

## An Overburdened Earth? The Trojan Allies and the end of the *Cypria*

It has been argued that the Cyclic *Cypria* lacked a real ending (e.g. Bethe 241), seeming rather to trail off with a series of disjointed episodes leading up to the starting-point of the *Iliad* and terminating with a catalogue of the Trojans' allies (see Proclus's summary, *Cypria* arg. 66-68 Bernabé). I argue that the final catalogue of Trojan allies furnished an ending that was integral to the *Cypria*'s overall conception of the Trojan War. Moreover, I argue that the depiction of the Trojan allies in Homer's *Iliad* reflects some aspects of their likely function in this later epic.

It is well known that the *Cypria* followed a particular conception of the "plan of Zeus" (Διὸς βουλή) as a plot to alleviate the burden of overpopulation on the earth by contriving a vast war, a fundamental idea introduced very early in the poem (*Cypria*, fr. 1, cf. arg. 4, Marks 6-7). The idea of the Trojan War as a global cataclysm has parallels in Hesiod and Near Eastern epic (Burkert 100-03), but seems quite alien to the historical realism of Homer and may have required some justification (cf. Reeves 213-14, Koenen 27). A fully elaborated epic catalogue of Trojan allies, essentially along the lines of the great catalogues of *Iliad* Book 2, would have served this purpose admirably. Early Greek catalogue poetry shows a particularly strong interest in geography and is also a primary epic device for representing huge armies and roughly quantifying large numbers of ordinary troops (Sammons 153-54, cf. Heiden 132-36). By representing the allies as arriving in great numbers from a broad swathe of the barbarian world, a lengthy catalogue would have helped to represent the Trojan War as a kind of "world war" whose outcome could have an effect on the population of the earth. Finally, the influx of allies dramatized by the catalogue would have inaugurated a strategic stalemate only to be broken by the eventual apostasy and return of Achilles (cf. *Cypria* arg. 66-68, Scaife 172); this would

explain the deployment of the catalogue at the end of the poem (immediately preceding the events of the *Iliad*) rather than in the part dealing with the first hostilities. The catalogue would thus have looked forward to its intended “sequel” (the events of the *Iliad*) as well as binding the end of the *Cypria* closely with its beginning (Zeus’s plan to alleviate the earth).

In general Homer seems to have little use for the Trojan allies and never offers an explanation for their presence at Troy, yet his depiction of them accords with the above reconstruction in several ways. The portion of the Catalogue of Trojans dealing with the allies shows the same geographical scheme as the Catalogue of Ships, with reference to the great distances from which the allies have come (τηλόθεν: 2.857, 863, 877) and unusual ethnographic details (2.852, 857). In a few places Homer mentions the idea that the allies are a polyglot horde (*Il.* 2.803-6, 4.437-38). In a key passage, Agamemnon speaks at length about the great number of allies (according to him, 90% of the Trojans forces) and how their presence has prolonged the war (*Il.* 2.123-33). Hector speaks of them along similar lines, emphasizing the difficulty of provisioning so great a force (*Il.* 17.220-26, cf. 18.290-92). Although it remains doubtful whether Homer implicitly acknowledges the overpopulation theme, it seems likely that his own account of the Trojan allies belongs to a shared tradition with that of the *Cypria* (cf. Kullmann 167-73, Burgess 138-39). As for the *Cypria*, it likely ended on a resounding and suspenseful note, using a traditional device (the epic catalogue) in an untraditional way (at the very end of the poem) to reinforce a somewhat novel vision of the Trojan War.

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