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Making and Unmaking: The Achaean Wall and the Limits of Fictionality in Homeric Criticism

Thanks to the poet's eloquence, the Achaean Wall in some way is, having emerged out of nothing, while the real Troy, which formerly *was*, in the course of time came to naught, having vanished.

Αὐτὸ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τὴν τοῦ ποιητοῦ λογιότητα ἐκ μὴ ὄντος ἐστὶ τρόπον τινά, ἢ δὲ ἀληθῆς Τροία τῆ τοῦ χρόνου φορᾶ ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος ἦλθεν εἰς τὸ μηδέν, ἀφανισθεῖσα.

Eustathius ad VII.452

How to Make Something from Nothing

The Achaean Wall troubled Homer's ancient readers from Thucydides to the Homeric scholia and later antiquity, just as it has troubled his modern readers. Ancients and moderns alike have been drawn to the incongruousness of the detail, both its tardiness in the plot but also the very fact of the wall itself, which is disorienting in the extreme. As Strabo complains, why build the wall now, in the tenth year of the War?—this is a sign of witlessness, of ἀπόνοια, both the building of the wall now and the fact of having camped out so close to Troy for so long unprotected by any such fortification (T1). But the very presence of the wall is evidently disorienting in itself. The Achaeans came to attack a wall, not to build one, let alone to defend one; why are they seemingly duplicating Troy on a smaller scale—creating their own μέγα τεῖχος¹ equipped with high towers (πύργοι ὑψηλοί [T1]),² effectively rivaling the Trojans

¹ VII.463; XII.18.

² VII.338; cf. πυργηδόν, μεγάλη, XV.618-19.

(ἀντιτειχιζόντων [T6]),³ as some of the gods complain,⁴ if not reversing roles with them altogether—and all of this just before the Trojan Wall is fated to fall?

The Greek wall disturbs, both in the way it suddenly appears (in a single day), a monument looming out of place on the Trojan plain, indeed built, seemingly, out of the rubble of cremated heroes (T3),⁵ and in the spectacular way in which it disappears, vengefully obliterated without a trace.⁶ What is the poet trying to conceal, and why does he go to such elaborate lengths to conceal it (only to draw attention to the concealment, ὥσπερ ἀπὸ μηχανῆς [T5])?⁷ The Achaean Wall is a curious object indeed. It seems ridiculously feeble in sheer physical terms, and consequently blown out of all proportion to the significance that is accorded to it: “Now the fame of this will last as long as dawnlight is scattered, / and men will forget that wall which I and Phoibos Apollo/ built with our hard work for the hero Laomedon’s city,” Poseidon worries, only half-right, as it turns out.⁸ The fame of the Achaean Wall will perdure, well beyond its seeming worth, but no one will ever be able to forget Laomedon’s city of Troy. And yet, there is an odd stubbornness to the Greek wall: the more that efforts go into making the wall disappear, the more the wall stands out, truculently asserting itself, like a stain that deepens instead of lifting. Indeed, this seems to be a good part of its logic and function: was it ever intended to go away? Homer seems to have wished to make it disappear, according to the Alexandrian scholars. The gods tried to obliterate it, but here we are still talking about it. And while the Alexandrians seem to have accepted the Wall-episode as genuine (T2), modern readers of the analytical persuasion, starting with Gottfried Hermann and culminating in Denys Page, try to make the detail vanish even more thoroughly than the Olympians did: senseless and absurd, the whole scene must be an interpolation.⁹

³ Σ bT VII.445.

⁴ VII.463.

⁵ VII.435-7. VII.334-5 must be an interpolation; see West 1969, 259; Kirk 1990, ad loc.

⁶ XII.3-33.

⁷ Σ bT VII.445.

⁸ VII.451-53; trans. Lattimore.

⁹ Hermann 1827-77, 8:387; Page 1959, 315-24. For intervening bibliography, see Bolling 1925, 92. Page’s view is the most extreme: he declared all of book VII from v. 327 on to be a fourth-century Athenian invention.

And yet, for all of their acceptance of the episode, the ancient scholars were not without criticism. And while the Achaean Wall is not exactly the most prolifically discussed scene from Homer by any means (Erbse's edition of the Homeric scholia contains only a few short paragraphs of text), later sources such as Porphyry and Eustathius are more expansive, and together they hint at a sizeable literature on the topic from antiquity that is now lost to us. Some of the ancients must have gone in a similar direction to the modern analysts. In fact, the entire episode of the Achaean Wall occasions a long and seemingly endless barrage of critical acrimony. I won't go into all of the details here, except to say that these touch on nearly every aspect of the problem, from the way the episode was titled in antiquity (more on this below), to the question of whether the Achaean corpses were burnt and buried on the spot or their bones were ferried back to the mainland (Aristarchus athetized two lines that editors continue to regard as interpolated), to the meaning of ἄκριτον in VII.336 (T3), to the problem of when the Achaeans first built their defensive works, to the question of how the wall proposed by Nestor in book VII slots into the tradition that Homer (our poem's composer) inherited and possibly enhanced (for instance, with those fancy sublime towers),¹⁰ or whether the counsel of the gods, in which Zeus conciliates a panicked Poseidon (VII.443-64), is a later addition, as all three heavyweight Alexandrian editors, Zenodotus, Aristophanes, and Aristarchus, felt it was (T4) ("an unusual consensus" [Bolling]), as do several modern editors and scholars.¹¹

Of greater interest to me here than the many editorial particulars and puzzles concerning the passage is the status of the Achaean Wall itself as an object and as a critical obstacle—less the authenticity of the Wall as an episode than the claims the Wall makes to carrying a certain ontological status as a Homeric object, which is to say first as a poetic object in its own right, and then as an (objectionable) object of criticism. For at stake in the Wall, I believe, and underlying all the debates around it, is its basic status as a fictional object, and therefore the status of fictional objects generally in the Homeric poems. The Achaean Wall cannot help but have this claim to interest, just by virtue of being an object that once so magnificently and palpably (but also, so curiously) was and then so utterly is no more. Highlighting the Achaean Wall's going into and out of existence is the sheer suddenness of its appearance and its disappearance, which also serves to make it a highly contestable object. All of this gives the Wall its interest to us today. Even so, the ancient commentators often did a better job in following the logic of the wall by tying questions about it to its fictional status than their modern counterparts have done. At least, that is what I hope to show in what follows, in recreating the context for the ancient debates.

¹⁰ See Kirk 1990, esp. p. 278.

¹¹ Kirk 1990, ad loc.

Literal-Minded Arguments in the Ancient Scholia: A Survey

This is not to say that all the ancients handled the problem of the Achaean Wall with supreme critical acumen. In fact, many of them were quite ploddingly literal-minded about the Wall. But, paradoxically, it was the literal-minded basis of some of the critical traditions that provided the background for the subtler, more open-minded approaches to the Wall's fictional qualities, against which these latter could find salience and purchase. A quick rundown of the ancient arguments will therefore be indispensable to our own inquiry into the question, not least because the literal worries of the ancient scholar-grammarians will give us a good handle on their views about the limits and possibilities of ancient fictionality.

One scholium on book VII mocks the poor poetic logic of an imagined (but probable) adversary who supposes that the account of the wall's destruction was a way of explaining away the wall's absence in Homer's own day. Here, at last, is what Homer fears and so must conceal: the charge of Someone who might (wrongly) take this passage as evidence of the time of the poet, as though Homer had lived not long after the Trojan War (wrongly, because this was not the orthodox view among the learned grammarians, who had read their Herodotus and knew that Homer had lived four hundred years after the Trojan War), and as though Homer would have been keen to disarm the obvious worry that the wall, built in an *ad hoc* fashion though it was (ἀυτοσχεδῶς ὠκοδομημένον [T6]), hadn't yet had a chance to collapse with time and to vanish from sight. So, the scholiast asks, lest somebody should have wondered about these details, are we to suppose that Homer resorted to the expedient of demolishing completely and without a trace the Achaean Wall, not only wrecking the monument but submerging it, and covering the place it once occupied with sand in the bargain? And if the concern was to get rid of every last bit of evidence, it wasn't enough to have nature do the deed, but the poet had to bring in the agency of the gods, and not just Poseidon alone but with Zeus raining down furiously at his side too? (ibid.).

Worse still, as Porphyry and one of my undergraduates both astutely wondered [T7], why, if the Achaeans took a day to build the wall, did the gods need nine days to destroy it? The discrepancy appears "illogical" (ἄλογον).¹² Needless to say, even here the grammarians had a neat solution. Callistratus, followed by Crates of Mallos, sought to emend the text from ἐννῆμαρ to ἐν δ' ἡμαρ, claiming that Homer never uses the expression "ninth day" by itself, but always balances it with something else, such as, "but on the tenth day . . ."¹³ And so, thanks to editorial magic, it could be shown that it took only a day to destroy the wall after all.

¹² Porph. *Quaest. Hom.*, p. 174.13-15 Schrader, ad XII.10-32.

¹³ Ibid., p. 174.27-30. "Never" may be too strong: "is inclined [or "tends] never to" (εὐεπιπτώτως, a *hapax*) is perhaps best. David Blank suggests that the term can be construed in

Those who weren't content with this linguistic *lusion* (λύσις ἐκ τῆς λέξεως) tried other arguments [T7]. One of these was a matter of hair-splitting: The gods did not in fact take nine days to destroy the wall; they merely needed nine days to cover the place it occupied with water to root out its foundations and to sweep them into the sea. Another explanation is rather empty, the more so as it is merely another way of more or less stating the same thing (as so many of the learned explanations are). It is one of expediency: because Homer felt he needed, at that time (τότε), to abolish the wall he had constructed in his poem (τὸ τεῖχος πλασθὲν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ), he went a bit overboard and gave it a thorough scrubbing (τοσοῦτον χρόνον ἐποίησε τῆς καθαίρεσως). It is as if Homer suddenly had an itch. Whence, I assume, the name for this solution, which is a rare species: ἀπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ, meaning a solution based on considerations of expediency—Homer's own sudden urgency. This urgency, as we shall see, is closely related to the palpable fictionality of Homer's procedures in the eyes of the commentators (another connotation of πλασθέν).

Of the twelve occurrences of the expression ἀπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ that I counted in the Homeric scholia (using the TLG), only one other plainly involves subjective exigency, viz., refers to the exigencies of poetic making and not to a circumstantial consideration situated within the narrated reality (Porph. ad XX.67ff.: οἱ δ' ἀπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ τοῦ τότε κατὰ τὴν Ἑλλάδα παραμυθοῦνται; though cf. Σ *Od.* ii, hypoth. 2, v. 40.1, which looks to be fragmentary: ἀπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ πεποιήται τὴν ... [sic]). Further support might be found in a parallel discussion in Eustathius ad VII.445-65 (v. 2, p. 494.19-21 van der Valk): Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι ἔχουσι πιθανότητα τοῦ μὲν ταχὺ γενέσθαι τὸ μέγα τεῖχος αἱ πολλὰ τοῦ λαοῦ μυριάδες, τοῦ δὲ νῦν μὴ φαίνεσθαι ὁ διὰ κλοπὴν καιροῦ σχεδιασμός, οἷα εἰκός, τοῦ τειχισμοῦ, “Note how the vast numbers of the host lend plausibility to the rapid rise of the great [Achaean] wall, while the non-appearance of the wall today is lent plausibility by the improvised manufacture of the wall, as is probable, through a theft of time.” The agency of “manufacture” (τειχισμός) seems to be ambiguous between Homer's and the Greek army's, viz., between one acted out upon words and one acted out upon things, as is habitual in accounts of the *teichopoia*, as we've seen above. (A further and parallel blending of agencies is noted by Eustathius at *ibid.*, p. 492.8, where Nestor's haphazard directions (τῷ Νέστορι αὐτοσχεδιάζοντι) concerning the construction of the wall are spoken “not by Nestor, but by Homer,” who himself appears to be speaking no less haphazardly: σχεδιάζων ἐνέλειψεν, whilst elsewhere Homer's construction of the wall is credited in the very same terms: Ὅτι ἕτερόν τι τεῖχος ἐξ ὄπλων σχεδιάζει ταῖς ναυσὶν ὁ ποιητής, *ibid.*, v. 3, p. 766.15-16.) “Theft of time” is somewhat puzzling, and unparalleled (see

the light of the exegetical scholium on the same line, which uses the word ἐπίφορος, “inclined.” The D-scholium ad 12.25 takes a different tack: Ἐνιοὶ δὲ δασέως, καὶ διὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς ν, ἀναγιγνώσκουσιν “ἐνῆμαρ” ἢ “μῖα ἡμέρα”. ὥστε μὴ μειοῦσθαι τὴν τῶν θεῶν δύναμιν, μὴ δυνηθέντων καταστρέψαι λόγῳ, θᾶττον δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ἐν μῖα ἡμέρα γεγονός.

van der Valk: “verba coniuncta κλοπή καιροῦ ‘furtum temporis’ mihi aliunde haud nota sunt”). It, too, is suspiciously ambiguous, for who is doing the stealing here? The Greeks, insofar as they are building their wall starting in the dead of night, rapidly? Or Homer, in producing their haste, which results in a structure that is built, as it were, with planned obsolescence in mind (see *ibid.*, v. 2, p. 494.8-10: οὐκ εὐσταθῶς διὰ τὴν ἄγαν κατέπειξιν, etc.)—but also one that is built, so to speak, in the blink of an eye, as readers close their eyes to the fictionality of the wall for as long as they hold the wall to be narrationally real (ὡς γινόμενον, *ibid.*, 493.57 [T2])?

A different kind of explanation, likewise preserved in Porphyry, is a moral one based on the principle of decorum (a solution “from character”): It wasn’t befitting (εὐπρεπές) for warriors, let alone for Homer (ἅμα δὲ καὶ τῷ ποιητῇ), to play the part of construction workers; but *teichopoiia* was an eminently worthy undertaking (μεγαλοπρεπής) for the gods, the builders of Troy. The little tag, “and for Homer too” (ἅμα δὲ καὶ τῷ ποιητῇ), is odd and simply worth filing away for the moment. Its implication seems to be that while Homer’s job, his *diatribē*, is not appropriately spent in the realm of building, it is appropriately spent in the realm of massive destruction—a fairly true statement if we reflect on the contents of either of his two poems, but especially the *Iliad*!

What seems to trouble the ancients most of all is the suggestion that the wall’s destruction looks to be a way of explaining away the wall’s absence in Homer’s own day—and, *a fortiori*, in their own. That this is anxiety-provoking is plain from the scholia, who transfer that anxiety onto the poet, as if Homer had resorted to the expedient of demolishing completely and without a trace something that never existed to begin with (τὸ μὴ γινόμενον, Σ bT 12.3-35). (T6) And so we might be tempted to conclude that what is troubling are both the encounter with an absence of extraordinary proportions, and then the seeming fictionality of what cannot be verified “today.”

Plainly, a literal-minded reading of the wall gets off on the wrong foot. But even more plainly, involved in the passage is not just “the solid and spectacular monument of a successful landing-operation” that Page wants Thucydides, the armchair general turned historian, to have imagined, but something far more intriguing—a spectacular and monumental *obliteration*.¹⁴ Page has indeed fallen victim to the reasoning exposed by the scholium just quoted: by introducing an interpolation to compensate, meaninglessly, for a problem that never existed to begin with, he has introduced an even greater problem, namely the problem of why the interpolation should have been introduced in the first place.

¹⁴ Page 1959, 319.

Poetic and Metapoetic Readings in the Scholia: The Achaean Wall as an Ersatz Troy

Other readings in the scholia are more satisfying. Instead of trying to explain away the evident fictionality of the Achaean Wall, they embrace it in all of its glorious poeticality, and then look for poetic motives in Homer's text that could help to explain the Wall's fictional status. Some of the readings discussed above do this implicitly, while others are more explicit about this. A good example is found in the bT scholia to 12.3-35 (T6), where the scholiasts argue that Homer is preparing us for things to come by putting us in mind of the final siege of Troy and, implicitly, the eventual obliteration of that greater wall. The language deserves closer inspection: Homer "of necessity wanted" (ἀναγκαίως βούλεται, roughly: following the felt requirements of his narrative) "to move [or "transfer," μεταφέρειν] the battle on the plain over to the *teichomachia*. For this reason he also fabricated"—"invented" (ἀνέπλασε)—"the construction of the wall (τὴν τειχοποιΐαν), in order to move the contests over to the *teichomachia*. Now, this was impossible (ἀμήχανον) to do at the Trojan Wall, for that wall was divinely made (θεοποίητον)." An odd phrase here is the emphatic expression, "of necessity." It reminds us of the pressing urgency of Homer's solution *apo tou kairou* from above, the urgency of his expediency. But whence comes the compulsion here? An answer can begin to be glimpsed in the next scholium: "So as to omit not even this genre (ιδέα) [viz., of battle scene, i.e., *teichomachia*]¹⁵ he made the *teichomachia* [take place] by the wall of the Greeks." The reasoning here seems to be that Homer felt a poetic compulsion to include a *teichomachia* in his poem: such was the "necessity" he felt.¹⁶ Perhaps so, but then the reasoning starts to tremble some. A *teichomachia* at the Trojan Wall would have been futile because the wall was immortal. But why did Homer feel the need to make a reference to an assault on Troy?

Here we can only speculate, just like the scholiasts. Assume that ἀμήχανον is (again) double-voiced: the impossibility touches both the unbreachable nature of the wall, owing to its divine status, and the unbreachable constraints on Homer's narrative, owing to the fictional limits of the tradition, but also, in retrospect, owing to the self-imposed restraints of his own narrative framework. Just as no audience would have been gulled into fearing that the Trojan

¹⁵ Eustathius' parallel phrasing reads τοιαύτην ιδέα πολέμου (v. 3, p. 341.5-6).

¹⁶ Unless we should connect the two explanations (cf. οὖν), and chalk up the necessity to the fact that the major heroes are wounded and out of commission: the wall allows the action to be extended in their absence (so R. Scodel). I'm not so sure, however, that the two comments are meant to be connected in this way (οὖν may refer to the lemma, as in Σ I.3c, or to some other thought, now lost or only inferable from the comment), while the second comment contains its own reasons that go off in quite a separate direction, begging the question we are after all over again.

Wall would be breached if Homer had opted for an assault on the Wall, so too Homer's poem needed to fight shy of breaching Troy. But Homer was not content to steer clear of the greater Teichomachia: he wanted simultaneously to invoke it. The episode of the Achaean Wall does this admirably by conjuring up the very image (ιδέα) of the assault on Troy.

That it does, at least for the scholiasts, is most evidently supported by the verb they use to describe the Greeks' action of wall-building: *antiteichizontōn*, "building a counter-Wall" (T5). Further suggestions build off of the text of the *Iliad* itself. The wall is built on a suggestively grand scale. It is called "wide" (εὐρύ) at XII.5, and a *mega teichos* at XII.12 (repeating VII.463 and reminiscent of *mega ergon* at VII.443), where its demolition is paired with the fall of the *polis* of Troy (XII.15ff.). And if Eustathius deploys *purgopoia* (the building of towers [or a "towered" or "towering" "construction"]) as a synonym for *teichopoia* (v. 2, p. 493.15), the impetus for this is to be found in the "lofty towers" (πύργους ὑψηλοῦς) that are said to flank or border (somehow) the construction of the Achaean Wall in book VII (v. 338 [T3]). The Achaean Wall, in its graphic appearance, seems larger than it needs to have been to achieve its more modest aim of providing a defensive bulwark. The impression is all the greater owing to the imprecision of the details provided (a fact that exercised the scholiasts as they sought to picture the wall's three dimensions in their minds).¹⁷ The wall bulks large in the imagination, in other words. And that is precisely the point. In its phantasmatic dimensions, the Achaean Wall is inordinately proportioned.¹⁸

Whence Poseidon's hysterical outburst when he first notices the wall exists, which in every other respect is totally incomprehensible. Why is this god so worked up about the violence that the mere fact of the wall's existence seems to do to his honor? What, in the end, is he threatened by?

So the flowing-haired Achaians laboured, and meanwhile

¹⁷ See Eust. ad XII.4f. (v. 3, p. 340.15-341.1), attempting to size up the construction. Cf. Strabo's earlier complaints, first about the disproportion of Troy's ruinous condition in the present and the unfettered prolixity (πολυλογία) that commentators "nonetheless" show in their zeal to explicate the site, and then about Homer's own lack of precision: "my discussion is further prolonged by the . . . historians who do not write the same things on the same subjects, nor always clearly either; among the first of these is Homer, who leaves us to guess about most things [!]" (13.1.1; trans. Jones). Cf. *ibid.* 13.1.2, on how the poet "indicates in a general way (ὑπαγορεύει)" details about the topography of the Troad.

¹⁸ It is worth noting that *teichomachia* and *teichomachein* in Greek standardly conjure up the attack on Troy (cf., not least of all, Philostratus *Heroicus* 33.27, 33.30).

the gods in session at the side of Zeus who handles the lightning
 watched the huge endeavour (μέγα ἔργον) of the bronze-armoured Achaians;
 and the god Poseidon who shakes the earth began speaking among them:
 ‘Father Zeus, is there any mortal left on the wide earth
 who will still declare to the immortals his mind and his purpose?
 Do you not see how now these flowing-haired Achaians
 have built a wall (τεῖχος ἐτειχίσσαντο) landward of their ships (νεῶν ὑπερ), and driven
 about it
 a ditch, and not given to the gods any grand sacrifice?
 Now the fame of this will last as long as dawnlight is scattered,
 and men will forget that wall which I and Phoibos Apollo
 built with our hard work for the hero Laomedon’s city.” (vv. 442-53; trans. Lattimore)

Indeed, the incomprehensibility of his reaction seems to be what the scholium to VII.445 is all about, starting with the words, οὐδενὶ δὲ ἤρμωσεν ἢ κατηγορία: “The accusation was suitable to no one except Poseidon or Apollo, because the Greeks were building a counter-wall [LSJ: “erecting counter-fortifications”] to the Trojan Wall. And Apollo is not speaking—for indeed Hera would say, “That’s just the sort of thing you would say [being anti-Greek]” (XXIV.56)—while Poseidon, though a pro-Greek god, seems to be accusing the Greeks ἀπαθῶς [mss.: ἀμαθῶς Cobet].” ἀπαθῶς, accepted by Erbse, is curious, and hard to render. “Unmoved” seems singularly inapt for the context, seeing how Poseidon is rather beside himself at the moment. “Without being affected” or “attacked” would seem something of a stretch. Cobet’s emendation, ἀμαθῶς, makes sense if we take it to mean “ignorant of the obvious difference between the two walls,” which the god is treating as effectively equal.¹⁹ In the eyes of this grammarian, at least, the difference is plain as day, and Poseidon is acting irrationally.

But not so for Eustathius, whose reading seeks to make better sense of the appearances of Homer’s text: if Poseidon seems to be getting overly worked up, there has to be a good reason. In a way, Eustathius’ reading pertains not so much to the fear Poseidon gives voice to as to the reality that his fear produces—namely, the underlying parallelism between the two walls, that of the Achaeans and that of Troy. Eustathius (ad loc.) is crystal clear about this, even

¹⁹ I am grateful to Hugh Lloyd-Jones for driving home the force of Cobet’s emendation to me in a conversation at Wellesley College in April 2005. Defending the ms. reading and Erbse’s choice to let it stand, Ruth Scodel construes ἀπαθῶς as something like “with impunity,” reasoning that although Poseidon opposes the wall, and successfully lobbies for its destruction, he does not oppose the Greeks, nor does the wall fall during their campaign.

as he confirms Poseidon's worst fears and proves that he was not acting irrationally at all: "Note that here the poet renders his own imaginary wall equal to the historical and true wall of Troy. For only the fame of both echoes on, but in reality neither one is visible, while the Homeric [wall] is the more renowned [of the two]." Then follows the remarkable statement quoted in my epigraph. The formulation is worthy of Gorgias, and it could easily have come from his paradoxical treatise *On Not Being*, where rhetoric and metaphysics interfere with one another disastrously. The remark also tells us something about the ontology of fictional objects in the mind of an ancient: "Thanks to the poet's eloquence, the Achaean Wall in some way is, having emerged out of nothing, while the real Troy, which formerly was, in the course of time came to naught, having vanished." (T8)

Eustathius' observation that the Achaean Wall is "more renowned" than the Trojan Wall is stunning, to say the least. But perhaps Poseidon is only to blame for the grievance he has, after all, not only voiced but also caused. After all, if it weren't for Poseidon's complaint, the Achaean Wall would have been the occasion for some splendid battle scenes, but would it for that reason alone have achieved more fame than Troy, let alone parity with Troy? Poseidon's act of complaining only helps consolidate the fame of the wall he fears in two ways: (i) first of all, constatively, at the level of speech (by virtue of his equation of the two walls), and (ii) then—or already, which is to say, performatively—as an element of the poetic ensemble of the Homeric epic, that is, just by virtue of adding his thoughts to the indelible medium of immortal song. For by expressing his fear, even if it is (or was) ungrounded, Poseidon helps to render the wall poetically memorable and lasting: the Achaean Wall will live on forever as a feared object, regardless of its actual qualities. (That is, just because Poseidon says the wall will put his own Trojan Wall in the shade, this does not mean that it will do so: he could be irrationally fearful and wrong without being prophetically right.)

What is more, and as it turns out, in narrative terms Poseidon's grouching unleashes the monumental destruction of the Achaean Wall, as a kind of appeasement of his worries, however groundless they may be. This Olympian overcompensation has the exact reverse effect of its overt purpose, as was mentioned earlier: instead of minimizing the memory of the Trojan anti- or counter-wall, the act memorializes it. Poseidon provokes the sympathy of Zeus, who takes drastic conciliatory measures:

After once more the flowing-haired Achaians
are gone back with their ships to the beloved land of their fathers,
break their wall to pieces and scatter it into the salt sea
and pile again the beach deep under the sands and cover it;
so let the great wall of the Achaians go down to destruction. (7.459-63).

The monumental obliteration of the Achaean Wall, rather than erasing the memory of the wall, to the contrary ensures that the same wall will go down in the annals of memory as one of the most unforgettable walls ever constructed. Not even the Trojan Wall suffered such an unforgettable annihilation: though it may have been divinely made (θεοποίητον), it was destroyed by mere men, albeit with the aid of the gods. The Achaean Wall was humanly made, but it took three gods, eight rivers, nine days, an earthquake, and an ocean to destroy it. What is so strange in all of this is the weird performative antilogic so furiously at work here. For let us suppose that Poseidon was dead wrong about his prophecy regarding the Achaean Wall—suppose the wall was never destined to eclipse Troy in fame. Nevertheless, by assuming (or pretending) that it was, Poseidon triggered off a chain of events that produced the reality he feared, and his prediction proved true in the end. As a result, the Achaean Wall suffered a cataclysmic obliteration that Troy (literally) never knew.

This much can be read out of the Homeric text, and it does lend some support to Eustathius' claim that the Achaean Wall is "more renowned" than the Trojan Wall. But of even greater interest than this, at first glance misplaced, praise is the epithet with which he chooses to brand the Greek wall. For at issue, in his text, is not the Achaean Wall, but the Homeric Wall (καὶ εὐκλεέστερον τὸ Ὀμηρικόν). Might this suggest that the Homeric version of the *Iliad*—our version—distinguished itself from all prior narrations of the war precisely by omitting the story of the sack of Troy and by substituting in its place its prefiguration in the form of a *teichomachia* around the Achaean Wall? If so, then Poseidon's expression of fear in book VII could be taken not as a literal fearfulness on the part of a god (which would indeed be illogical, as the scholia recognize), but rather as a kind of metapoetical highlighting on the part of a poet eager to draw attention to one of the major criterial differences between his own poem and the traditional (cyclical or other) versions of the epic material. Cobet's ἀμαθῶς, as applied to Poseidon, begins to look attractive indeed, on this speculative interpretation of book VII: Poseidon, here, would figure not only as a metapoetical billboard, but as a singularly poor "reader" of Homer, failing as he does to grasp the difference between the two walls and the function of that difference as marking the difference between the two kinds of epic. Here, Poseidon, qua model of the reader, is complaining about a difference where he ought in fact to be celebrating one. Homer's poem is literally vying with the tradition, and using the Achaean Wall to displace, even more than to compensate for, the missing story of the Trojan Wall's final destruction.²⁰ After all, the functional identity of the Achaean Wall with the plot of the *Iliad* seems fairly plain if we consider a passage like XII.9-12:

it was not to stand firm for a long time.

So long as Hektor was still alive, and Achilles was angry,

²⁰ Cf. Scodel 2002, 41 49: "The *Iliad* obviously wants to be *the* Trojan epic."

so long as the citadel of lord Priam was a city untaken,
for this time the great wall of the Achaians stood firm. (T9)

The statement is inexact, as is often noted, and it stands corrected in the next few verses: the Achaean Wall will in fact fall shortly after Troy is taken. But the *rhetoric* and the rhetorical truth of the statement are what count: the poetic life of the Achaean Wall is (roughly) coextensive with the life of the *Iliad*. Both last for a few months during the last flickering moments of the Trojan War, and no longer. This is all the more true especially if the Achaean Wall has no narrative life outside of the *Iliad*. Beyond this larger but localized epic narrative frame, the two facts are inconceivable. Their fates, in other words, are intertwined. Indeed, after Homer, and possibly before him too, the one is unimaginable without the other.²¹

²¹ This proximity is behind the reasoning of those who defend the Achaean Wall against the arguments for its excision by Page and others. For one defense, see West 1969, esp. p. 255, where he points out that the wall exists in order to be fought over, that the Greek fortifications are mentioned again “in every book from the eight to the eighteenth” and into the twenty-fourth, and that the ms. title of book XII is *Teichomachia* (see also p. 259, for further integrations). See Σ XII.9-12. Further, Lynn-George 1988, 265; Ford 1992, 147, 151-52; West 1995, 212. With my speculative reconstruction, compare that by Kirk 1990, 278, who argues that the Achaean Wall scene is a later expansion of an earlier version of the same, found preexisting in the tradition: “and so [the poet] decided to supplement or virtually replace it with a more formidable construction, the idea of which would then be typically credited to Nestor.” Only, for Kirk, the poet is not “Homer himself,” but “another ἀοιδός, a close follower perhaps, rather than . . . a fully-fledged rhapsodic elaborator whose uncertainties of taste might have shown up more clearly.” (ibid., p. 289). This takes commentary beyond the pale of scholarship and into the realm of clairvoyance. Could the Achaean Wall have preexisted the hypothetical version I am calling “Homer’s”? (Could the use of ἀνα-πλάττειν, “fashioned again,” suggest this?) But even if so, Homer’s version seems to be calling undue attention to itself, as if upping the ante on any earlier versions. Nonetheless, if prior versions existed, Aristotle and others did not know about them.

Douglas Frame has proposed a suggestively parallel case, namely that of the Phaeacians. As with the Achaean Wall, they enjoy a tenuous existence between being (forever) and not-being (being only a fictional construct); they seem to exist *per se* and only in (and for) the *Odyssey*; they are literally walled-off from the present the way the Wall is figuratively immured within the past but open to the present as a fictional construct (see XII.1-30; cf. Nagy 2001); and, as Richard Martin added in discussion, this final action issues once again from Poseidon’s vengeful agency. In other words, the Phaeacians could well have been the signature

The presence of the Achaean Wall could, accordingly, be explained by reference to what we might call narrative completeness. Homer's epic, being no more than a slice of the Trojan cycle, nonetheless has to gesture to the larger tradition to which it belongs, which translates into a depiction (or in the present case, a referencing) of the first beginnings of the war (its *archai*), in the raising of the army) and its final moments (its *telos*), in the sack of Troy. Here, Homer's compulsion (cf. ἀναγκαίως) is to integrate his poem into a larger teleology, by presenting the image of Troy's sacking before the fact. But if so, then we would have to say (although Eustathius does not) that Homer has gone to extraordinary lengths just to be able to prefigure, through the rhetorical device (σχῆμα) of *proanaphōnēsis* (anticipation), the *telos* of Troy in the middle of the *Iliad* (Eust. ad 12.17). Indeed, Eustathius finds all of this to be in perfectly good order: Homer has proceeded εὐμεθόδως.²²

Aristotle's Solution: The Fictions of Homer, or, The Lady Vanishes

While it is perhaps not immediately apparent, what all the scholia discussed so far share on all sides of the various issues is an affinity with Aristotle's attempt to construe the episode of the Achaean Wall's sacking by the gods, for it seems that he was the first to adumbrate a connection with the poem as a whole.

fictional invention—a kind of fictional *sphragis*—of (the poet of) the *Odyssey* in the same the way that the Achaean Wall was the signature fictional invention of (the poet of) the *Iliad*.

²² Scodel 2004 might be taken to suggest that Homer is proceeding in good Homeric fashion in one further way, by keeping within the bounds of modest decorum. According to her argument, Homer's practice is never to boast of radical innovations vis-à-vis the tradition, but to adopt the posture of acquiescent inferiority. In the present instance, Poseidon's fear (which would be a fear concerning one such radical innovation) is quickly undercut by Zeus' response (in effect saying, "don't worry, the Achaean Wall is nugatory" [cf. VIII.178, where Hector calls the fortifications "not worth a thought (οὐδενόσωρα)"; cf. Eust. 690.5]), and so the aggrandizing of the wall is modestly balanced out, at least in book VII. (The same would perhaps apply to XV.360-66, where Apollo smashes through the wall as a boy wrecks sand towers on the sea-shore—a seeming contradiction to the beginning of book XII. But see Janko 1992, 226-27, for a suggestion about how to harmonize this and other similar passages.) On the other hand, is balance really achieved? The nugatory wall requires a spectacular *aphanismos*. It would seem that Homer here is manipulating the device of modest decorum, if that is what he is doing, to his own credit in the end. (Cf. also Scodel 2002, 41 on the poem's modesty, balanced by *ibid.*, 49, quoted earlier.) See further n. 21, above.

Aristotle inaugurated the sanest line on the problem, ancient or modern, but also the most daring: the Achaean Wall is a non-problem, he says, or at least it is a self-effacing one, just because the wall never existed to begin with; it is a pure fiction: “The poet who made it up (ὁ πλάσας) also made it vanish (ἠφάνισεν)” (fr. 162 Rose [T1]). The language of the fragment needs a brief comment. ὁ πλάσας brings to mind, in a pointed way, Xenophanes’ term for poetic myths: πλάσματα, fictions, fabrications (fr. 1.22 DK). ἠφάνισεν, apart from being double-edged (it can mean “made to vanish” or “obliterated”), recalls Aristotle’s own language from the *Poetics* at the end of ch. 24: “Homer completely disguises (ἀφανίζει) the absurdity by his sweetness (ἠδύνων) . . . When character and intellect are being represented too brilliant a style often conceals them (ἀποκρύπτει γὰρ πάλιν ἢ λίαν λαμπρὰ λέξις τὰ τε ἦθη καὶ τὰς διανοίας).”²³ This is one of the more striking passages from the *Poetics*, because it contains one of the least “Aristotelian” and more sophistic-sounding insights in that work. The possibility that Homer is resorting to deliberate disguise, which is to say disguising his fiction by obliterating its traces, cannot be ruled out from Aristotle’s interpretation of the Homeric passage. Be that as it may, no other critic after Aristotle is as blandly complacent about Homer’s fictionalization of the Achaean Wall. But then, Aristotle was calmly willing to countenance the fact (and in the face of Plato’s objections) that Homer “taught the rest of the poets how to lie” (*Poet.* 24.1460a18-19). On the other hand, we have no further context for this bare fragment from Aristotle, apart from Strabo’s quotation of it. Seeing how Strabo quotes it in the course of the ever-troublesome question concerning the true location of Troy, it is just possible to infer that the ancient tradition that preserved the debates over Troy also preserved Aristotle’s fragment. From here, one might infer that the question of the location of the two walls was intimately connected in this same topographical literature, whether or not this was the seat of its original context in Aristotle (and there is no reason to suppose it was). Indeed, some of the Aristarchean material that found its way into the scholia may have derived from his treatise *On the Naval Station* rather than from his lemmatic commentaries or editions of Homer proper.

Was Troy visible in historical antiquity or not? Homer is the first reference to Troy’s obliteration (XX.303; see below). The assumption of the site’s disappearance, said by Eduard

²³ Trans. Hubbard, adapted. The identical image of one literary device’s being concealed through the sheer brilliance of another is replicated in Longinus’ *On the Sublime* 17.2: “As fainter lights disappear (ἐναφανίζεται) when the sunshine surrounds them, so the sophisms of rhetoric are dimmed when they are enveloped in encircling grandeur. [And so,] emotional and sublime features seem closer to the mind’s eye, both because of a certain natural kinship and because of their brilliance (περιλαμπθεῖσ’).” In this way, Demosthenes “concealed (ἀπέκρυψε) the figure” in the passage cited, “by [his] sheer brilliance (τῷ φωτὶ αὐτῷ)” (trans. Russell).

Meyer to have been “widespread” in antiquity, has been disputed.²⁴ In some cases, rhetorical or poetic exaggeration may be a factor, but so may an underlying uncertainty as to the true location of Troy, which remains unverifiable today, and must have been difficult to establish in antiquity. While we have accounts of isolated relics from the Trojan War trotted out for distinguished visitors like Alexander (Arrian, *Anabasis* 1.11.7-1.12.2) and of topographical disputes, the ruins of Troy’s citadel are nowhere reported on in antiquity. The debates around Troy’s location could not have arisen if the remains of Troy were visible on the ground. It seems likeliest that as Lucan remarks, in a hauntingly beautiful phrase, “even the ruins [of Troy] ha[d] perished” (*etiam ruinae periere*).²⁵ What did survive of Troy, in contrast, was the harrowing memory of its destruction (more on this below).

To return to Aristotle: Aristotle, accordingly, read the episode of the Achaean Wall as a twofold allusion. First, the traceless obliteration of the wall alluded to facts about the past that could no longer be verified by Homer or his audiences. But secondly, the memory of what was no more—that is, poetic memory *tout court*—alludes to the poem’s own poetics. In this ancient tradition, the wall is plainly emblematic of the traceless obliteration of Troy itself, but also of the event’s susceptibility to fictional manipulation. The implications for a theory of fictionality in ancient poetics deserve to be teased out of this tradition.²⁶

Later grammarians, as we have seen, perpetuated the anxieties that Aristotle sought to eliminate with a single meta-stroke. But the implications persist even despite their best intentions, often stymieing them. Thus, we find a conflation of the two kinds of making, τὴν τειχομαχίαν ποιεῖν (the poetic fashioning of the *Teichomachia*, or the Battle at the Achaean Wall) with τεichoποιία (the construction of the wall). (T6) Once again, it only takes a second breath to draw the last bit of implication from this insight, and to leap to the conclusion that Homer fabricated Troy, in other words that the whole myth of Troy is a monumental falsehood. But Aristotle doesn’t exactly say this, nor does any other ancient we know of either.

²⁴ Meyer 1877, 68; but cf. *ibid.*, 106: “gänzlich vom Erdboden verschwunden.” For an interesting use of the view that Troy was not leveled but still stood in Homer’s day, see West 1995, 217-18—that is, whatever “Homer” or his contemporaries would have taken for Troy. The latest challenge has come from the current team of Trojan archaeologists (results summarized in Latacz 2004). But the evidence is far from certain.

²⁵ Lucan 9.969. Cf. Catullus 68.89-94; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.260-415, 15.424.

²⁶ Finkelberg 1998 is surprisingly silent about the entire episode of the Achaean Wall and its associated criticism from Aristotle on. On Homer and ancient fiction generally, see Bowersock 1994.

Instead, the scholia dance gingerly around the margins of the abyss of fiction, occasionally peeping down into it, but quickly withdrawing their gaze, not infrequently with a mixture of pleasure and guilt. The fictionality of the Achaean Wall is typically conceded, as we saw (T2), doubtless on Aristotle’s authority. Σημείωσαι δὲ καὶ ὅτι τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν τοῦτο τεῖχος ἀρέσκει τοῖς παλαιοῖς πλάσμα εἶναι Ὀμηρικόν. Its fictionality, when conceded, is often invoked to subserve all kinds of subsidiary arguments, as we’ve partially seen already. And arguments for one purpose tend to become contaminated by another, e.g., with those to do with fictionality. For instance, at VII.445 we read in the bT scholia: “Being eager to destroy the fiction of the wall, the poet, as if by design [or “by calculation”] gives no help to anyone who might seek out traces of the walls later on.” (T5)²⁷ Here, two themes have become intertwined: that of the wall’s destruction and that of its fictionality. This was the implied reading of Aristotle, too: if Homer had the capacity to make up an object, he had the capacity to unmake it. Differently put, the poet is a fashioner of a fashioning. And, as Aristotle adds, he is also, perforce, a great destroyer, even the maker of destruction. Aristotle’s verb for unmaking was ἠφάνισεν. The verb used here is more colorful: ἀναιρησαί, just as it supplies Homer with a more complex motive for the destruction of the wall. The guilty pleasure that is taken in a fictional object, which Aristotle’s Homer and so too his readers enjoy insouciantly (this is the lesson of the *Poetics*), is here transferred onto a guilty Homer eager to cover up his traces and to deceive future generations of investigators, travelers, and learned local historians or even grammarians and scholars all eager to translate fictions into facts—or else to protect the rest of his poetry from too close an inspection.²⁸

Similarly, Σ bT XII.3-35: “Because he himself produced (lit., “reassembled” [ἀνήγειρε]) the wall, on this account he also made it vanish (ἠφάνισεν), thus simultaneously making vanish (συναφανίζων) the grounds for reproach/the means of disproof (τὸν ἔλεγχον). (T6)²⁹ Here, the contamination is patent in the doubling up of the verbs for making vanish (which plainly depend on Aristotle’s language in the fragment quoted by Strabo). Logic and language

²⁷ How significant is the plural here? Taken by the letter, it might seem to refer to both the Achaean and the Trojan walls, although the plural (even in Homer) can refer to the singular Achaean Wall alone, as in VIII.178.

²⁸ So Eust. ad VII.445-65 (v. 2, p. 494.17-18), where, however, the rest of the poetry is taken to encompass historically reality (τὰ ὄντως γενόμενα). But see below on Eustathius and allegory. Cf. the D-scholium to XII.4 (van Theil): ἵνα μὴ ἐλέγχηται αὐτοῦ τὸ ψεῦδος ὡς μὴ γεναμένου [ZY: γενομένου QXA] ὑπὸ τῶν μεταγενεστέρων.

²⁹ Eust. ad XII.4ff. (v. 3, p. 341.8-9) picks up the same verb and the same argument again: συναφανίζων.

pile up here. There is an ambiguity in the term ἔλεγχον: Does Homer want to conceal the evidence for the wall, or does he want to elude the charge of having fabricated the wall from whole cloth? In metapoetical terms, Homer ought to be boasting of his accomplishment, proud to foreground his fictionalization. The confusion of the scholiasts is perhaps tangible in the way they construe Homer as an author. For in their reconstruction of Homer's devious thinking, they construct Homer as a strategically deceiving author. (But this self-effacement by Homer may be due to his modesty vis-à-vis the tradition noted earlier.) Nor does he, in a sense, have much of a real choice: as Sartre somewhere says about erasure—namely, that you can erase something, but you cannot erase your erasure—so too here: to conceal the evidence of the wall as it were on the ground is to leave evidence for the concealment itself in the text. The logic is strained, but if so, then it is the strained logic of fiction that the scholiasts are coping with in this entire episode of the Achaean Wall. All these questions involve us in the problem of fictional objects and their properties. (“The Achaean Wall in some way is, having emerged out of nothing.”) In the terms of that unsurpassed theorist of fiction and desire, Alfred Hitchcock, the wall has the exact status of a MacGuffin.³⁰ Only, at this point Homer is playing not with real entities but with the outlines of entities, and even less than that—with mere presences and absences. To make the wall vanish is on one level to conceal, not so much the evidence for its former existence, as the absence of any such evidence.³¹ But it is, at the same time, to produce this absence and so too, on another level (that of the proud singer and maker of tales) to make it palpable in the text (whence its easy detection and exposure in the grammatical literature). Not for nothing is the the wall of the Achaeans called a ψευδοτείχος by Eustathius (which also happens to be a *hapax*): a “false wall” but also a non-wall, the Achaean Wall is riddled with fictionality.³²

If Aristotle's fragment is the first preserved hint of a discussion around the Achaean Wall, the last literary remembrance (apart from Porphyry and Eustathius) is a hitherto unremarked source, but one that is uniquely suited to expose the problem of fiction in Homer:

³⁰ See Porter 2002, 65 with n. 21 and Porter 2004, 303 with n. 32. A MacGuffin is an impossible, nonexistent and empty object, the effects of which are nonetheless real. A good example would be the old joke about the Duke of Wellington retailed by Freud: “Is this the place where the Duke of Wellington spoke those [famous] words?” — ‘Yes, it is the place; but he never spoke the words’” (Freud 1953–74 [1905], 61 n. 1). Philosophers sometimes call these Meinongian objects, although these latter (Cicero's sixth finger, golden mountains, and the like) probably have effects only in the philosophical literature.

³¹ Thanks to Ruth Scodel for help with this formulation.

³² Eust. ad 34f. (v. 3, p. 342.26).

Philostratus' *Heroicus*, a third-century CE work in which the chief inner narrator, a vinedresser and self-appointed tender of Protesilaus' shrine, gives a version of the events at Troy according to the ghost of Protesilaus that stands Homer's epic on its head in various respects. The text at one point reads,

You should also know other matters about Sthenelos: that no wall was erected by the Achaeans at Troy (ὡς τεῖχος μὲν οὐδὲν τοῖς Ἀχαιοῖς ἐξεποιήθη ἐν Τροίᾳ), nor was there any protection for either the ships or the booty, but these were intended by Homer as songs of the siege, because of which the wall was also constructed by him (ἀλλὰ τειχομαχίας ὦδαι ταῦτα Ὀμήρῳ ἐπενοήθησαν, δι' ἃς καὶ τὸ τεῖχος αὐτῷ ξυνετέθη). At any rate, the impetus for building the wall (τειχοποιίας) is said to have come to Agamemnon when Achilles was raging. Sthenelos first declared his opposition to this when he said, 'I, of course, am more fit for pulling down walls than for erecting them (ἐγὼ μέντοι ἐπιτηδειότερος τείχη καθαιρεῖν ἢ ἐγείρειν).' Diomedes also opposed building the wall and said that Achilles was being deemed worthy of great deeds 'if we should then shut ourselves in while he rages!' Ajax is said to have remarked, eyeing the king like a bull, 'Coward! What then are shields for?' Sthenelos deprecated the hollow horse as well, alleging that this was not a battle for the city walls but a theft of the battle (οὐ τειχομαχίαν τοῦτο φάσκων εἶναι, ἀλλὰ κλοπὴν τῆς μάχης). (*Heroicus* 27.7-9; trans. Maclean and Aitken)

The passage is sprinkled with the language of the grammarians and their learned debates, which Philostratus is surely spoofing. Protesilaus, after all, poses as someone who carefully scours Homer's poems for their faults (βασανίζειν γὰρ που αὐτοῦ ἔφασκες τὰ τούτου ποιήματα, 25.1). For the critical admission that the Achaean Wall was a *plasma*, or poetic fiction invented by Homer, Philostratus playfully pretends to substitute Protesilaus' aggressively anti-Homeric view, which challenges Homer's representation of the Trojan War on every conceivable detail. "No wall was erected (ἐξεποιήθη) by the Achaeans at Troy." And yet the tag, "the wall was also constructed (ξυνετέθη) by [Homer]," places the accent just as where it belongs: first, on the verb for Homer's making, which is one of poetic making (*sunthesis*); and second, on the equivocation that is implied (there was no wall, and yet there was), which is the equivocation of fiction—or else of sophistry.³³ νεωστὶ γεγονέναι ἢ οὐδ' ἐγένετο, ὁ δὲ πλάσας How convenient to be able to challenge Homer so authoritatively on a learned detail when you are a foot-soldier in the Trojan army! The joke is doubled inasmuch as the criticism seems to come totally out of the blue in the course of a defense of Sthenelus, an undersung Homeric hero in

³³ Cf. Jakobson 1960, 371 on the "usual exordium of the Majorca storytellers: 'Aixo era y no era' ('It was and it was not),' which he views as emblematic of the "double sensed" character of the poetic sign, which is ambivalent to the core.

Protesilaus' eyes.³⁴ Sthenelus' connection with the Achaean Wall is gratuitous (he is nowhere mentioned by Homer in this regard), and therefore all the more apt: in a sense, the frailty of the connection merely highlights the arbitrariness of his choice by Protesilaus/Philostratus as a counterweight to Achilles in the *Heroicus*. As one of the Epigonoι and a fairly irrelevant secondary figure in the *Iliad*, Sthenelus ("The Mighty One"), who is being promoted like a prize-fighter by Protesilaus (the first to lay foot on the Trojan shores and to die there, and so the representative of a "distantiated" perspective capable of weighing in against Homer's own), is an eminently useful personage to retrieve in a Second Sophistic revisionist context, especially as a counter to Homer's Achilleocentric epic.

A few quick remarks on this passage need to be made before moving on, especially as the only existing commentaries on it have nothing to say about its connections to the Homeric scholia.³⁵ Where the scholia denied that the Achaean Wall was real, but conceded it to be a mere fictional device, Protesilaus literalizes their claim, acting as if the war was waged quite differently from the way in which Homer narrated it (e.g., the various proposals for and against the wall's construction). Where the scholia use the excuse that it was unseemly for heroes to build defensive bulwarks when their proper job was to win glory on the battle field, thus accounting for the hasty, improvised construction and (therefore, in principle) easy destruction of the wall, Protesilaus has Sthenelus impersonate the same claim ("I, of course, am more fit for pulling down walls than for erecting them") and repeats the indignation of the other heroes at the task of building enjoined upon them by Homer. An irony here is of course that this remark reworks the Aristotelian fragment ("the poet who made it up (ὁ πλάσας) also made it vanish/ obliterated it (ἠφάνισεν)"), and reminds us that Homer himself excels at both construction and at destruction. Sthenelus' final jab at the Trojan Horse is a swipe at the *Odyssey*: he is plainly happy to attack the whole of Homer as unreliable in many of its key elements.

To be sure, Philostratus' view of Homer is tongue in cheek, and fairly complex. He has Protesilaus sing Homer's praises earlier on in rather traditional terms (25.2-9), even as he has him fault Homer, likewise in traditional terms (25.10-12). But the criticisms of the Achaean Wall fall under a different category, which we might call a criticism from "fictionality," which

³⁴ At the base of Protesilaus' carping arguments lies a kind of scholiastic reasoning, made humorously hyperbolic. If in one place Sthenelus claims that "we have taken even the foundations of Thebes" (IV.406), then he must be held accountable for deeds that Homer elsewhere remains silent about; therefore deeds assigned by Homer to Diomedes alone were also done by Sthenelus, such as when Diomedes attacked Aeneas! (27.6).

³⁵ Beschorner 1999; Maclean and Aitken 2001.

is more unusual in the ancient literature on Homer (although vague precedents might be found in Eratosthenes, Strabo, or some of the scholia). At 25.13, Protesilaus claims that “for Odysseus’s sake Homer invented (ἔπεινορήθη) the race of the Cyclopes, although they live nowhere on the earth, and also imagined (ἀνετυπώθησαν) the Lyaestrygonians—no one knows where they came from,” and he even calls Odysseus “Homer’s plaything (παίγνιον),” owing to the way Homer can change his appearances freely, like a doll, or simply because of the way Odysseus seems to be the recipient of sufferings so disproportionately beyond his control, as whenever he falls asleep (25.14).³⁶ But then Philostratus indulges in a bit of invention of his own and rewrites large tracts of the *Odyssey* (25.15-17), before turning his attention to the *Iliad*. A few paragraphs after revising the episode of the Achaean Wall, Philostratus reverts back to the mode of praise. When he does so, he significantly withdraws his charge that Homer was merely fictionalizing. Discussing a handful of verses spoken by Diomedes, he writes, “[Protesilaus] said that Homer had spoken these words like a fellow soldier (συστρατιώτην), and not as a composer of fiction (οὐχ ὡς ὑποτιθέμενον), but as though he himself had been present (ξυνγγεγονότα) with the Achaeans at Troy” (27.12). The language here likewise recalls the language of the scholia (τὰ εἰκότα δὲ ὑποτιθέμενος, T2).

The backtracking is significant. Having ascribed so much fiction to Homer, Protesilaus is in danger of creating total skepticism in his audience. How much of Homer is a matter of invention, and how much is based on credible fact? Creating just this kind of uncertainty is presumably Philostratus’ point. The *Heroicus* thus treads a tightrope between the extremes of fact and fancy, and between doubt and dogmatism. Whence the assurances of 43.4, which ultimately assure us of nothing: “Protesilaos testifies that Homer did not invent (μὴ ὑποτεθεῖσθαι) these things, but that he made a narrative of deeds that happened and were genuine, except for a few of them, which he rather seems to transform purposefully so that his poetry appears elaborate and more pleasurable.” An extreme symptom of these infectious worries is their spread to Homer’s own identity. For, given the insecurities of the tradition, doubts touching the very existence of Homer himself are inevitable, and accordingly these have to be allayed too: “For he existed, my guest, the poet Homer existed and sang twenty-four years after the Trojan War, as some say; but others say . . .” (43.7; cf. 43.5). But these concerns are endemic to the very idea of Homer in the ancient world.³⁷

³⁶ This is contradicted later on (43.12-16) when it appears that Homer is Odysseus’ plaything: it turns out that Homer has to bribe the ghost of Odysseus to glean information about what took place at Troy a generation or so earlier. (As his reward, Odysseus exacts from Homer a favorable account of his own deeds!)

³⁷ See Porter 2004. To the remarks there, which suggest a strong parallelism between the vicissitudes of Troy and of Homer, involving the traumatic fates of both, I would now add a

Traumatic Obliteration (Aphanisis)

A high proportion of the ancient discussions of the Achaean Wall descend, or seem to descend, from Aristotle, as we've seen. The unexpected persistence of this influence into a work like Philostratus' *Heroicus* tells us that with the episode of the Wall we are having to do with something like a primal scene of criticism, and not a haphazard survival. Above, I gave a few different reasons to back up this suspicion: the Achaean Wall is a fictional object *par excellence*, and it touches a nerve in epic fiction and criticism inasmuch as it consciously models itself as a second (or *ersatz*) Troy. Taken together, these two factors inevitably raise questions about fiction that reach beyond the episode's boundaries. One might suppose that all of this suffices to give the Achaean Wall the staying power it enjoys in the Greek critical imagination. But the story hardly ends here. When Aristotle linked the powers of poetic production with those of poetic destruction, he was making a more intriguing connection, and offering an insight into what we might call the ancient traumatic imagination: the Homeric tradition pays tribute to the power of the mind to conjure up catastrophes that no one could possibly witness.

Consider the verbs and other expressions that are associated with the destruction of the Achaean Wall, for these provide a key to its significance: ἀμαλδύναι, κατηρειφθῆναι, οὔκ ἔμενεν ἔμπεδον, καταβάλλειν, ἀναίρησις, ἀποκατάστασις, ἐξαλεῖψαι, καθαίρεισις, λειῶσαι (said of the sands and topography, once the wall was knocked down), and the rarest but most intriguing of all, ἀφανίζειν and ἀφανισμός. The last pair of terms, once again, derives from Aristotle (ἡφάνισεν). But the concept of obliteration as tied to visual extinction may well have roots in epic tradition. The two are hinted at together for the first time in *Iliad* 20 (Poseidon is addressing the gods, exhorting them to avert Aeneas' untimely death at the hands of Achilles):

reference to the language of the destruction of the Achaean Wall, which forecasts that of Homer's verses: earthquake and flood (but no fire): Eust. ad 12.4-6, 888; cf. Schol. Dion. Thrac. 29.17-19 Hilgard. The significant contrast is that whereas the wall is made, destroyed, and lost, Homer's verses are made, destroyed and lost, and then found again (sometimes in greater numbers than originally existed). It is worth pointing out that for Eustathius the problem of fictionality in Homer is somewhat moot, because at some level his poems are capable of being read allegorically from top to bottom, and at the level of allegory everything is fictional. Thus, the destruction of the Achaean Wall, categorized as *muthikē*, is an "*ainigma* [allegory] of the fact that nothing happens without the gods (*athei*)" (690.20-21). The sequel runs, "But otherwise [viz., generally speaking] Homer fictionalizes by treating the mythological portions in a humanizing fashion, so that Poseidon not only envies his own cherished Greeks on account of his own sense of honor, but also. . .," etc. ("Ὀμηρος δὲ ἄλλως ἀνθρωπίνως τὰ μυθικὰ διαχειριζόμενος πλάττει, ὡς οὐ μόνον φθόνει ὁ Ποσειδῶν τοῖς φίλοις Ἀχαιοῖς διὰ φιλοτομίαν οἰκείαν, . . . ἀλλὰ, κτλ.)

ἄλλ' ἄγεθ' ἡμεῖς πέρ μιν ὑπέκ θανάτου ἀγάγωμεν, 300
 μή πως καὶ Κρονίδης κεχολώσεται, αἶ κεν Ἀχιλλεὺς
 τόνδε κατακτείνῃ· μόριμον δέ οἱ ἔστ' ἀλέασθαι,
 ὄφρα μὴ ἄσπερμος γενεὴ καὶ ἄφαντος ὄληται
 Δαρδάνου, ὄν Κρονίδης περὶ πάντων φίλατο παίδων
 οἳ ἔθεν ἐξεγένοντο γυναικῶν τε θνητάων. 305
 ἤδη γὰρ Πριάμου γενεὴν ἔχθηρε Κρονίων·

But come, let us ourselves get him away from death, for fear
 the son of Kronos may be angered if now Achilleus
 kills this man. It is destined that he shall be the survivor,
 that the generation of Dardanos shall not die, without seed
 obliterated, since Dardanos was dearest to Kronides
 of all his sons that have been born to him from mortal women.
 For Kronos' son has cursed the generation of Priam.³⁸

Aphanismos (obliteration), it turns out, is a constant theme—or rather, gnawing question—in the ancient tradition of Homer's reception, not least of all because that reception is itself already a gnawing obsession in Homer. Poseidon's worry about his Troy expresses this already; τις-speeches predicting the future of a hero's κλέος are another instance, as is the song of Demodocus; and the examples can be multiplied *ad libitum*. Plainly, the theme of reception is rooted in the epic consciousness—as a most uncertain fate. Aeneas' family may have escaped the dire fate of obliteration, but what about Troy? The question was the source of heated debates, particularly among local historians of the Troad. Present-day Ilians, Strabo reports, “tell us that the city was, in fact, not completely wiped out (οὐδὲ τελέως ἠφανίσθαι) at its capture by the Achaeans and that it was never even deserted” (13.1.40). But Homer says otherwise (VI.448, XII.15; iii.130), Strabo notes, and he casts his vote with Homer and with empirical evidence (“no trace of the ancient city survives”), in favor of ἀφανισμός (13.1.37; 13.1.41).³⁹ Besides, “the more recent writers agree about the *aphanismos* of Troy,” among them

³⁸ See Welcker 1865 2:223ff. and 266ff; Meyer 1877, 68-73; Jebb 1881, 37; Leaf 1912, 135, 146; Jacoby 1933, 42; Edwards 1991 ad 20.307-308; *Homeric Hymn to Venus* 196-97; Janko 1982, 158; Smith 1981.

³⁹ The “ancient city” in question is Ilium, which Strabo takes to be the site of former Troy. He might have added VI.60, though this is merely wishful thinking on Agamemnon's part, and no more probative than the verses from book XX on the race of Aeneas which would prove to be so heavily contested much later on (see below).

Lycurgus (to be quoted below; *ibid.*). And when the authority of Hellanicus is invoked a few pages later, the verb ἀφανισθείσης crops up again (13.1.42). Could the idea, let alone the term, have been in circulation in the fifth century? Strabo's mention of Hellanicus could point to a debate over Troy's location already in the fifth century.⁴⁰

The idea and language of *aphanismos* runs from Homer down to Aristotle, then to Strabo, and then into the Byzantine era (Eustathius uses it frequently, and it appears in two Byzantine epic poems about Troy).⁴¹ The persistence of the motif can be explained in part, I suspect, due to the traumatic memory of the event it seeks to capture. Certainly the obliteration of Troy was a sufficiently harrowing image that it could leave its searing mark on the Greek imagination.⁴² There was a lesson to be learned here, and it was frequently drawn. The orator Lycurgus warned the Athenians in 331 BCE, in the direst of tones, of a fate similar to Troy's, involving brutal betrayal, destruction, and desolation: "Who has not heard of Troy? Who does not know that Troy—once the greatest city of its age, and the queen of Asia—has remained for all time uninhabited (τὸν αἰῶνα ἀοίκητος), since once for all it was razed (ἄπαξ. . . κατεσκάφη) by the Greeks?" (*Against Leocrates* 62; trans. Jebb).⁴³ And while it is true that the fifth and fourth centuries witnessed their share of cities razed to the ground if not exactly obliterated, whether in the form of executed orders (Crisa/Cirra by the Amphictyons during the First Sacred War in the early sixth century,⁴⁴ Athens by the Persians in 480, Melos by the Athenians in 416, Thebes by Alexander in 335⁴⁵) or in the form of threats (Athens by Sparta and Thebes during the Peloponnesian War⁴⁶), it is at least as likely that the paradigm

⁴⁰ See Erskine 2001, 102; 105.

⁴¹ Strabo 13.1.41-42; Eust. 459.22, 690.4, 889.7, 1549.18, 1694.29 [ἐπὶ τῷ τῆς Τροίας ἀφανισμῷ (v. 1, 428.18); cf. v. 1, p. 727.9; v. 2, p. 164.12; v. 2, 251.27; Τὸ δὲ «ἐξάπόλωλε» τέλειον ἀφανισμὸν δηλοῖν. 4, p. 180.8]; *Rhet. Anon.* 3:158.5 Spengel. *Ilias Byz.* 2t.; *Achilleis Byz.* 1900.

⁴² See Anderson 1997; Burgess 2001.

⁴³ Jebb 1881, 276.

⁴⁴ Aeschines 3.107-13.

⁴⁵ Arrian 1.9.7-9; Thebes had destroyed Plataea in 427 (Arrian 1.9.6-9). There are countless other instances of cities being leveled in Greece, alas.

⁴⁶ E.g., Xenophon *Hellenica* 2.2.

case lurking behind all these traumatic injuries was the indelible example of Troy.⁴⁷ One need only glance at the northern Parthenon frieze in Athens, with its decorative motifs from the *Iliad*, to see how easily available the images of the Trojan War were, not to mention the increased frequency of the theme of the sack of Troy in Greek tragedy at the end of the fifth century (as one might only expect, given the dire circumstances and fears of the time). A later event that resonated in the same “genre” of the ancient traumatic imagination in both historical and literary writing was the terrible *aphanismos* of Carthage at the hands of the Romans in 146 BCE. Parallels to Troy were inevitable and likewise frequently drawn.⁴⁸

Homer was remembered not only as the greatest of the Greek poets, but also as the most violent—that is, not only as the most inventive (creative, fanciful, etc.) of poets, but as the most destructive. Once again, Aristotle’s fragment encapsulates both halves of Homer’s reputation perfectly and pithily. And the Achaean Wall stands at the center of this reputation. Indeed, the bizarre violence of the Achaean Wall episode is encapsulated in the tiny but egregious detail that one tends to forget in the course of the battles that rage on over it: the wall literally entombs the nameless and indiscriminate (ἄκριτον) Greek dead; it is both a

⁴⁷ See Bernd Steinbock, “Social Memory in 4th-Century Athenian Public Discourse,” Diss. University of Michigan 2005, for the historical examples and for a theory about the workings of collective social memory in the face of the traumatic facts or fears of civic destructions during the fifth and fourth centuries. It is worth noting that the terms for civic destruction (κατασκάπτειν, ἐξανδραποδίζειν, ἐξαιρεῖν, διαφθεῖραι, ἀναστάτους ποιῆσαι, μηλόβοτον τὴν πόλιν ἀνεῖναι, etc.) differ from those associated with the obliterations of Troy and the Achaean Wall, as do the procedures, which tend to be formalized and almost ritualized (involving razing and pillaging the city, enslaving the population, and wasting the surrounding land by dedicating it to the god and excluding it from tillage; see Steinbock for discussion). In a word, and all poetic considerations aside, κατασκαφή, ἀνδραποδισμός, and so on are markedly different from ἀφανισμός. (In the case of *Against Leocrates* 62, Lycurgus has applied the current political vocabulary to the mythological *exemplum* for rhetorical point, as a glance at the surrounding context will show. I am, to be sure, assuming that Troy suffered *aphanismos*, or at least will appear to have done so by Lycurgus’ day. I am also assuming that this applies to Troy earlier. See n. 24, above.)

⁴⁸ “When their fortunes turned, the Carthaginians were utterly destroyed and henceforth became insensible to their own collapse” (καὶ Καρχηδόνιοι μὲν ἅμα ταῖς περιπετείαις ἄρδην ἀφανισθέντες ἀνεπαίσθητοι τῶν σφετέρων εἰς τὸ μέλλον ἐγένοντο συμπτωμάτων) (Polybius 38.1.6). See Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 2.53-54 for one Homeric parallel. I owe these references to an astonishing new study of the traumatic impact of Carthage on the Roman historical imagination (O’Gorman Forthcoming).

bulwark and a (haphazard) tomb.⁴⁹ Hence one of the alternative Hellenistic titles of *Iliad* 7, which reads, *The Collection of the Corpses* (Νεκρῶν ἀναίρεσις).⁵⁰ Nor is this all there is to the traumatic associations of the Achaean Wall.

The link made in this same tradition between the Trojan war and Zeus' (luckily) abortive wish to wipe out the human race, known from Hesiod and from the Homeric *Cypria*, seems to be responding to this same insight into irreparable harm, only now on a vastly larger scale, one that is world-historical and divine.⁵¹ On this view, the Trojan war marks the dividing line between mythical and historical time and a final separation of the divine and the human. After Troy, we enter into history, leaving myth definitively behind. Troy's sacking was first mythologically and then conventionally the start of Greek history, the ground zero of relative dating within human time (so, for example, the Chronographers at least in the Hellenistic period; but also Democritus, who dated his *Small Diacosmos* to "730 years after the capture of Troy" (Diogenes Laertius 9.41); and so history began, oddly but canonically and symbolically, in an obliteration. Seen in this light, Troy is not only a monument, whether of the past or of the poetic imagination; it is a bulwark against human obliteration. But Troy is this only insofar as it survives in memory. Following a Kafkaesque logic, we could say that you can be sure you are alive so long as you can tell yourself that Troy no longer exists. Here, as so often, prehistory is

⁴⁹ See also Lynn-George 1988, 258.

⁵⁰ The other title is *The Duel [Monomachia] between Hector and Ajax*. See Edwards 1991, 230; and *ibid.*, 277, where he concludes that the Hellenistic titles (they actually collapsed the two alternatives into one combined title) "suggest that versions were around without the wall-building." I don't see how this has to follow, and given his own thesis, the argument does seem like special pleading: there is no reason why titles had to have been complete descriptors of their books' contents, and all the rest of the evidence goes the other way. The D-Scholia to book VII, for example, contain a hypothesis that refers to all three elements: the *monomachia*, the gathering of the dead, and the wall-building.

⁵¹ Kullmann 1955; Kullmann 1956; Scodel 1982. To the Near-Eastern and Eastern parallels they note in the Greek myth of the destruction of the Achaean Wall (flood myths found in the Bible and in *Gilgamesh*, and in Egyptian, Babylonian, and Indian myths [Kullmann 1955, 186-87; Scodel 1982, 40-42]), Eustathius invites comparison, indirectly, with Babel by way of invoking the Giants and Titans as a comparandum for the Achaeans' threat to the Olympians, as perceived by Poseidon (690.31-34). For a different invocation of Babel, see Scodel 1982, 48 n. 38.

a defense mechanism against the insignificance of the present, endowing the present with contours and depth.⁵² And it allows for surreptitious pleasures of stolen identifications.

Only artists, and especially those of the theater, have given men eyes and ears to see and hear with some pleasure what each man is himself, experiences himself, desires himself; only they have taught us to esteem the hero that is concealed in everyday characters; only they have taught us the art of viewing ourselves as heroes—from a distance and, as it were, simplified and transfigured—the art of staging and watching ourselves. Only in this way can we deal with some base details in ourselves. Without this art we would be nothing but foreground and live entirely in the spell of that perspective which makes what is closest at hand and most vulgar appear as if it were vast, and reality itself By surrounding him with eternal perspectives, it taught man to see himself from a distance and as something past and whole. (Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, §78; trans. Kaufmann)

Surreptitious, like forbidden fruit. Fictionality was not openly allowed in the ancient critical traditions that touched on Troy's historicity: here, fiction was history, and therefore the pleasures it afforded had to be stolen, displaced, and disputed as well. But as we have also seen, there were complicating factors that interfered with the pure pleasure of a fictional appreciation of Homer. It was not just that Troy signified so horrifically. It was also that the Achaean Wall was something that came from nothing and that bore the signs of this original negation within itself—a terrifying prospect no matter how one looked at it. Homer was traumatic and pleasurable. He might even be both of these at once. And that alone might be enough to provoke concern in the mind of an ancient commentator.

Given the similarity of the two walls and their parallel fates, but also either event's susceptibility to fictional manipulation, the contamination of allusions from one to the other was inevitable. Behind the two walls lurks an insight into what I referred to above as "the ancient traumatic imagination," which covers a wide range of phenomena—from the violent prehistory of the poems to the interaction of mythical and historical time, to a consciousness of the impermanence or even vanity of poetic achievements.⁵³ Fictionality is a further

⁵² Schadewaldt 1966, 118 n. 1 takes the wall episode as embodying such a retrospective gaze: "*Der singuläre Gebrauch dieser Bezeichnung der Heroen in der Ilias hängt damit zusammen, dass der Dichter am M-Beginn in ebenso singulärer Weise aus der späteren Zeit auf die Heroenwelt zurückblickt.*" See further Nagy 1979, 159-60; Scodel 1982, 34-36.

⁵³ For a strong statement of this latter, see Lynn-George 1988, 257: "The *Iliad* constructs a sign of survival and annihilation, the *sêma*, in the awareness of the possibility of the annihilation of all surviving signs. The possibility of total effacement is thus also part of the *epos*." For an explication of this sensibility in terms of "sublime monuments" in ancient poetry and prose, see Porter Forthcoming, ch. 3.

connotation that can stand in for any of these items. The scholia's literal-minded anxieties, with their energetic defenses of the impossible (the nakedly fictive), may well be a rationalization of this fear. Investing the same events with a sublime aesthetic aura is another way of taming this same fear—the one we may be most familiar with ourselves today.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ This essay develops points I first made in Porter 2002 at nn. 6 and 12. Thanks above all to Ruth Scodel for helpful discussion of an earlier draft, as well as to members of the Homerizon group for energetic comments and feedback at the time of the conference.

TEXTS

- T1** Strabo 13.1.36: καὶ μὴν τό γε ναύσταθμον τὸ νῦν ἔτι λεγόμενον πλησίον οὕτως ἔστι τῆς νῦν πόλεως, ὥστε θαυμάζειν εἰκότως ἂν τινα τῶν μὲν τῆς ἀπονοίας τῶν δὲ τούναντίον τῆς ἀψυχίας ἀπονοίας μὲν, εἰ τοσοῦτον χρόνον ἀτείχιστον αὐτὸ εἶχον, πλησίον οὔσης τῆς πόλεως καὶ τοσοῦτου πλήθους τοῦ τ' ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ τοῦ ἐπικουρικοῦ· νεωστὶ γὰρ γεγονέναι φησὶ τὸ τεῖχος. (*ἢ οὐδ' ἐγένετο, ὁ δὲ πλάσας ποιητῆς ἠφάνισεν, ὡς Ἀριστοτέλης φησὶν* [fr. 162 Rose])· ἀψυχίας δέ, εἰ γενομένου τοῦ τείχους ἐτειχομάχουν καὶ εἰσέπεσον εἰς αὐτὸ τὸ ναύσταθμον καὶ προσεμάχοντο ταῖς ναυσίν, ἀτείχιστον δὲ ἔχοντες οὐκ ἐθάρρουν προσιόντες πολιορκεῖν μικροῦ τοῦ διαστήματος ὄντος ἔστι γὰρ τὸ ναύσταθμον πρὸς Σιγείῳ, κτλ.
- T2** Eust. ad VII.441-63, v. 2, p. 493.57-60: Σημείωσαι δὲ καὶ ὅτι τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν τοῦτο τεῖχος ἀρέσκει τοῖς παλαιοῖς πλάσμα εἶναι Ὀμηρικόν. τῇ γὰρ ἀληθείᾳ, φασίν, οὐ γέγονεν, ἀλλ' ἐπλάσατο τὴν πρὸς τῷ ναυστάθμῳ τειχοποιίαν καὶ τὰ κατ' αὐτὴν ὁ ποιητῆς, οὐχ' ἱστορῶν πράγμα γενόμενον ἀλλ' ὡς γενόμενον ἐκτιθέμενος, οὐδὲ λέγων ἀληθῶς, τὰ εἰκότα δὲ ὑποτιθέμενος, ὡς ἂν ἐγγυμνάσῃ προῖων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ῥητορικὴν καὶ τειχομαχίαις καὶ κινδύνοις τοῖς περὶ αὐτάς, ὅπερ οὐκ εἶχε περὶ αὐτὴν τὴν Τροίαν ἄρτι πιθανῶς ποιῆσαι, κτλ.
- T3** (VII.336-40):
τύμβον δ' ἀμφὶ πυρὴν ἕνα χεύομεν ἐξαγαγόντες
ἄκριτον ἐκ πεδίου· ποτὶ δ' αὐτὸν δεῖμομεν ὦκα
πύργους ὑψηλοὺς εἴλαρ νηῶν τε καὶ αὐτῶν
ἐν δ' αὐτοῖσι πύλας ποιήσομεν εὖ ἀραρυίας,
ὄφρα δι' αὐτῶν ἰππηλασίη ὁδὸς εἴη·
- T4** Σ VII (443-64a.) (Ariston.) οἱ δὲ θεοὶ παρ Ζηνί (443) ἕως τοῦ ὡς οἱ μὲν τοιαῦτα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀγόρευον (464) ἀθετοῦνται στίχοι εἴκοσι δύο, ὅτι *περὶ τῆς ἀναιρέσεως τοῦ τείχους* λέγει πρὸ τῆς τειχομαχίας (sc. M 3—35) ὡς ἂν μὴ προειρηκῶς ἐνθάδε. **A (443-64b1.)** (Did.) <οἱ δὲ θεοὶ—ὡς οἱ μὲν τοιαῦτα:> καθόλου δὲ τὴν τῶν θεῶν ἀγορὰν ἠθέτουν οἱ περὶ Ζηνόδοτον καὶ Ἀριστοφάνη καὶ αὐτὸς Ἀρίσταρχος. **A (443-64b2.)** οἱ δὲ θεοὶ παρ Ζηνί καθήμενοι ἀστεροπητῇ <— ὡς οἱ μὲν τοιαῦτα>: τὴν ἀγορὰν τῶν θεῶν ἠθέτουν οἱ περὶ Ζηνόδοτον καὶ αὐτὸς Ἀρίσταρχος. **T (443-64c.)** (ex.) οἱ δὲ θεοὶ παρ Ζηνί <—ὡς οἱ μὲν τοιαῦτα>: τοῦτο εἰς ἀξιοπιστίαν τοῦ ἔργου καὶ ἀναιρῶν, ὃ ἐπλάσατο. **T**
- T5** Σ VII (445.) (ex.) τοῖσι δὲ μύθων ἦρχε Ποσειδάων: ἀναιρῆσαι τὸ πλάσμα τοῦ τείχους σπουδάζων ὁ ποιητῆς ὡς περὶ ἀπὸ μηχανῆς βοήθειαν πορίζεται εἰς τὸ μηδένα ἐπιζητεῖν ὕστερον τὰ τῶν τειχῶν ἴχνη. οὐδενὶ δὲ ἤρμωσεν ἡ κατηγορία ἢ Ποσειδῶνι καὶ Ἀπόλλωνι, ἀντιτειχιζόντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῷ Τρωϊκῷ τείχει. καὶ ὁ μὲν Ἀπόλλων οὐ λαλεῖ—ἦ γὰρ ἂν

εἶπεν ἡ Ἥρα “εἴη κεν καὶ τοῦτο τεὸν ἔπος” (Ω 56)—Ποσειδῶν δὲ Ἑλληνικὸς ὢν θεὸς δοκεῖ ἀπαθῶς [mss.: ἀμαθῶς Cobet] τῶν Ἑλλήνων κατηγορεῖν. bT

T6 Σ bT XII.3-35. οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔμελλεν <—/θησέμεναι>: τετρωμένων τῶν ἀριστέων μένειν ἐν τῇ πεδιάδι Ἑλληνες οὐκ ἐδύναντο. **bT** ἀναγκαίως οὖν τὴν πεδιάδα μάχην ἐπὶ τειχομαχίαν μεταφέρειν βούλεται. τούτου γὰρ χάριν καὶ ἀνέπλασε τὴν τειχοποιῖαν ὁ ποιητής, ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀγῶνας κινήσει ἐπὶ τῇ τειχομαχίᾳ. τοῦτο μὲν οὖν ἐπὶ τοῦ Τρωϊκοῦ τείχους ἀμήχανον θεοποίητον γάρ. **bT** ὑπὲρ δὲ τοῦ μηδὲ ταύτην καταλιπεῖν τὴν ιδέαν ἐπὶ τῷ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τείχει τὴν τειχομαχίαν ποιεῖ. **T** ἐπεὶ δὲ αὐτὸς ἀνήγειρε τὸ τεῖχος, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἠφάνισεν αὐτό, τὸν ἔλεγχον συναφανίζων. **bT** λάβοι δ' ἂν τις τοῦτο πρὸς τοὺς χρόνους τοῦ ποιητοῦ διότι οὐ μετὰ πολὺ τῶν Τρωϊκῶν γέγονεν· εἰ γὰρ ἐνῆν ὑπονοεῖν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ χρόνου κατέπεσε καὶ ἠφάνισθη ὡς ἀντοσχεδῶς ὠκοδομημένον, οὐκ ἂν τῷ αἰτήματι τούτῳ ἐχρήσατο ὅτι αὐτὸς Ποσειδῶν ἠφάνισεν ὡς πάντας δὲ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Ἰδης ποταμοὺς ἐπ' αὐτὸ ἄγει ἐφ' ἡμέρας ἐννέα (cf. 19—25), καὶ τοῦ Διὸς συνεχῶς ὕοντος καὶ τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος ἀναμοχλεύοντος τὰ θεμέλια (cf. 25—32)—, οὐ δυνάμενος δὲ ἴχνος τι ἀπαιτηθῆναι τοῦ μὴ γενομένου. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ οὐκ ἠρκέσθη τῇ τῆς δομήσεως ἀναιρέσει, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀμάθῳ τὸν τόπον ἐκάλυψε, καὶ αἰγιαλὸς γέγονε τὸ πᾶν. **T** τούτου δὲ αἴτιον ἀποδέδωκε τὸ μνηῖσαι θεοὺς, θυσιῶν ἐπ' αὐτῷ μὴ τυχόντας, **bT** οἷα καὶ τῇ οἰκοδομίᾳ αὐτοῦ εἰσήγαγε Ποσειδῶνα λέγοντα “οὐχ ὀράας, ὅτε δ' αὐτε κερηκομόωντες Ἀχαιοὶ τεῖχος ἐτειχίσαντο <...> οὐδὲ θεοῖσι δόσαν κλειτὰς ἐκατόμβας;” (H 448-50). **T**

T7 Porphyry *Homeric Questions*, p. 174.13-15 Schrader, ad XII.10-32: διὰ τί τὸ τεῖχος οἱ μὲν Ἀχαιοὶ μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ ἐποίησαν, ὁ δὲ Ἀπόλλων καὶ ὁ Ποσειδῶν ἐννέα ἡμέραις κατέβαλον; ἄλογον γὰρ τὸ μὲν χαλεπώτερον ῥαδίως τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ποιῆσαι, τὸ δὲ ῥᾶον, τὸ καταβαλεῖν τοῦ οἰκοδομῆσαι, τοὺς θεοὺς μόλις· ῥητέον δέ· οὐκ εἰς τὸ καταβαλεῖν ταῖς ἐννέα ἡμέραις κέχρηται, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ ἀλίπλοα γενέσθαι, καὶ τὰ θεμέλια καὶ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν κατενεχθῆναι

φιτρῶν καὶ λάων, τὰ θέσαν μογέοντες Ἀχαιοὶ (v. 29),

καὶ ἔτι λειῶσαι τε τὸν τόπον καὶ

αὖθις δ' ἠίονα μεγάλην ψαμάθοισι καλύψαι (v. 31),

οὐ μὴν τὰ πρὸς τὸ καταβαλεῖν συνηρημένα εἰς τὸ τέλειον τοῦ ἀφανισμοῦ καὶ τῆς ἠίονος τὴν εἰς τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀποκατάστασιν. ἄμα δὲ καὶ τῷ ποιητῇ ἡ μὲν τῶν Ἀχαιῶν τειχοποιία οὐ παρέιχε τὴν διατριβήν· οὐ γὰρ εὐπρεπές τοὺς ἀριστεὰς ποιῆσαι λιθοφοροῦντας· ἡ δὲ τῶν θεῶν μεγαλοπρεπής· τοῖς γὰρ ποταμοῖς καὶ τῇ τριαίνῃ διέλυον τὸ τεῖχος. Καλλίστρατος δὲ ἠξίου ἐν δ' ἡμᾶρ ἐς τεῖχος γράφειν, δασύνοντας τὸ ἔν, ἐπεὶ μηδέποτε καθ' ἑαυτὸ τὸ ἐννήμαρ ὁ ποιητὴς εἴρηκεν, ἀλλὰ πάντως ἐπάγων τὴν δεκάτην· ἐννήμαρ μὲν ἀνὰ στρατόν, τῇ δεκάτῃ τε (A 53. 54).

ἄλογον τοὺς μὲν ἀνθρώπους ποιῆσαι <om. B> μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ τὸ τεῖχος, τοὺς δὲ θεοὺς ἐννέα ἡμέραις καθελεῖν. οἱ μὲν οὖν ἐκ τῆς λέξεως λύουσι· τὸ γὰρ ἐννήμαρ εὐεπιπτώτως λέγουσι λέγειν Ὀμηρον. οἱ δὲ δασύνουσιν, ἵνα ἦ ἐν <ένος L> ἡμᾶρ. οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ, ὅτι τότε

βουλόμενος παντάπασιν *ἐξαλείψαι* τὸ τεῖχος πλασθὲν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοσοῦτον χρόνον ἐποίησε τῆς καθαιρέσεως, οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου· *οὐ γὰρ πρέπει* τοὺς ἀριστεὰς εἰσάγειν τειχοδομοῦντας ἐν πολλαῖς ἡμέραις, ἀπρεπεστέρας οὔσης τῆς ὑπηρεσίας

T8 Eust. ad VII.452: Καὶ ὄρα τὸ «ἐπιλήσονται». εἴρηται γὰρ ἑλλειπτικῶς διὰ τὸ ἐναγώνιον τοῦ λέγοντος, δῆλον δὲ ὅτι ἄνθρωποι ἐπιλήσονται. Σημείωσαι δὲ καὶ ὅτι ἐνταῦθα εἰς ἴσον ἄγει ὁ ποιητὴς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ πλαστὸν τεῖχος τῷ ἱστορικῷ καὶ ἀληθεῖ τῷ τῆς Τροίας. Κλέος γὰρ μόνον καὶ ἀμφοτέρων φέρεται, πραγματικῶς δὲ οὐδέτερον φαίνεται, ἤδη δὲ *καὶ εὐκλεέστερον τὸ Ὀμηρικόν*. Αὐτὸ μὲν γὰρ διὰ τὴν τοῦ ποιητοῦ λογίοντα ἐκ μὴ ὄντος ἐστὶ τρόπον τινά, ἢ δὲ ἀληθῆς Τροία τῆ τοῦ χρόνου φορᾶ ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος ἦλθεν εἰς τὸ μηδέν, ἀφανισθεῖσα.

T9 XII.9-12:

τὸ καὶ οὐ τι πολὺν ὄνον ἔμπεδον ἦεν.
ὄφρα μὲν Ἴκτωρ ζωὸς ἔην καὶ *μήνι' Ἀχιλλεύς*
καὶ Πριάμοιο ἄνακτος ἀπόρθητος πόλις ἔπλεν,
τόφρα δὲ καὶ μέγα τεῖχος Ἀχαιῶν ἔμπεδον ἦεν.

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