THE GREEK EPIC CYCLE

Malcolm Davies

PAPERBACKS

6: The Cypria

Antiquity assigned this poem either to Homer (T 1-5) or to the Cypriot poet Stasinus (T 7-11). The delightful story that the impoverished Homer gave the poem to his son-in-law Stasinus, as a substitute for a dowry for his daughter (cf. T 1 and T 8), is probably a relatively late anecdote of a familiar kind, bringing together contemporary but differently aged practitioners of the same genre and intended to reconcile these alternative attributions. It is often alleged that the story dates back at least as far as Pindar, but the passage in question (T 1) may only be evidence that Pindar assigned to Homer a word or phrase which later writers recognised in the text of the *Cypria*. The linking of this to the dowry anecdote might be a later development. Herodotus 2.117 (T 5 = F 11) is the earliest extant writer to deny the *Cypria* to Homer: this need signify no more than that he too believed it was the work of Stasinus. On the work's date see above, p. 3ff.

Why did the epic bear the title *Cypria*? The most popular and convincing explanation (cf. T 9) talks in terms of Stasinus' place of origin and compares the epic known as *Naupactia* (*E.G.F.* pp. 145ff.) which has a name relating to the city where its author lived, rather than to its own content. This is so unusual a way of naming a poem that, from the seventeenth century at least onwards, some scholars have preferred to associate the title with Aphrodite, a goddess closely connected with Cyprus, whom we can infer to have played a major role in this poem. But that manner of devising a title for an epic has even less analogies than the first (with which compare also Thestorides of Phocaea's *Phocais* (*E.G.F.* p. 153)).

As with so many poems of the Epic Cycle, the *Cypria's* main function, at least in its final stage, would seem to have been to supply the background presupposed by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The numerous contradictions of those two epics' tone and ethos and the fewer inconsistencies in points of tradition need not tell against this interpretation

of its purpose. The requirement to supply details of all the multifarious events that occurred before the start of the *Iliad* seems to have resulted in a work even more rambling (it amounted to eleven books), ramshackle and lacking in cohesion than the average, though a rather spurious unity was ingeniously imposed in F 1:

> Once upon a time the countless tribes <of mortals thronging about weighed down> the broad surface of the deep-bosomed earth. And Zeus, seeing this, took pity, and in his cunning mind he devised a plan to lighten the burden caused by mankind from the face of the all-nourishing earth, by fanning into flame the great strife that was the Trojan War, in order to alleviate the earth's burden by means of the death of men. So it was that the heroes were killed in battle at Troy and the will of Zeus was accomplished.

This fragment obviously occurred near the beginning of the poem, but there is no evidence that it constitutes the very opening lines and that the *Cypria* dispensed with the normal epic exordium appealing to the Muse which is attested for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as well as for the *Thebais* (F 1: see above, p. 23) and *mutatis mutandis* the *Little Iliad* (F 1: p. 61). The employment of the immemorial story-telling formula 'once upon a time...' is very unlike Homer (who avoids this feature so redolent of folk-tale) as is the ingenious exploitation of the folk-tale motif in which the gods take alarm at the growing numbers of mankind and resolve to reduce them by causing a catastrophe. Ancient near-eastern analogies for this motif can be cited. The phrase 'and the will of Zeus was accomplished' also occurs at the end of the *Iliad*'s proem (*Il.* 1.1-5) where it seems calculated to convey a rather complex effect, impressive but slightly mysterious, potentially reassuring but also potentially disturbing: Achilles' anger hurled down to the Underworld the mighty souls of many heroes, making their corpses a prey for dogs and birds to feast on – and the will of Zeus was accomplished. One might compare, from a very different time and milieu, this from the end of a Serbian folk-ballad: 'Thus the Tsar perished and with him all his soldiers, the seventy-seven thousand Serbs. And all that was holy and honourable and agreeable to God the Almighty'. We can see from the scholion on

the Iliadic line, which is our source for F 1 of the *Cypria*, that the enigmatic nature of Homer's phrase caused controversy in antiquity, and was sometimes explained away by recourse to the identical phrase near the start of the *Cypria*. There, by contrast, Zeus' will or plan was perfectly straightforward (to reduce the burden on the earth). In fact one could not ask for a clearer illustration of the difference in ethos between Homer and the Epic Cycle.

Proclus tells us that Zeus deliberated with Themis as to <how to cause> the Trojan War. This was doubtless the immediate sequel to F 1. The Iliadic scholion which is our source for that fragment prefaces it with a story in which the earth, burdened by the weight of mankind and oppressed by the prevailing impiety, directly appeals to Zeus. He first eliminates many mortals by bringing about the Theban War and then, on the advice of Momus, the personification of blame or fault-finding, causes the Trojan War by having Thetis marry a mortal and give birth to the beautiful Helen, the cause of the war at Troy. 'The story is found in the *Cypria*' the scholion concludes, and cites F1. Several scholars therefore infer that Momus and the rest of the account occurred in that epic. But this story, though similar to the background implied by F 1, is clearly not perfectly compatible with it (our fragment leaves no room for an appeal by a personified Mother Earth or a Theban War as a preliminary stage of Zeus' plan; nor is Momus easy to fit in). The scholion's narrative must therefore have a different source to the *Cypria*.

Themis, goddess of righteousness, the first of the numerous significant personifications in the poem (see below, pp. 35 and 37f.), is an appropriate adviser to Zeus concerning his great plan to reduce mankind (more so than Momus in the alternative tradition). Her support confirms the rightness of the plan. Since Proclus next mentions the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, the result of Zeus' deliberations must have been precisely that marriage, and this is where F 2 comes in. For it tells us that Thetis had gratified Hera by rejecting Zeus' earlier sexual advances. Zeus in anger swore that Thetis, a goddess, would be punished by marriage to a mortal. Hera, presumably, showed her gratitude to Thetis by ensuring that the mortal in question would be the greatest then living and (cf. *Il.* 24.61 and Hes. fr. 211.3 MW) one particularly dear to the

gods. The union, then, was 'overdetermined' in a way familiar from early Greek literature: the relatively personal and trite motives of Zeus and Hera move in the same direction as the loftier and more universal 'plan of Zeus'.

F 3 informs us of one of the gifts brought by the gods to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis: Chiron, the beneficent centaur who had reared Peleus, presented him with a spear made by Athena and Hephaestus. This spear would later be wielded by Achilles, the offspring of the marriage. (Apollod. 3.13.5 adds that Poseidon gave Peleus the immortal horses Balius and Xanthus; and this too may be from the *Cypria*.) But the event, we learn from Proclus, was marred by the arrival of Eris, a goddess personifying strife, who caused a quarrel about beauty between Athena, Hera and Aphrodite. If, as later writers state, Eris' malicious act was inspired by resentment at not receiving an invitation to the wedding, this episode too derives from a widely spread folk-tale motif, the deity cheated of honour or sacrifice, who takes revenge (one thinks of the Wicked Fairy's intervention at Sleeping Beauty's christening, or Artemis' sending of the Calydonian Boar to punish Oeneus). It has been argued that Eris simply turned up in the *Cypria's* account; that she need not have thrown the famous apple inscribed 'to the fairest' which is only explicitly attested in late authors and may be a Hellenistic invention; and that the judgement of Paris need not entail Eris' apple, the apple first visible in several early artistic depictions of the scene being explicable in a different way. This interpretation is both possible and much less natural.

The judgement of Paris, to which (says Proclus) Hermes led the three goddesses on Zeus' instruction, is only once explicitly mentioned by Homer (*Il.* 24.25ff.) but the *Iliad* on several occasions implies it, even if reluctant for various reasons to give it overt prominence. It is an extremely popular episode in later literature and art. One cannot guess with any likelihood which of the numerous details as to Paris' behaviour and the goddesses' bribes found in these later sources derive from the *Cypria*. We cannot even tell whether the poem parenthetically explained Paris' presence on Mt. Ida by the familiar tradition of his previous exposure and discovery by a shepherd, or whether this son of a king was watching his father's flocks as naturally as Aeneas, at a later stage in the

same epic, guarded his family's cattle (below, p. 46f.). We do know, however, that the epic contained a description of Aphrodite's adornment, treated in terms reminiscent of Hera's beautification in the Iliadic *Deception of Zeus* (14.166ff.), Aphrodite's own in the *Homeric Hymn* to that deity (v.56ff.) and of the decking-out of Pandora in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (v.60ff.). According to F 4:

> She set on her skin the garments which the Graces and the Seasons had made and dyed in the flowers of spring-time, garments such as the Seasons wear, dyed in crocus and hyacinth and in the blooming violet and in the fair flower of the rose, sweet and fragrant, and in ambrosial flowers of the narcissus and the lily.
>
> Such were the garments fragrant in all seasons that Aphrodite put on herself.

A slightly later stage of the narrative seems to be represented in F 5:

> Laughter-loving Aphrodite, together with her attendants <...> plaiting fragrant garlands out of flowers of the earth they set them upon their heads, the goddesses with their bright head-bands, the Nymphs and Graces, and with them golden Aphrodite, with fair song down the mountain of Ida rich in springs...

F 4 in particular has been deemed rather vacuously ornamental in comparison with the other epic instances of the motif of a goddess' self-beautification: the list of flowers meanders confusingly and the repetition of the word for 'flower' (*anthos*) three times in five lines does not display the archaic device of emphasis through duplication at its most elegant.

Proclus tells us that Paris' verdict in favour of Aphrodite was elicited by her promise of union with Helen. F 6 and F 7 of the *Cypria* deal respectively with the divergent destinies of the sons of Tyndareus and Leda:

> Castor was mortal, and the fate of death is allotted to him, but Polydeuces, scion of Ares, was immortal;

and the pursuit of Helen's mother Nemesis by Zeus:

> And after these two sons he begot as third offspring a girl, Helen, a wonder to mortals <...> Her once in the past fair-tressed Nemesis, after mingling in love, bore to Zeus king of the gods, by the dictates of a harsh destiny. For at first Nemesis tried to escape and was unwilling to mingle with him in a loving embrace, with him Zeus the father, son of Cronus, because her mind was oppressed with the feeling of shame and indignation. Therefore by land and by the limitless dark water of the sea she tried to escape, but Zeus pursued her, and was eager in his heart to get hold of her, as now she fled through the wave of the loud-roaring sea, transformed into the shape of a fish and set in tumult the vast waters, and now she fled across the Ocean river and the limits of the earth, and now again over the dry land with its fruitful clods. And all this time she kept changing into the various wild animals that the land nurtures in order to be finally quit of him.

F 6 might in theory have occurred in connection with any one of the numerous opportunities for mentioning the Dioscuri provided by the plot of the *Cypria*. But clearly it best fits their first and earliest mention. F 7 and its picture of Zeus' pursuit of Nemesis (with the ultimate purpose of begetting Helen) might be thought suitable for placing in the vicinity of Zeus' consultation with Themis as to his grand master-plan (above, p. 34f.). But it opens with an indubitable reference to the Dioscuri, who are at best tangential to that plan; and the Greek word *pote* ('once') used of the birth of Helen in v.2, tells against direct narrative. A particularly plausible suggestion locates both fragments in the context of the judgement of Paris, perhaps in a speech made to Paris by Aphrodite (Proclus' summary proceeds to relate various items of advice and instruction given by the goddess, and Paris' visit to Greece, where he is entertained first by the Dioscuri and then by Helen).

Homer characteristically omits from his epics the tradition that Peleus, before he could wed Thetis, had to capture her by force, wrestling with her on the sea-shore and holding on to her despite her shape-changing. The poet of the *Cypria*, though possessed by none of Homer's reluctance to include details redolent of folk-tale, seems likewise to have decided against incorporating this primeval detail

within his poem: it would be at odds with his presumed picture (above, p. 34) of a Thetis *rewarded* by Hera with Peleus as husband and therefore unable to complain or resist. Instead, he transferred the motif, from its original and apposite association with the sea-sprite Thetis, to a rather less obviously appropriate connection with Nemesis, the personification of retribution. From F 8 we learn what happened when Zeus finally caught up with Nemesis: the two coupled in the form of male and female goose, and Nemesis later produced an egg from which Helen was born. The idea that Zeus, disguised as a swan, mated with Leda who gave birth to the famous egg from which Helen (and the Dioscuri) emerged, is infinitely more familiar to *us*: but its first explicit attestation is not until Euripides' *Helen*, and some would have it that it was Euripides who invented the story. The two versions are obviously closely linked, but it is not easy to say which came first and served as model for the other. A reconciling tradition, that Leda came across the egg and vicariously nurtured it and the children that emerged, is dateable quite early (it occurred in a poem by Sappho (fr. 166 LP)), so it may be that the *Cypria* replaced Leda with Nemesis in order to achieve further symbolic personification (compare above, p. 34). Leda certainly seems to have featured in our epic as mother of Castor and Polydeuces. F 6's picture of twins one immortal (because begotten by a god), one mortal (because begotten by a mortal) is another widely spread folk-tale motif which the *Iliad* rejects (in 3.243f. they are both dead), and the mortal and immortal in the *Cypria*'s case must have been Tyndareus and Zeus.

As hinted above, Proclus tells how the judgement was followed by Paris' construction of ships on Aphrodite's advice. His brother Helenus prophesied the future; Aphrodite instructed that her son Aeneas sail with Paris; Paris' sister Cassandra in turn prophesied the future. This arrant reduplication has created some disillusionment and disgust either with the *Cypria*'s repetitive poet or with Proclus as unreliable epitomiser. The episodes certainly have an unHomeric feel to them: Helenus and Cassandra are neither of them at all prominent in Homer's epics and when they are mentioned nothing is said of any prophetic powers (the raving prophetess is particularly alien to Homer's skilfully selective poetic world). But it must be said that in contrast to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (and like Virgil's *Aeneid*) the *Cypria* obviously laid great stress on

oracles and prophecies (see for example below, pp. 42 and 45).

Paris (continues Proclus) sailed to Lacedaemon in Greece and was entertained first by the sons of Tyndareus and then by Menelaus in Sparta. Again the duplication is striking and may originally have had some point. A number of scholars have deduced from later sources that the banquet at which Castor and Polydeuces entertained Paris saw an ugly brawl break out between the Dioscuri and their cousins the sons of Aphareus, when the latter taunted the former over the unceremonious manner in which they had abducted Hilaeira and Phoebe (cousins of the sons of Aphareus) to be their brides. The two girls were certainly mentioned in the *Cypria* (F 9). It would have been an economic device if some such brawl had given Paris the idea of abducting Helen and determined the Dioscuri on their later fatal theft of the cattle of the sons of Aphareus (below, p. 40) to serve as dowry for their brides. We also know that the *Cypria* touched on Helen's earlier abduction (as a child) by Theseus, when her brothers the Dioscuri had been called on to rescue her (F 12). That detail too could have had a thematic relevance.

F 10 tells us that, in contrast to Homer (who gave Helen and Menelaus only one child (Hermione) and Helen and Paris none) the poet of the *Cypria* gave Helen and Menelaus a son Pleisthenes (who came with Helen to Cyprus on her flight) and Helen and Paris a son Aganus. Such proliferation of offspring characterises later epic as opposed to the severer world of Homer (see pp. 80 and 89). In his poems Helen's beauty and aura of mystery cannot be diminished by the presence of a whole brood of offspring; the illegitimate liaison of Helen and Paris must be distinguished from a real marriage by its literal sterility; and the sheerly practical question of what to do with Helen's children by Paris after Troy has fallen can be totally side-stepped.

As regards Paris' entertainment at Sparta we learn from Proclus that Helen received gifts from Paris and that Menelaus, on having to sail to Crete, left his wife with instructions to entertain Paris and his retinue appropriately until they departed. The untimely call to Crete recurs in later authors, and the extra detail in Apollod. *Epit.* 3.3 that Menelaus was required to attend his maternal grandfather's funeral probably derives from our epic. Menelaus' instructions to Helen seem inept in view of the sequel. That Proclus' summary saw fit to mention so seemingly

trivial a detail might suggest that the *Cypria* stressed the perversity.

At any rate, Aphrodite brought together Paris and Helen and after making love they sailed off at night taking a great deal of Menelaus' property with them (cf. *Il.* 3.70ff., 91ff., 282ff. etc.). So says Proclus, who continues with the statement that Hera, <resentful after the judgement of Paris,> sent a storm which drove the erring couple to Sidon: Paris sacked the city and then sailed back off to Troy where he celebrated his marriage to Helen. This portion of Proclus' summary raises one of the most thorny problems concerning the *Cypria*. For F 11 (that is Herodotus 2.117) states, by contrast, that Paris took only three days to bring Helen from Greece to Troy because he enjoyed a favourable breeze and a calm sea. How explain the contradiction? Many scholars have resorted to the likelihood that Proclus' summaries have occasionally been adjusted to bring their details into line with Homer's epics (see above, p. 7) but this does nothing to clarify the present difficulty; for the storm mentioned by Proclus does not feature in the relevant Homeric passages (*Il.* 6.289ff. and *Od.* 4.227ff.). Herodotus' own summary of these lines is rather misleading (he implies that Homer says Paris was forced to put in at Sidon) and it may be that his well-known contrast of the *Cypria*'s calm voyage with the Iliadic scheme has (in over-simplified form) influenced Proclus' phrasing.

Since the Dioscuri had intervened on an earlier occasion to rescue Helen from abduction (F 12), it was necessary to explain why they were powerless to help now and why they were absent from the Trojan expedition (cf. *Il.* 3.243f.). So Proclus observes that while Paris was bringing Helen to Troy, Castor and Polydeuces were detected by Idas and Lynceus, the sons of Aphareus, as they tried to rustle their cattle. The cattle-raid as heroic exploit is yet another popular folk-tale motif. A few lines of description from this part of the poem are preserved as F 13:

> Lynceus quickly sped to Taygetus, trusting in his swift feet. And climbing to the topmost part of the mountain he gazed over the whole island of Pelops, son of Tantalus, and swiftly the glorious hero espied with his formidably sharp eyes hidden within the hollow of an oak both of them, Castor the tamer of horses and Polydeuces winner of contests. So standing by the mighty oak he struck <...>.

The sequel as outlined by Proclus (and confirmed by several authors later than the *Cypria*) is that Castor was killed by Idas, and Lynceus and Idas by Polydeuces. F 14 adds the slightly sharper perspective that Castor was *speared* by Idas. Then (to revert to Proclus' summary) Zeus bestowed alternative immortality upon the Dioscuri (a detail also recounted in, for instance, *Od.* 11.300ff.).

Pindar's superb narrative of these events (*Nemean* 10.60ff.) seems to derive from the *Cypria*, though he characteristically recasts those details that might discredit the Dioscuri. In his account Castor is not lurking treacherously with his brother inside a hollow oak, but casually sitting on the stump of an oak-tree far from Polydeuces, who has to run to his aid when the two sons of Aphareus attack. The preternaturally lynx-sharp eyes of the appropriately named Lynceus are another of the features that set the *Cypria* apart from Homer's epics.

Proclus' résumé continues with the information that Iris brought the news of his wife's elopement to Menelaus (Iris was, then, messenger of the gods, as in the *Iliad*). Menelaus proceeded to confer with his brother Agamemnon concerning the expedition against Troy, and then moved on to visit Nestor. Nestor parenthetically related to him in a digression several mythical events: Epopeus' seduction of the daughter of Lycurgus and his consequent destruction; the story of Oedipus; the madness of Heracles; and the story of Theseus and Ariadne. Homer's epics often employ myths paradigmatically to point a moral, and the Iliadic Nestor on several occasions puts myths to this use. It is not difficult to see how the first and fourth of Nestor's tales in the *Cypria* might have furnished edifying precedents for the punishment of sexual escapades (for the early version of the Theseus and Ariadne story which concludes with the latter's killing by Artemis, see *Od.* 11.322ff. and Eur. *Hipp.* 339). The second and third tales are less obviously explicable in this light: perhaps we do not know enough of the relevant versions, perhaps Nestor's sense of relevance was deficient in comparison with the Iliadic standard (the accumulation of *exempla* is certainly without parallel in Homer). F 15 may conceivably belong to the same context; someone gave Menelaus the following pointed advice:

> I tell you, Menelaus, it is wine that the gods have devised as the best means for mortal men to disperse their cares.

Menelaus, Agamemnon and Nestor then proceeded through Greece gathering the leaders for the expedition. So says Proclus' summary which next presents as with some strikingly unHomeric details: Odysseus is unwilling to participate in the expedition and feigns madness, but is unmasked when, at Palamedes' prompting; Odysseus' son Telemachus is snatched up with a view to punishing Odysseus. The compressed narrative again becomes clearer in the light of later accounts which tell how Odysseus' assumed madness was manifested by his attempting to plough the sea-shore and sow it with salt, a ploy brought to an abrupt end when his infant son Telemachus was set down in the path of the plough. Madness (feigned or genuine) is strikingly absent from the Homeric epics; alien to them likewise is the notion that a hero would dishonourably seek to avoid battle (like Amphiaraus before the Seven's assault on Thebes: see p. 27). Only heroic anger and resentment such as Achilles' is allowed by Homer as a legitimate motive for such abstinence. Finally the figure of Palamedes goes totally without mention in either the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. Later authors explain that it was the present thwarting of Odysseus' scheme that inspired the hostility which finally led to Palamedes' death (below, p. 48).

By contrast, the next section of Proclus' summary is remarkably consistent with the Iliadic scheme of things: the Greek force assembled at Aulis and made sacrifice. An omen involving a snake and sparrows was witnessed, and the seer Calchas drew conclusions for the future. All this fits with the account given by Odysseus in *Il.* 2.303ff. (the snake's devouring of nine sparrows before it is miraculously turned to stone by Zeus portends as many years of war before final success in the tenth) as well as matching the *Cypria's* predilection for prophecies and the miraculous.

A complete contrast follows with the markedly unHomeric content of the next section of Proclus' résumé. The Greek forces sailed to the land of Teuthrania, put in there, and proceeded to ravage it under the misapprehension that it was Troy. Telephus <the king of the region> sallied out, killed Thersander son of Polyneices and <one of the Greek leaders> and was in turn himself wounded by Achilles. Some scholars have ingeniously tried to detect indirect allusions to this abortive expedition in the narrative of the *Iliad* but they have rightly failed to carry

conviction. It may well be that the author of the *Cypria* invented the Teuthranian expedition as a prelude to the Trojan War proper. He may also have created many of the details that characterise the former by transferring motifs from the opening episode of the latter; for, as reconstructed from later writers, the Teuthranian episode reads like a doublet of the initial invasion of Troy. His aim was presumably to diversify the plot of his epic and introduce battle-scenes that the Trojans' long refusal to fight would largely deny him once he had brought his Greek forces to Troy.

<Recognising their error> the Greeks sailed away from Mysia only to be beset by a storm (Proclus continues). Their forces were thereby scattered and Achilles put in at the island of Scyros where he married Deidameia, daughter of Lycomedes. F 16 of the *Cypria* comes handily to our aid here. It tells us that the poem gave a rather more refined account of the name of Achilles' son Neoptolemus than we get in Homer, to wit that his grandfather Lycomedes called him Pyrrhus ('red-haired'), and that Neoptolemus was the name given him by Phoenix (Achilles' tutor, as in the *Iliad*) because his father Achilles was young (*neos*) when he began to fight in war (*ptolemein*). The idea of naming a child after the qualities or achievements of one of its parents is quite common in early Greek poetry (e.g., according to some, Telemachus was so named because his father Odysseus was far away (*têle-*) fighting a battle (*machê*) at Troy).

The detail of Achilles' putting in at Scyros is not fully intelligible without reference to a further tradition. At an earlier stage Peleus, aware that his son was fated to die at Troy, had hidden him away on the isle of Scyros. Here he was brought up among girls and dressed as such until Odysseus, searching for the hero without whom (according to an oracle) Troy could not fall, ferreted him out by a famous device. Together with Phoenix and Nestor he went to Scyros and saw to it that a number of weapons along with baskets and equipment for weaving were set down before the young girls' quarters. Alone of the 'girls' Achilles picked up the weapons and was thereby detected. A late source attributes this story to poets of the Epic Cycle (*Fr. incert. loc.* 4) and most scholars assume that the *Cypria* was meant, but there are other possibilities (below, p. 64). The same source tells us that these Cyclic poets also related how

Achilles slept with Deidameia and begot Neoptolemus while he was hidden among the girls.

To return to Proclus: he next relates how Telephus, following the dictates of an oracle, arrived at Argos and was healed by Achilles on the understanding that he would then guide the expedition to Troy. Once again it is hard not to be struck by the unHomerically important role assigned to prophecies and oracular pronouncements and to folk-tale motifs, like 'the wounder shall heal', which underlie this part of the poem. How many of the subsidiary details later found in Euripides' *Telephus* (Austin, *Nova Fragmenta Euripidea* pp. 66ff.) were already present in the *Cypria's* treatment it is not easy to say.

Proclus then summarises events during the expedition's second gathering at Aulis: Agamemnon's ill-timed boast that he had surpassed Artemis in the skill with which he shot a deer; the angry goddess' penning-up of the fleet at Aulis with stormy winds; Calchas' explanation of her wrath and his demand for the sacrifice of Iphigeneia as appeasement; the summoning of Iphigeneia to the Greek camp under the pretext of marriage to Achilles; and the attempt at sacrifice thwarted by Artemis, who substituted a deer and transported Iphigeneia to the land of the Taurians. All of this again achieves a very unHomeric impression. The primitive concept of the sacrifice of a young virgin to achieve an expedition's success is totally alien to the ethos of Homer's poems, which, indeed, preserve a sedulous silence as to the existence of Iphigeneia. In *Iliad* 9 Agamemnon mentions three daughters as part of his list of inducements to Achilles to renounce his anger, and a very idiosyncratic set of names they bear in contrast to what we might expect after reading, for instance, the Athenian tragedians on the family of Agamemnon. Chrysothemis, Laodice and Iphianassa (145 = 287) are Homer's three daughters of Agamemnon. Their melodious and etymologically symbolic names may have been invented *ad hoc* by the poet. Laodice and Iphianassa were identified by some later writers with Electra and Iphigeneia, but Homer's original plan may have been to distract his audience's minds from the grim stories attached to those unhappy heroines. Certainly his Iphianassa is still alive in the ninth year of the war, and we learn from F 17 that the poet of the *Cypria* distinguished her from Iphigeneia by giving Agamemnon four daughters (the

remaining two presumably Electra and Chrysothemis). The miraculous substitution of the deer for Iphigeneia is another of those folk-tale motifs for which Homer has little time.

Even at this stage the *Cypria*'s poet seems to have given his epic's plot further twists and elaborations before allowing the Greeks to reach Troy. Proclus says their force put in at Tenedos (no resistance or fighting is specifically mentioned). While the Greeks were feasting on Tenedos, Philoctetes was bitten by a water-snake and the stench of his wound grew so dreadful that he had to be abandoned (on the isle of Lemnos). Thus was his absence from all but the tenth year of the Trojan War explained (cf. *Il* 2.718ff.). A hero with an incurable but not fatal wound is markedly unHomeric. Achilles was summoned late (Proclus proceeds) and quarrelled with Agamemnon. Heroic quarrels (such as that between the two self-same heroes which opens the *Iliad*) were a common motif of early epic. Some scholars have tried to identify the *Cypria*'s disagreement with one or other of these (e.g. that at *Od.* 8.72ff.) but the likeliest amplification of the detail in Proclus' summary bases itself on Sophocles' lost tragedy *The Fellow Feasters* (*Syndeipnoi*: see *Tr.G.F.* 4.425ff. Radt). Here, it seems, Achilles quarrelled with the Greeks on Tenedos because he was invited late to a feast.

F 19 may be mentioned next because it certainly suggests a further retardation of his plot by the *Cypria*'s poet. It tells how King Anius of Delos tried to persuade the Greek forces to stay with him because divine knowledge had been granted him and he foresaw nine unsuccessful years of war before the final victory (again the penchant for the oracular and prophetic manifests itself: see p. 38f.). Scholars have perhaps been excessively ready to infer from other sources that the *Cypria* too exploited the further detail that Anius' daughters the Oenotropoi supplied the Greek forces at Troy with food (rescuing them, by one account, from a serious famine). Nothing of this is in our fragment, which merely states that Anius promised his daughters would maintain the Greeks *in Delos*. The three daughters with their etymologically significant names – Oeno ('wine-girl'), Spermo ('seed-girl'), Elais ('oil-girl') – are nevertheless a further token of the poem's liking for the marvellous and the romantically picturesque.

At last the Greeks reached Troy. Proclus tells us that their landing

was opposed by the Trojans, and that Protesilaus was killed by Hector. Protesilaus' role in the epic is amplified by F 18, which reminds us that, when the Greeks were hesitating to disembark on Trojan soil, Protesilaus, appropriately for his name, was the *first* who dared to *leap* ashore. Apollod. *Epit.* 3.29f. completes the pattern of the story with the detail that Thetis ordered Achilles not to be the first to set foot on shore, for the first such person was doomed to die. The *Cypria*'s fondness for such prophecies and for such ancient motifs as the sacrifice of the initiator's life to ensure an enterprise's success encourages the hypothesis that our poem contained this detail too. F 18 also names Protesilaus' wife as Polydora daugher of Oeneus.

Returning to Proclus we learn that Achilles' slaying of Cycnus ensured the rout of the Trojans. The Greeks recovered their corpses.

Proclus' next item, the Greeks' embassy to Troy requesting the return of Helen and the property stolen with her, was a popular theme in a good deal of later art and literature (it is already implied at *Il.* 3.205ff., where Odysseus and Menelaus are mentioned as ambassadors). The request being refused (says Proclus), the Greeks invested the city and then ravaged the countryside and the surrounding towns. After this, Achilles was desirous of seeing Helen, and Aphrodite and Thetis brought them together. This is an extremely unHomeric episode. The mention of Aphrodite surely indicates that the bringing together was sexual: the bravest hero and the fairest heroine appropriately united, just as (according to another tradition) they lived together on the island of Leuce after their deaths. That version was probably the inspiration for the *Cypria*'s idea of an earlier encounter (note that the *Hesiodic Catalogue of Women* (Hes. fr. 204.87ff, MW) claims that Achilles would have married Helen had he been old enough to compete as a suitor). The romantic elaboration is characteristic of much of the Epic Cycle. Proclus' next detail probably relates directly to what has gone before: the Greek forces revolted and tried to go home but Achilles checked them – presumably because of his meeting with the direct cause of the war. This is superficially similar to Odysseus' restraining of the host at *Il.* 2.169ff. but really very different, if purely selfish and romantic motives underlay Achilles' action.

Much of what comes next in Proclus' summary reads like a definite attempt on the part of the poet to prepare for events in the *Iliad*. For we

are told that Achilles drove off the cattle of Aeneas and sacked Lyrnessus and Pedasus together with many of the surrounding cities. Two passages in the *Iliad* presuppose this theft of cattle (for whose status as heroic act see above, p. 40f.) followed by the destruction of the two cities: 2.688ff. and 16.56f. And yet an independent fragment from our poem seems to suggest that the fit between Homer's and this epic was not completely snug and comfortable. For F 21, as naturally approached, states that the *Cypria*'s Achilles captured Briseis, the slave-girl so crucial to the Iliadic wrath-theme, from Pedasus. In the *Iliad*, of course, she comes from Lyrnessus. Only a strained interpretation of the fragment's wording can avoid this inconcinnity.

Next in Proclus' summary comes Achilles' murder of Troilus. Like Cassandra and Helenus (see above, p. 38) Troilus is a child of Priam whom Homer mentions very sparingly indeed. His death at Achilles' hands becomes a very popular motif in later literature and art, but is variously represented. Sometimes he is depicted as killed in ambush or slaughtered on the altar of Apollo; sometimes his killing is associated with Achilles' sighting of Polyxena, with whom Achilles falls in love; sometimes Achilles himself is given homosexual feelings for Troilus. All and any of which associations are quite incompatible with the heroic world as constructed by Homer.

After this detail Proclus proceeds with an account of how Patroclus sold Lycaon, another son of Priam, into slavery in Lemnos and how, in the distribution of booty, Achilles received Briseis while Agamemnon got Chryseis. Once again there is the impression of a preparation for significant motifs in the *Iliad* (on Lycaon cf. 21.34ff.). F 22 reveals that the *Cypria* had an explanation for Chryseis' presence in Hypoplacian Thebes (her place of capture): she was attending a festival of Artemis. This detail looks very much like an attempt to answer the question 'Why does the *Iliad* (1.366) present Chryseis as captured in a city other than Chryse, to which she is linked by name as well as father?' A scholion on the relevant line of the *Iliad* gives additional details: Chryseis was visiting Iphinoe, daughter of Actor; Athena <foreseeing the wrath> had forbidden Achilles to sack Chryse. These may also derive from the *Cypria*.

Next the *Cypria* treated the death of Palamedes. Proclus' lapidary

statement to this effect conceals beneath its surface a remarkably un-Homeric treatment of a literally unHomeric figure (cf. above, p. 42). From F 20 we learn more about the mode of death: Palamedes was drowned by Diomedes and Odysseus while out fishing. The collaboration of Diomedes and Odysseus is Iliadic, but further from Homeric values one could hardly go than this tale of the cowardly and treacherous murder (to such an undignified background) of a fellow-Greek. (Fishing in Homer is always a last resort due to the absence of a more heroic diet of meat: we recall that some authors mention a famine during the Trojan War (see above p. 45).) Later writers attribute a different, though no less Machiavellian, means of securing Palamedes' death to Odysseus. It is hardly surprising that the sympathetic treatment of the latter in the *Odyssey* has no room for mention of his rival from earlier days. The reason for Palamedes' absence from the *Iliad* is not so immediately obvious, but he seems in origin to be a type of the culture-hero, the *prôtos heuretês* or *primus inventor* of such aspects of civilisation as the alphabet and draughts, and, given this flavour of folk-lore, profoundly unHomeric.

Proclus' summary of the *Cypria* ends with two items as lapidary as his notice of Palamedes' death, but in this case, unfortunately, we have no fragments to lend independent illumination. What he says is that at the end of the poem there was mention of the will or plan of Zeus (the same two words as at F 1.7 and *Il.* 1.5: above, p. 34) to lighten the Trojan burden by causing Achilles to revolt from his duties to the Greek alliance; and a catalogue of the allies who fought on the Trojan side. One infers for the first detail some sort of intended link with the events of *Iliad* Book 1, though an accurate summary of the latter would state that Zeus wanted to honour Achilles rather than help the Trojans by making Achilles withdraw. Perhaps (as in F 1) the *Cypria* revised the Iliadic scheme; or perhaps Proclus' summary has been altered to bring it closer to the *Iliad*'s version than it originally was.

The catalogue of Trojan allies is not quite so problematic, especially if interpreted in light of the catalogue of the same given by Apollod. *Epit.* 3.34f. which is prefaced by the information that the allies only arrived during the ninth year of the war. This would neatly explain the catalogue's otherwise strangely late position within the *Cypria*. A catalogue of Trojan allies also occurs at *Il.* 2.816ff. but that is under a cloud of suspicion for a number of independent reasons, and the simplest deduction from Proclus is that the poet of the *Cypria* included a catalogue of Trojan allies because the *Iliad* in the form known to him was deficient in this respect (cf. below, p. 85 on a similar problem within the *Telegony*).

We have already considered above those fragments that can be located with certainty or by conjecture within the framework of the *Cypria's* plot. Some, however, are quite unplaceable. This is true, for instance, of F 23, which tells us that the poem specified Eurydice as the name borne by the wife of Aeneas, a hero who featured on several occasions during the poem. F 24 reveals that someone said to somebody else at some point in the epic:

> It is Zeus the god, who did this and who brought all these things to fruition, that you are unwilling to name: for where there is fear there, too, is shame.

A similarly unassignable generalisation is provided by F 25:

> Foolish the man who, while he kills the father, leaves the sons behind.

F 26 shows that the *Cypria* mentioned the Gorgons and their island of Sarpedon (in what context we cannot hope to guess):

> And conceiving by him she bore to him the Gorgons, baleful monsters, who dwelt on Sarpedon, by the deep-edying Ocean, a rocky isle.

Finally, the intriguing F 27 brings the surprising news that the *Cypria*'s poet had Polyxena die after being wounded by Odysseus and Diomedes at the sack of Troy, and be buried by Neoptolemus. Surprising, because this version of events is so very different from the *Sack of Troy*'s more familiar tradition that Neoptolemus sacrificed her to his father's shade (below, p. 73); surprising also because we have no real reason to suppose that the main narrative of our epic proceeded anything like so far as

the sack of Troy. Presumably this detail featured proleptically or parenthetically.

Scholars have also wanted to assign to the *Cypria* a number of unHomeric traditions that are so wide-spread and tenacious in later accounts that they must (it is felt) have featured in some early and influential epic. These include the notion of an oath by the suitors of Helen to come to recover her should she ever be abducted from her chosen husband; and the picture of Achilles reared (like his father) by the centaur Chiron and fed on the innards and marrow of wild beasts, so that he sympathetically absorbed their speed and strength.