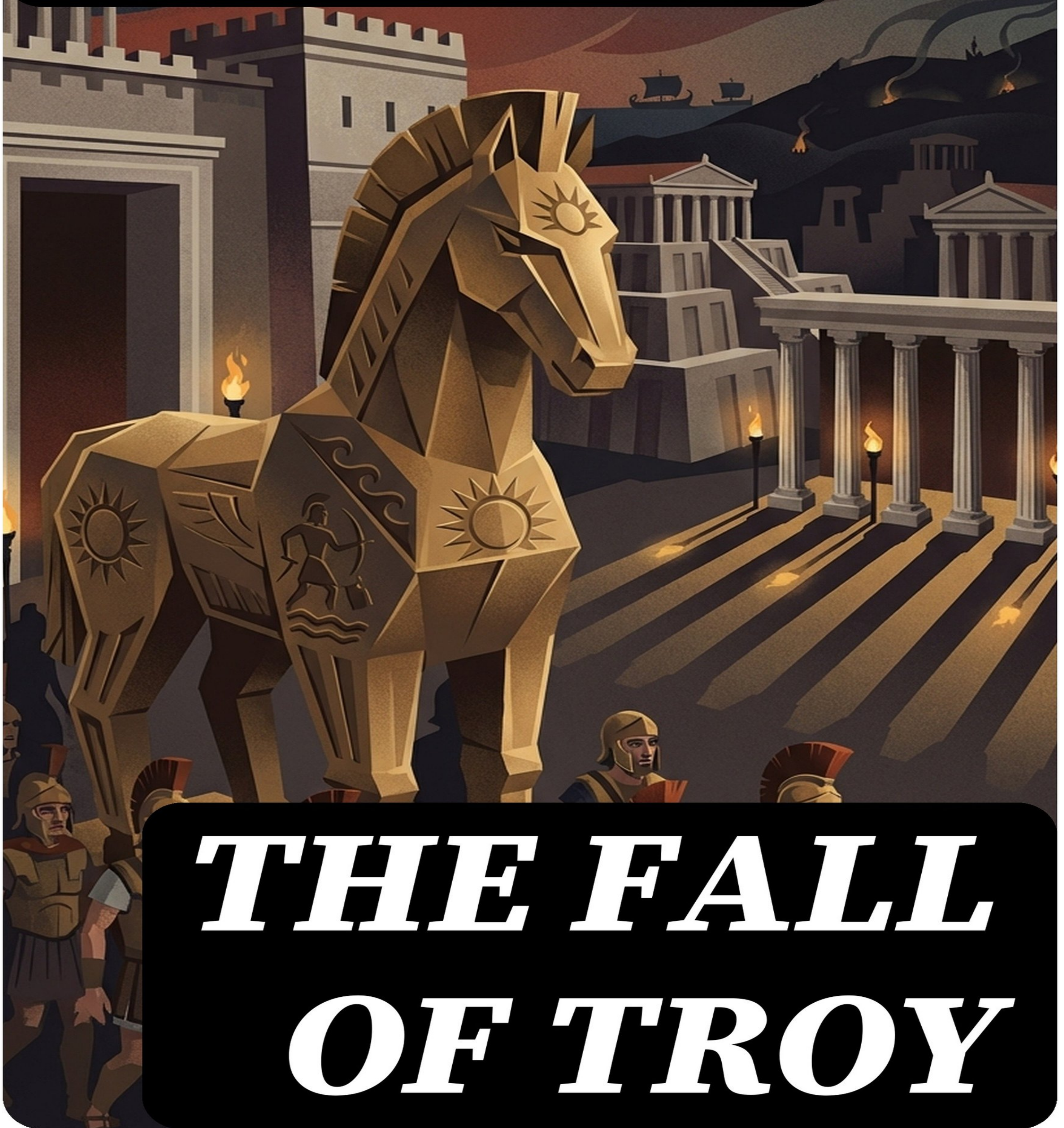
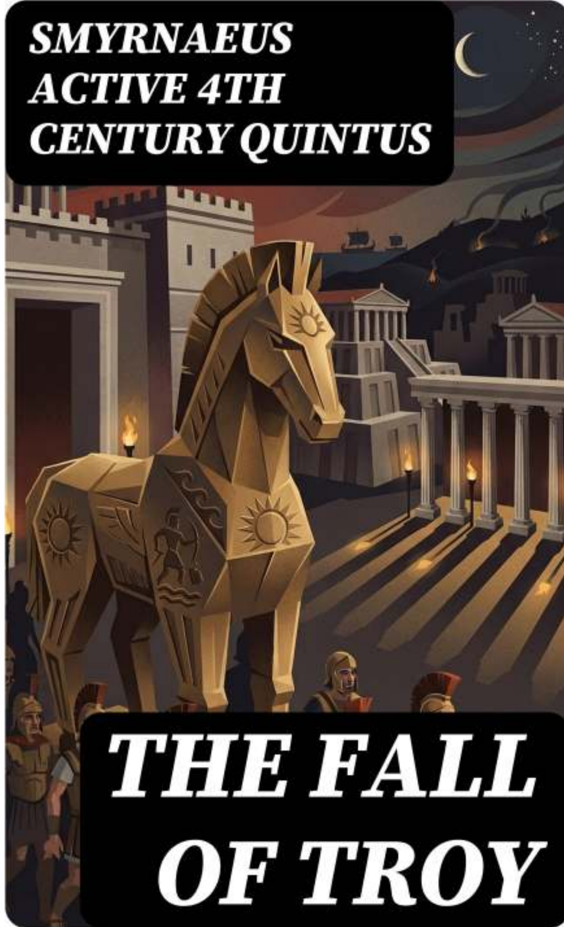
SMYRNAEUS ACTIVE 4TH CENTURY QUINTUS



THE FALL OF TROY


SMYRNAEUS
ACTIVE 4TH
CENTURY QUINTUS
THE FALL
OF TROY

Smyrnaeus active 4th century Quintus

The Fall of Troy

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Lucas Finch

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Introduction

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Between inherited glory and irrevocable loss, The Fall of Troy traces how the end of a legendary war tests what stories, loyalties, and lives can endure. Composed in Greek dactylic hexameter by Quintus Smyrnaeus (Quintus of Smyrna), a late antique poet active probably in the fourth century CE, this epic stands in the tradition of Homer while speaking from another age. Often known by its Latin title Posthomerica, it narrates the sequence of events after the Iliad closes, carrying the conflict toward its culmination. Set around Troy and the Greek encampment, it presents a panoramic theatre of strategy, combat, counsel, and lament.

The premise is simple yet expansive: where one canonical poem stops, this one begins, escorting readers through the war's final campaigns and the uncertain dawn that follows. The voice is elevated without being obscure, marked by stately rhythms, vivid similes, and formal speeches that weigh honor against prudence. Scenes of fierce action alternate with deliberation and grief, giving the narrative a pulse that rises and falls like the sea the armies cross. The tone is solemn rather than cynical, attentive to courage and to suffering, and the storytelling moves with clear momentum from episode to episode without presuming prior specialist knowledge.

At its heart, the poem examines the costs of victory and the fragility of fame. Glory can burn bright, but Quintus is

concerned with what remains when triumph fades—memory, grief, and the bonds of kinship that war strains to breaking. Human agency collides with forces beyond human control, whether named as fate, divine will, or the inertia of vengeance. The poem returns often to the work of mourning and the moral imagination required to see an enemy's suffering. In doing so, it complicates simple heroics, inviting readers to consider how communities survive endings and how stories carry the weight of loss.

As a work of epic in late antiquity, The Fall of Troy demonstrates how classical tradition remained a living conversation rather than a sealed monument. It extends the narrative arc that runs from the Iliad toward the broader cycle of returns, bridging a celebrated silence with sustained, artful continuity. The poem's Homeric idiom is not mere pastiche: it is a disciplined method for thinking about succession, inheritance, and change. Reading it beside earlier epics reveals continuities of form and striking shifts in emphasis, offering a case study in how cultures negotiate the authority of the past while speaking to their own moment.

Quintus gives attention to individual valor while widening the lens to include councils, communities, and the vulnerable who stand in war's path. Speeches articulate competing values—shame, mercy, prudence, steadfastness—and the poem allows each to sound persuasive before events test them. Laments and rituals register the human need to shape suffering into meaning. The narrative grants both Greek and Trojan perspectives room to breathe, so that antagonists are not abstractions but people bound by honor,

fear, and hope. Without abandoning the exhilaration of epic prowess, the poet insists that endurance, care, and remembrance are forms of strength that do not glitter.

Stylistically, the poem favors clarity within grandeur: lines unfold in steady hexameter, episodes cohere in well-shaped arcs, and transitions are guided by motifs that echo and return. Extended similes open the battlefield to the natural world, while precise catalogues and vivid set pieces give shape to the press of action. The gods are present as part of the epic cosmos, yet the poem's emotional force arises above all from human deliberation. Readers attuned to rhythm will hear an antique cadence; readers drawn to narrative will find a firm, cumulative build that remains accessible in translation without flattening its dignity.

For contemporary readers, The Fall of Troy matters because it treats endings not as silence but as work—ethical, communal, and imaginative. It shows how societies remember violence, how victory and defeat ripple beyond the field, and how storytelling itself repairs the breaks between past and present. In an era still marked by displacement, contested memory, and the search for closure, Quintus offers a disciplined meditation on what comes after. The poem rewards newcomers to classical myth as well as those exploring reception and intertextuality, reminding us that the classics endure not by fixity, but by carefully reimagining what seemed already complete.

Synopsis

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Quintus Smyrnaeus’s The Fall of Troy, a late antique Greek epic also known as the Posthomerica, resumes the Trojan War after Hector’s funeral and carries the story toward the city’s fate. In Homeric meter and idiom, it gathers scattered traditions into a continuous narrative that charts the war’s final phase. The opening frames a besieged Troy briefly heartened by new allies while the Achaeans, led by Achilles and the Atreidae, harden their resolve. Gods watch and intervene unstably, and councils and single combats alternate. From the outset the poem entwines valor, pity, and rivalry, setting a measured march of reversals under an ever-narrowing horizon.

The first surge comes with the arrival of Penthesilea, the Amazon queen who rides to defend Priam’s city. Her prowess lifts Trojan spirits and forces the Greeks to confront a fresh champion. Achilles meets her in battle; their encounter ends in her death and a complicated aftermath that exposes the costs of fame. A quarrel within the Greek camp over the treatment of her body briefly ruptures unity and requires ritual purification, reminding readers that victory can summon censure as well as acclaim. The episode establishes the poem’s balance of ferocity and scruple, as deeds on the field echo into council and shrine.

Another formidable ally soon appears: Memnon, son of a dawn goddess and king of distant warriors, whose arrival recharges Trojan hopes. His onslaught claims prominent

victims before Achilles answers and defeats him, a duel that widens the poem’s cosmic register without loosening its tragic undertow. In the next movement the counterstroke falls: Achilles himself is struck by a fatal arrow directed from the Trojan side with divine assistance, ending the Greeks’ fiercest flame. A desperate struggle for his body ensues, and Ajax carries it clear. Mourning and rites honor the fallen champion, yet his absence opens a contested space within the army.

That gap becomes the subject of public judgment when Achilles’ armor is offered to the most deserving. Speeches, testimonies, and deliberation resolve in favor of Odysseus, whose intelligence and endurance carry the day; Ajax, eclipsed, descends into a solitary disaster that darkens the camp. With morale shaken, the Achaeans seek guidance beyond ordinary counsel. Oracles and a captured seer identify conditions for success, including the need to recover a long-absent archer armed with the bow of Heracles and to summon Achilles’ young son. These mandates redirect the war from sheer attrition toward missions that test loyalty, healing, and generational succession.

Odysseus and companions retrieve Neoptolemus from Scyros and bring Philoctetes back from exile after remedying his wound. Restored to honor, Philoctetes returns to the line and brings down Paris with the inherited bow, a blow that jolts Trojan leadership. Neoptolemus quickly proves a ferocious spear on the Greek wing, while Troy finds brief relief when Eurypylus, a mighty ally from Mysia, arrives and crushes the Achaean ranks in furious fighting. The tide swings again when Neoptolemus meets and kills him. These

reversals sharpen the poem’s theme of succession: sons must reckon with legacies as they pursue victory under watchful gods.

With brute force insufficient, stratagem supplants siege. Odysseus conceives a ruse, and the craftsman Epeius constructs a towering wooden horse to mask a chosen force. The remaining host feigns withdrawal, leaving behind the ambiguous gift and a skilled deceiver. Inside Troy, debate rages: warnings are raised, and prodigies shock the city, yet persuasion and exhaustion turn judgment. The horse passes the gates. The focus tightens to stillness and suspense as night drops and the concealed company prepares to act, while the citizens, divided between piety and relief, celebrate a hard-won reprieve that the poem’s rhythm makes ominously provisional.

What follows completes the long arc from promise to ruin, narrated with alternating clash and lament. Quintus traces the city’s last convulsions, the fates of households, and the allotment of captives, then shifts to the Greeks’ preparations to depart amid storms of human and divine anger that presage troubled returns. The epic closes the gap between Iliad and Odyssey by gathering late episodes into one sustained poem, emphasizing the volatility of kleos, the burden of counsel, and the price of expedients. Its enduring resonance lies in this sober bridge: a late voice preserving the cycle’s end while inviting reflection rather than triumph.

Historical Context

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Quintus Smyrnaeus, commonly dated to the late third or early fourth century CE, composed The Fall of Troy (Posthomerica) in Greek dactylic hexameter, extending the Trojan narrative from the end of Homer's Iliad to Troy's destruction. He is associated with Smyrna (modern İzmir) in the Roman province of Asia, a prosperous port with active civic institutions such as council (boule), assemblies, and gymnasia. Under imperial rule, Smyrna cultivated Greek paideia and public festivals that showcased education and eloquence. In this milieu, a Homerizing epic was both a literary achievement and a civic credential, aligning Quintus's poem with the educational ideals of his city.

Greek literary life in Roman Asia was shaped by the long afterglow of the Second Sophistic, which prized mastery of classical models and staged displays of learned performance. Homer lay at the center of curricula administered by grammarians and rhetors; commentaries and scholia circulated widely in cities with libraries and schools. Smyrna claimed a special connection to Homer, maintaining a Homereion and promoting itself as the poet's city, as noted by Strabo. Composing a continuation in Homeric style thus resonated with institutional pride and educational practice, and The Fall of Troy functions as both homage and demonstration within this classicizing culture.

The poem emerged in a Roman world recently tested by the Crisis of the Third Century (235–284 CE), followed by

Diocletian's administrative reforms and the Tetrarchy. In Asia Minor, major cities like Smyrna retained commercial vitality and civic traditions, even amid episodic instability and reconstruction. Under Constantine in the early fourth century, imperial policy reorganized provinces and promoted new centers, while established Greek cities continued festivals and learned competitions. Rather than engage contemporary politics, The Fall of Troy turns to a panhellenic past that audiences shared across the empire, offering cultural cohesion through mythic exempla instead of topical commentary.

Quintus's narrative fills the span between Homer's Iliad and Odyssey by reworking episodes known in antiquity from the Epic Cycle, especially the Aethiopis, Little Iliad, and Iliou Persis. Those cyclic poems are lost, but their contents are summarized by later sources such as Proclus. Other treatments of Trojan material around the Roman era include Statius's unfinished Achilleid (Latin) and the Greek Iliou Halosis by Tryphiodorus, often placed in late antiquity. By adopting and reorganizing this shared mythic dossier, The Fall of Troy supplies a continuous Greek epic for readers trained to value the canon but lacking the cyclic originals.

The poem consists of fourteen books in dactylic hexameters, employing Homeric vocabulary, Ionic and Aeolic forms, recurrent epithets, and extended similes familiar from archaic epic. It stages conventional scenes—assemblies, embassies, arming, duels, laments—while amplifying descriptive set pieces prized by rhetorical schooling. The stylistic choices reflect a practiced mimesis of Homer under the discipline of late antique paideia, in

which close imitation signaled learning and virtuosity. In this way, The Fall of Troy operates as an advanced exercise in classical technique as well as narrative, demonstrating how inherited forms could be sustained and refreshed within Roman-era education.

Late antiquity brought religious pluralization to Asia Minor. Smyrna had longstanding Christian communities attested since the second century (for example, the martyrdom of Polycarp), yet traditional civic cults and festivals persisted into the fourth century. The Edict of Milan (313) legalized Christian worship, while Greek schools continued to center instruction on authors such as Homer. Fourth-century figures like Basil of Caesarea advised Christian youths on reading Greek literature selectively. In this environment, The Fall of Troy could circulate as cultural capital across confessional lines, embodying paideia without explicit religious polemic and underscoring the durability of Hellenic literary education.

The text survives chiefly in a fourteenth-century manuscript now in the Laurentian Library at Florence, whose provenance in southern Italy led early editors to call the poet “Quintus Calaber.” Renaissance humanists produced the first printed edition in Venice at the Aldine Press in the early sixteenth century, and subsequent philology restored the designation “Smyrnaeus,” attested in Byzantine sources and supported by internal indications. This transmission history highlights how The Fall of Troy, though a late antique work, was integrated into the early modern recovery of Greek classics and reassessed within historical linguistics and poetics.

The Fall of Troy presents war, counsel, divine agency, and heroic reputation in ways recognizable from Homer, yet its cumulative design addresses the needs of late antique readers formed by schools and public recitation. By converting a dispersed mythic archive into a continuous, decorous epic, Quintus offers exempla for moral reflection and models for style. The work neither debates current doctrines nor advertises imperial ideology; instead it validates a shared Hellenic memory under Roman rule. In doing so, it reflects its era’s classicizing confidence and preserves a pedagogical bridge between archaic epic and late antique culture.

The Fall of Troy

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INTRODUCTION

Homer's "Iliad" begins towards the close of the last of the ten years of the Trojan War: its incidents extend over some fifty days only, and it ends with the burial of Hector. The things which came before and after were told by other bards, who between them narrated the whole "cycle" of the events of the war, and so were called the Cyclic Poets**[1]**. Of their works none have survived; but the story of what befell between Hector's funeral and the taking of Troy is told in detail, and well told, in a poem about half as long as the "Iliad". Some four hundred years after Christ there lived at Smyrna a poet of whom we know scarce anything, save that his first name was Quintus. He had saturated himself with the spirit of Homer, he had caught the ring of his music, and he perhaps had before him the works of those Cyclic Poets whose stars had paled before the sun.

We have practically no external evidence as to the date or place of birth of Quintus of Smyrna, or for the sources whence he drew his materials. His date is approximately settled by two passages in the poem, viz. vi. 531 sqq., in which occurs an illustration drawn from the man-and-beast fights of the amphitheatre, which were suppressed by Theodosius I**[2]**. (379-395 A.D.); and xiii. 335 sqq., which contains a prophecy, the special particularity of which, it is maintained by Koechly, limits its applicability to the middle of the fourth century A.D.

His place of birth, and the precise locality, is given by himself in xii. 308-313, and confirmatory evidence is

afforded by his familiarity, of which he gives numerous instances, with many natural features of the western part of Asia Minor.

With respect to his authorities, and the use he made of their writings, there has been more difference of opinion. Since his narrative covers the same ground as the "Aethiopis" ("Coming of Memnon") and the "Iliupersis" ("Destruction of Troy") of Arctinus (circ. 776 B.C.), and the "Little Iliad" of Lesches (circ. 700 B.C.), it has been assumed that the work of Quintus "is little more than an amplification or remodelling of the works of these two Cyclic Poets." This, however, must needs be pure conjecture, as the only remains of these poets consist of fragments amounting to no more than a very few lines from each, and of the "summaries of contents" made by the grammarian Proclus (circ. 140 A.D.), which, again, we but get at second-hand through the "Bibliotheca" of Photius (ninth century). Now, not merely do the only descriptions of incident that are found in the fragments differ essentially from the corresponding incidents as described by Quintus, but even in the summaries, meagre as they are, we find, as German critics have shown by exhaustive investigation, serious discrepancies enough to justify us in the conclusion that, even if Quintus had the works of the Cyclic poets before him, which is far from certain, his poem was no mere remodelling of theirs, but an independent and practically original work. Not that this conclusion disposes by any means of all difficulties. If Quintus did not follow the Cyclic poets, from what source did he draw his materials? The German critic unhesitatingly answers, "from Homer." As

regards language, versification, and general spirit, the matter is beyond controversy; but when we come to consider the incidents of the story, we find deviations from Homer even more serious than any of those from the Cyclic poets. And the strange thing is, that each of these deviations is a manifest detriment to the perfection of his poem; in each of them the writer has missed, or has rejected, a magnificent opportunity. With regard to the slaying of Achilles by the hand of Apollo only, and not by those of Apollo and Paris, he might have pleaded that Homer himself here speaks with an uncertain voice (cf. "Iliad" xv. 416-17, xxii. 355-60, and xxi. 277-78). But, in describing the fight for the body of Achilles ("Odyssey" xxiv. 36 sqq.), Homer makes Agamemnon say:

"So we grappled the livelong day, and we had not refrained
us then,
But Zeus sent a hurricane, stilling the storm of the battle
of men."

Now, it is just in describing such natural phenomena, and in blending them with the turmoil of battle, that Quintus is in his element; yet for such a scene he substitutes what is, by comparison, a lame and impotent conclusion. Of that awful cry that rang over the sea heralding the coming of Thetis and the Nymphs to the death-rites of her son, and the panic with which it filled the host, Quintus is silent. Again, Homer ("Odyssey" iv. 274-89) describes how Helen came in the night with Deiphobus, and stood by the Wooden Horse, and called to each of the hidden warriors with the voice of his own wife. This thrilling scene Quintus omits, and substitutes

nothing of his own. Later on, he makes Menelaus slay Deiphobus unresisting, "heavy with wine," whereas Homer ("Odyssey" viii. 517-20) makes him offer such a magnificent resistance, that Odysseus and Menelaus together could not kill him without the help of Athena. In fact, we may say that, though there are echoes of the "Iliad" all through the poem, yet, wherever Homer has, in the "Odyssey", given the outline-sketch of an effective scene, Quintus has uniformly neglected to develop it, has sometimes substituted something much weaker—as though he had not the "Odyssey" before him!

For this we have no satisfactory explanation to offer. He may have set his own judgment above Homer—a most unlikely hypothesis: he may have been consistently following, in the framework of his story, some original now lost to us: there may be more, and longer, lacunae in the text than any editors have ventured to indicate: but, whatever theory we adopt, it must be based on mere conjecture.

The Greek text here given is that of Koechly (1850) with many of Zimmermann's emendations, which are acknowledged in the notes. Passages enclosed in square brackets are suggestions of Koechly for supplying the general sense of lacunae. Where he has made no such suggestion, or none that seemed to the editors to be adequate, the lacuna has been indicated by asterisks, though here too a few words have been added in the translation, sufficient to connect the sense.

—A. S. Way

BOOK

I How died for Troy the Queen of the Amazons, Penthesileia[3].

II How Memnon, Son of the Dawn, for Troy's sake fell in the Battle.

III How by the shaft of a God laid low was Hero Achilles.

IV How in the Funeral Games of Achilles heroes contended.

V How the Arms of Achilles were cause of madness and death unto Aias.

VI How came for the helping of Troy Eurypylus, Hercules' grandson.

VII How the Son of Achilles was brought to the War from the Isle of Scyros.

VIII How Hercules' Grandson perished in fight with the Son of Achilles.

IX How from his long lone exile returned to the war Philoctetes.

X How Paris was stricken to death, and in vain sought help of Oenone.

XI How the sons of Troy for the last time fought from her walls and her towers.

XII How the Wooden Horse was fashioned, and brought into Troy by her people.

XIII How Troy in the night was taken and sacked with fire and slaughter.

XIV How the conquerors sailed from Troy unto judgment of tempest and shipwreck.

BOOK I:

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How died for Troy the Queen of the Amazons, Penthesileia.

When godlike Hector by Peleides slain
Passed, and the pyre had ravined up his flesh,
And earth had veiled his bones, the Trojans then
Tarried in Priam's city, sore afraid
Before the might of stout-heart Aeacus' son:
As kine they were, that midst the copses shrink
From faring forth to meet a lion grim,
But in dense thickets terror-huddled cower;
So in their fortress shivered these to see
That mighty man. Of those already dead
They thought of all whose lives he reft away
As by Scamander's outfall on he rushed,
And all that in mid-flight to that high wall
He slew, how he quelled Hector, how he haled
His corse round Troy;—yea, and of all beside
Laid low by him since that first day whereon
O'er restless seas he brought the Trojans doom.
Ay, all these they remembered, while they stayed
Thus in their town, and o'er them anguished grief
Hovered dark-winged, as though that very day
All Troy with shrieks were crumbling down in fire.
Then from Thermodon, from broad-sweeping streams,
Came, clothed upon with beauty of Goddesses,
Penthesileia—came athirst indeed

For groan-resounding battle, but yet more
Fleeing abhorred reproach and evil fame,
Lest they of her own folk should rail on her
Because of her own sister's death, for whom
Ever her sorrows waxed, Hippolyte,
Whom she had struck dead with her mighty spear,
Not of her will—'twas at a stag she hurled.
So came she to the far-famed land of Troy.
Yea, and her warrior spirit pricked her on,
Of murder's dread pollution thus to cleanse
Her soul, and with such sacrifice to appease
The Awful Ones, the Erinnyes**[4]**, who in wrath
For her slain sister straightway haunted her
Unseen: for ever round the sinner's steps
They hover; none may 'scape those Goddesses.
And with her followed twelve beside, each one**[2q]**
A princess, hot for war and battle grim,
Far-famous each, yet handmaids unto her:
Penthesileia far outshone them all.
As when in the broad sky amidst the stars
The moon rides over all pre-eminent,
When through the thunderclouds the cleaving heavens
Open, when sleep the fury-breathing winds;
So peerless was she mid that charging host**[1q]**.
Clonie was there, Polemusa, Derinoe,
Evandre, and Antandre, and Bremusa,
Hippothoe, dark-eyed Harmothoe,
Alcibie, Derimacheia, Antibrote,
And Thermodosa glorying with the spear.
All these to battle fared with warrior-souled

Penthesileia: even as when descends
Dawn from Olympus' crest of adamant,
Dawn, heart-exultant in her radiant steeds
Amidst the bright-haired Hours; and o'er them all,
How flawless-fair soever these may be,
Her splendour of beauty glows pre-eminent;
So peerless amid all the Amazons Unto
Troy-town Penthesileia came.
To right, to left, from all sides hurrying thronged
The Trojans, greatly marvelling, when they saw
The tireless War-god's child, the mailed maid,
Like to the Blessed Gods; for in her face
Glowed beauty glorious and terrible.
Her smile was ravishing: beneath her brows
Her love-enkindling eyes shone like to stars,
And with the crimson rose of shamefastness
Bright were her cheeks, and mantled over them
Unearthly grace with battle-prowess clad.
Then joyed Troy's folk, despite past agonies,
As when, far-gazing from a height, the hinds
Behold a rainbow spanning the wide sea,
When they be yearning for the heaven-sent shower,
When the parched fields be craving for the rain;
Then the great sky at last is overgloomed,
And men see that fair sign of coming wind
And imminent rain, and seeing, they are glad,
Who for their corn-fields' plight sore sighed before;
Even so the sons of Troy when they beheld
There in their land Penthesileia dread
Afire for battle, were exceeding glad;

For when the heart is thrilled with hope of good,
All smart of evils past is wiped away:
So, after all his sighing and his pain,
Gladdened a little while was Priam's soul.
As when a man who hath suffered many a pang
From blinded eyes, sore longing to behold
The light, and, if he may not, fain would die,
Then at the last, by a cunning leech's skill,
Or by a God's grace, sees the dawn-rose flush,
Sees the mist rolled back from before his eyes,—
Yea, though clear vision come not as of old,
Yet, after all his anguish, joys to have
Some small relief, albeit the stings of pain
Prick sharply yet beneath his eyelids;—so
Joyed the old king to see that terrible queen—
The shadowy joy of one in anguish whelmed
For slain sons. Into his halls he led the Maid,
And with glad welcome honoured her, as one
Who greets a daughter to her home returned
From a far country in the twentieth year;
And set a feast before her, sumptuous
As battle-glorious kings, who have brought low
Nations of foes, array in splendour of pomp,
With hearts in pride of victory triumphing.
And gifts he gave her costly and fair to see,
And pledged him to give many more, so she
Would save the Trojans from the imminent doom.
And she such deeds she promised as no man
Had hoped for, even to lay Achilles low,
To smite the wide host of the Argive men,

And cast the brands red-flaming on the ships.
Ah fool!—but little knew she him, the lord
Of ashen spears, how far Achilles' might
In warrior-wasting strife o'erpassed her own!
    But when Andromache, the stately child
Of king Eetion, heard the wild queen's vaunt,
Low to her own soul bitterly murmured she:
"Ah hapless! why with arrogant heart dost thou
Speak such great swelling words? No strength is thine
To grapple in fight with Peleus' aweless son.
Nay, doom and swift death shall he deal to thee.
Alas for thee! What madness thrills thy soul?
Fate and the end of death stand hard by thee!
Hector was mightier far to wield the spear
Than thou, yet was for all his prowess slain,
Slain for the bitter grief of Troy, whose folk
The city through looked on him as a God.
My glory and his noble parents' glory
Was he while yet he lived—O that the earth
Over my dead face had been mounded high,
Or ever through his throat the breath of life
Followed the cleaving spear! But now have I
Looked—woe is me!—on grief unutterable,
When round the city those fleet-footed steeds
Haled him, steeds of Achilles, who had made
Me widowed of mine hero-husband, made
My portion bitterness through all my days."
    So spake Eetion's lovely-ankled child
Low to her own soul, thinking on her lord.

appears for various figures in Greek myth, so identifications can vary by source.

8 A Greek hero in the Trojan War tradition, traditionally counted as the first Greek to land at Troy and the first to be killed there (often said to have been slain by Hector).

9 A notorious figure in the epic tradition, depicted as a low-born, abusive, and contemptible Greek soldier who is mocked by other leaders; here his corpse is described as dishonourably buried.

10 A poetic epithet for Achilles (Aeacus was the grandfather of Achilles via Peleus); such patronymics were common in Greek epic to indicate ancestry and heroic lineage.

11 A legendary warrior-king, described as son of the Dawn (Eos) and leader of Aethiopian forces who aid Troy; in epic tradition he is a foreign ally of Troy who is slain in single combat, provoking mourning and mythic transformations.

12 A contingent of warriors in Greek myth led by Achilles, famed for their loyalty and prowess; later traditions link their name to a legendary origin (sometimes ants turned to men) and to the region of Phthia in Thessaly.

13 A patronymic epithet used throughout the poem to denote Achilles, indicating he is the son of Peleus and the sea-nymph Thetis.

14 A captive woman awarded to Achilles as a spoil of war in the Homeric tradition; her seizure by Agamemnon is a key cause of the quarrel between Achilles and the Achaean leadership.

15 Also called Nereids, these are the sea-nymph daughters of the sea-god Nereus who attend and comfort

Thetis; they are minor goddesses associated with the Mediterranean sea in Greek mythology.

16 In Greek myth the food or unguent of the gods, often said to confer immortality or to preserve divine bodies; here it is described as preserving the flesh of a slain warrior from corruption.

17 Aias is the Greek form of Ajax, son of Telamon, a principal Achaean (Greek) warrior famed for great strength and valor; here he is the hero who contests Odysseus for Achilles' arms.

18 Peleides is a patronymic meaning ‘son of Peleus’ and is used as an alternative name for Achilles, the foremost Greek warrior whose armour is the disputed prize.

19 Thetis is a sea-nymph (a Nereid) in Greek myth, mother of Achilles, who intervenes with the gods and the sea on behalf of her son; she is often portrayed as protecting or avenging Achilles.

20 The Nereids are sea-nymph daughters of the sea-god Nereus who accompany Thetis in mythic scenes at sea and in other divine acts associated with coastal and marine events.

21 Xanthus is the name of a river near the site of Troy (also called Scamander in some Greek sources), frequently mentioned in epic poetry as flowing by the Trojan plain and its ramparts.

22 A traditional formulaic epithet for Agamemnon and Menelaus, the sons of Atreus who are leaders of the Greek (Achaean/Danaan) forces in the Trojan War cycle.

23 Here a Trojan ally and great warrior who leads assaults on the Achaean ships; several different mythic

figures bear the name, but the poem's context identifies him as the powerful foe opposing the Greeks in this episode.

24 An epic term for the Greeks (also called Danaans or Achaeans) used across Homeric and later epic poetry to denote the Greek contingent at Troy.

25 A famed healer and warrior in Greek myth, traditionally a son of the god Asclepius and a chief physician of the Achaean army, mourned and honoured by the Greeks in the epic tradition.

26 A minor Greek warrior often noted in Homeric tradition for his exceptional beauty but limited physical strength; he is described here as loved and mourned though not foremost in battle prowess.

27 The mouth or lower course of the river Simois in the Troad (the plain around ancient Troy), a geographic landmark frequently mentioned in Trojan War poetry as lying near the ships and the city.

28 The ancient name for the narrow strait (modern Dardanelles) between Europe and Asia that connects the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara, an important maritime route in antiquity.

29 In Greek myth, Ganymede (Ganymedes) is a Trojan youth sometimes said to have been taken to Olympus to serve as cupbearer to Zeus and granted immortality; traditions about his parentage and functions vary between sources.

30 A reference to a leading Nereid (sea-nymph); in Trojan War poetry this title typically denotes Thetis, a sea-goddess and mother of Achilles who intercedes for him and his descendants.

31 A singular form of Erinyes (the Furies), chthonic deities of vengeance in Greek religion and literature charged with pursuing and punishing certain crimes and moral transgressions.

32 A principal gate in the walls of Ilium (Troy) repeatedly named in the epic tradition; its exact archaeological counterpart is uncertain, but it is conventionally located on the side of the city facing the Greek camp.

33 Alexander is an alternate name for Paris, the Trojan prince who (in Greek tradition) took Helen from Sparta, an act that triggered the Trojan War; ancient sources vary in details of his deeds and death.

34 Oenone is a nymph of Mount Ida in Greek myth who, according to some traditions, was an early consort of Paris and possessed skill in healing; sources differ on the exact course of her grief and death after Paris abandoned her.

35 Evadne is portrayed in Greek legend as the wife of Capaneus who, according to some versions of the myth, threw herself upon his funeral pyre after he was struck down (here said to be by Zeus' thunderbolt), an act commemorated in later literary tradition.

36 Laocoon is a Trojan priest who in this narrative warns against bringing the wooden horse into Troy and is then struck down along with his sons by sea-serpents—an episode presented as divine punishment and a key omen ignored by the Trojans in many ancient sources.

37 The 'Wooden Horse' (the Trojan Horse) is the large carved hollow horse built by the Greeks as a stratagem to conceal warriors inside and thus gain entrance to Troy; in