Homer. Towards a Solution of an Old Mystery*. Translated by K. Windle and R. Ireland. Pp. xx + 342, maps, ills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 (first published as *Troia und Homer*, 2001). Cased, £30. ISBN: 0-19-926308-6.

The Old Mystery to which the title refers is the question, 'Was there really a Trojan War?' Latacz's answer is 'Yes', or 'Very probably', and after reading his fine review of new finds at Hissarlik and new reconstructions of the politics of Bronze Age Anatolia, one is bound to agree with him.

L.'s book is divided into two parts: 'Troy' and 'Homer'. In 'Troy' he describes the significance of Manfred Korfmann's finds since 1995 in the plain below Hissarlik, indicating that the famous outcrop excavated by Schliemann and Blegen was only the upper city in a much larger settlement of perhaps 10,000 inhabitants. Useful illustrations and charts accompany his discussion. Bronze Age Troy, built on a common Anatolian design, must have been an important commercial center, perhaps a royal residence, and cannot have been ignored by the great power of Hattusa in central Anatolia. The first piece of writing ever found at Troy, in 1995, is a bronze seal inscribed in Luvian, a 'hieroglyphic' syllabic script recording a Hittite dialect. Furthermore, Hittite archives refer directly to Troy, calling it Wilusa (Ilios) and Taruwisa (Troia). These identifications are old, going back to the 1920s, but modern reconstructions of political divisions in Anatolia leave little doubt that they are accurate.

Other names in the Hittite archives appear to give historical background to the Homeric epics. A famous treaty is with Alaksandu of Wilusa, a Hittite form of the Greek Alexander; Priam appears to be a Hittite name meaning 'exceptionally courageous'; The Hittite Ahhiyawa, too, must be the Achaioi, a powerful place beyond the reach of the Hittite king. In Egypt records of Amenhotep III refer to the *tniw*, presumably the Danaoi of Homer. Therefore we must not doubt that the historical backdrop of Homer's description of the Trojan War is accurate: a powerful wealthy kingdom on the shores of the Hellespont and an overseas kingdom of Mycenaean Greeks not always on friendly relations with the Asian power.

But how could Homer have known about any of this? In the second section, 'Homer', L. reviews the bare facts of Greek history from the Bronze through Iron Ages, with a good description of Linear B and how it served the palace civilization. The decipherment by Ventris proved that the Mycenaeans (mentioned in the Hittite archives) were Greeks, hence there is cultural continuity between them and Homer. Whereas the specific issues of responsibility and behavior in the Homeric poems must belong to the eighth century B.C., the time of their composition, the poet assumes a remarkable familiarity with the poem's personnel and the background of the Trojan War; the tradition must be old, certainly not Homer's invention. The *Iliad* is a secondary source for the Trojan War (for which no primary sources exist), but the larger story may preserve authentic elements.

In an interesting discussion of the perplexing *Catalogue of Ships*, L. agrees with earlier views that the list originated in the Bronze Age. An apparent confirmation is the appearance of three names in a Linear B tablet from Thebes that also appear in the Boeotian entry in the Catalogue, but which are otherwise completely unknown. Why is the Catalogue centered on Boeotia? Because the capital of the Bronze Age Ahhiyawa was none other than Thebes, as suggested by a remarkable letter in

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cuneiform script from the Hattusa archive, recently reinterpreted as being not a record of outgoing correspondence, but uniquely as coming to Hattusa from the king of Thebes. (However, the Catalogue, and the launch from Aulis, more probably reflects the position of the ambitious Euboeans at the end of the Iron Age, sponsors of epic poetry and the first possessors of the Greek alphabet.)

But how did the tale of Troy reach Homer? Through the traditional song of the *aoidoi*, of course (as most agree). One unmetrical line, often examined, can be explained as arising from change in the vocalization of Mycenaean consonants, so that we can be happy to regard Homer's traditional language as beginning in the Bronze Age and not after it. Other linguistic clues suggest a stage of Homeric Greek precedent to Homer.

To sum up: Hittite and Egyptian knowledge of an important Aegean power; the names Wilusa, Taruwisa, *tniw*, Alaksandu, and others; the fact of cultural continuity; and the great age of the Homeric hexameter make it probable that an Achaean campaign against a Hittite stronghold in the Late Bronze Age did take place, inspiring the framework which Homer inherited and within which he placed his contemporary stories of moral crisis and homecoming. However, I was surprised to read that the Homeric poems 'display features of linguistic, intellectual, and structural compression such as can only have appeared with the deployment of writing', as if the arguments of Parry, Lord, and myself for the creation of an alphabetic text through dictation had never been made. I also doubt that Homer belongs in Ionia, when the Euboeans were dominant in the late ninth and early eighth centuries, the venue for Homer's fame, and L.'s notion of a catalogue of names and ships that survived four hundred years of oral transmission as a coherent 'poem' is not likely. Mere quibbles against the outstanding contribution L. has made to understanding how recent archaeological finds and cross-cultural studies have illuminated the historical roots of the Homeric poems.

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PENELOPE'S WEB

B. CLAYTON: *A Penelopean Poetics. Reweaving the Feminine in Homer's* Odyssey. Pp. xii + 143. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, and Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004. Paper, US$22 (Cased, US$75). ISBN: 0-7391-0723-2 (0-7391-0722-4 hbk).

Since Penelope has disappointed the expectations of feminists seeking to justify a gendered *Odyssey*, Clayton tries to establish a new feminine poetics through the ποίησις of Penelope's web. Her readership will be students of feminist theory, women's studies, and classics. C's main argument is as follows: Penelope, excluded from the (male) μῦθος of Phemius, constructs a discourse of her own by weaving a story into her web and then unweaving and reweaving it. The discourse of the web presents an alternative to the apparent reality of Phemius' song, that Odysseus was lost, along with many other Greeks, on the way back from Troy. Odysseus' true account to the Phaeacians of his real experiences corresponds to the song of Phemius, but the false identity he constructs in his Cretan lies corresponds to the discourse of the web. Clayton's 'Penelopean Poetics' refers to the process of making and remaking a song with each oral performance, rather as Penelope's web is woven

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