

TROJAN WAR CYCLE

A. Before the events narrated in the *Iliad*

Ancient Epic (underlined = extant)

1. Creation of Zeus' cosmic order
2. Apollo and Poseidon build the walls of Troy
3. Heracles sacks Troy
4. Rape of Ganymede
5. Rape of Leda
6. Birth and abandonment of Paris¹
7. Wedding of Peleus and Thetis²
8. Oath of Helen's suitors to support her chosen husband
9. Judgment of Paris
10. Elopement of Paris and Helen
11. The trickery necessary to recruit Odysseus and Achilles for the expedition
12. Mistaken expedition against Mysia and the wounding of Telephus
13. Gathering of the army at Aulis
14. Sacrifice of Iphigenia
15. Wounding of Philoctetes³
16. Landing at Troy
17. Death of Protesilaus and Cynus
18. Nine years of indecisive warfare, including raids by the Greeks on Troy's allies

Titanomachy

Cypria

B. The *Iliad*

1. Quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon
2. Dual of Paris and Menelaus
3. Episodes of war--valor of Diomedes⁴; character and abilities of Hector and Ajax the Greater⁵
4. Embassy to Achilles and his refusal to rejoin the Greeks

Iliad

¹ Before Paris was born, Hecuba dreamed she had given birth to a firebrand that destroyed Troy and the prophets said this meant the child would be the destruction of the city. Priam shrank from killing him and gave him to a shepherd to expose ("unwanted child who survives"). Paris was brought up as a shepherd and not revealed as a prince of Troy until after the Judgment.

² Thetis is the woman who would have a son "stronger than his father" whose identity Prometheus knew and finally revealed to Zeus to the generation before the Trojan War. Zeus married her to a mortal, for whom it would be an honor to have a strong son.

³ Philoctetes was the recipient of Heracles' bow and arrows.

⁴ Diomedes was one of the Epigoni who defeated Thebes (his father Tydeus was an Argonaut and one of the seven against Thebes).

⁵ Son of Telamon; his half brother Teucer was half Trojan (son of Telamon and Priam's sister Hesione)

5. Spying expedition of Odysseus and Diomedes; capture of the horses of Rhesus⁶
6. Entry of Patroclus into the battle
7. Death of Sarpedon, the Lycian
8. Death of Patroclus at the hands of Hector and Apollo
9. Vengeance of Achilles
10. Death of Hector, killed by Achilles--and Athena
11. Ransoming of Hector's body by Priam
12. Funeral of Hector

C. After the events narrated in the *Iliad*

1. Arrival of the Amazons as Trojan allies Death of Penthesileia, their queen (killed by Achilles)
2. Assistance of the Ethiopians on the Trojan side
3. Antilochus killed by Memnon, king of the Ethiopians⁷
4. Memnon killed by Achilles
5. Death of Achilles (shot by an arrow aimed by Paris and Apollo)
6. Contest for the arms of Achilles between Odysseus and Ajax
7. Suicide of Ajax
8. Arrival of Achilles' son Neoptolemus (or Pyrrhus-"red-haired")
9. Successful attempt to get the bow and arrows of Heracles
10. Death of Paris (killed by Philoctetes with Heracles' bow)
11. Marriage (?) of Helen and Deiphobus, another of Priam's sons
12. Theft of the palladium (statue of Greeks) by Odysseus and Diomedes⁸
13. Strategy of the wooden horse
14. Story of Sinon and death of Laocoon, priest of Poseidon

Aethipois

Little Iliad

Iliupersis

FALL OF TROY

15. Death of Priam at the altar (killed by Neoptolemus)
16. Escape of Aeneas
17. Rape of Cassandra by lesser Ajax
18. Sacrifice of Polyxena to Achilles' ghost
19. Murder of Astyanax
20. Enslavement of the Trojan women

⁶ The capture of Rhesus' horse was one of three conditions for the taking of Troy that the Greeks had to fulfill – N.B. this aspect of the capture of Rhesus' horses is not mentioned in the *Iliad*.

⁷ Memnon son of the Dawn (Eon) and a Trojan, was great enough as a hero to kill Achilles' friend Antilochus (son of Nestor) and threaten Achilles himself before suffering his fate.

⁸ Another one of the conditions for the taking of Troy, revealed to the Greeks by Helenus, a captured Trojan prophet and another of Priam's sons.

D. The Returns (Nostoi)

For their misuse of the victory to which the gods had helped them, the Greeks were cursed by Greeks and Poseidon to have a wretched homecoming and in some cases to envy the Trojans their death before the doomed city. There are three basic groups into which the fates of the Greeks can be divided: A) those who died on the way; B) those who arrived home safely only to meet disaster there; and C) those who wandered for years before regaining their homelands. The only exception to this was Nestor, who arrived home safely and was granted a peaceful and prosperous old age by the gods.

<i>Nostoi</i>

A) Those who died on the way home included:

Ajax the Lesser (and a number of obscure heroes)-- scattered by the storm Poseidon sent; drowned or shipwrecked--Ajax was impaled either by the trident of Poseidon or the thunderbolt of Zeus (hurled by Athena) for his impiety in dragging Cassandra from the altar and raping her in Athena's temple.

B) Those who arrived home safely to meet disaster there included:

1. **Agamemnon**--with his prize Cassandra arrived home first, only to meet treachery and death from his wife Clytemnestra and his cousin Aegisthus (see *Oresteia*).

2. **Diomedes**--returned to find his wife unfaithful and his kingdom taken away--wandered in exile for some time and finally settled in Italy.

3. **Philoctetes**--expelled by nobles who had ruled in his absence--eventually like Diomedes settled in Southern Italy and founded a new city.

4. **Neoptolemus** -- burned the shrine of Apollo at Delphi because Apollo would not give him satisfaction for death of Achilles--was finally killed at Delphi and buried near the shrine.

C) Those who wandered for years before regaining their homelands included:

1. **Menelaus**--blown by the storm to Egypt--contrary winds kept him in Africa for seven years--finally, after travels in Ethiopia and Libya as well as Egypt, he and Helen were allowed to return to Sparta.

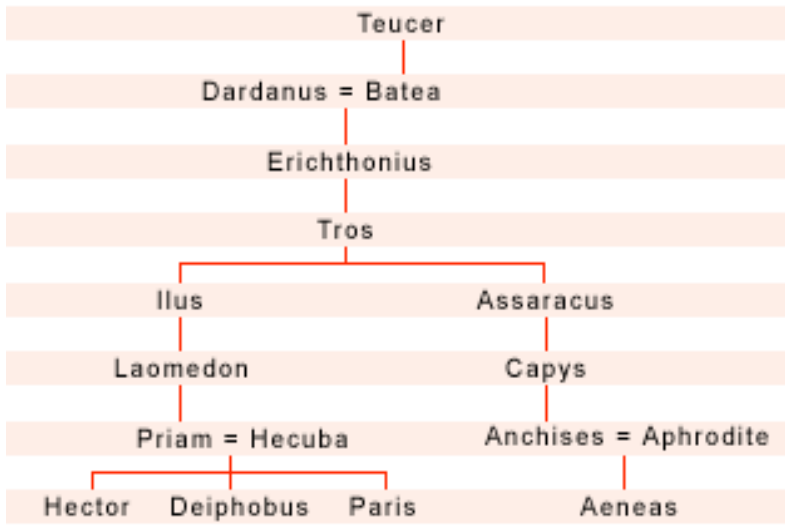
2. **Odysseus**- (Odysseus' fate is a combination of #2 and #3). He returns home after 10 years but is then eventually killed by his bastard son Telegonus.

<i>Odyssey</i>

<i>Telegony</i>

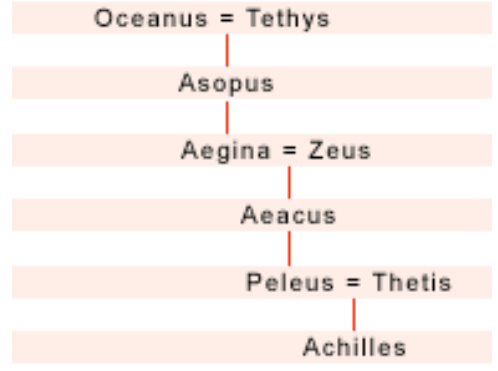
3. **Aeneas**, leader of the surviving Trojans, travels to Italy and founds precursor to Rome but loses father and wife and gains eternal enmity of the city of Carthage in the process.

The House of Troy



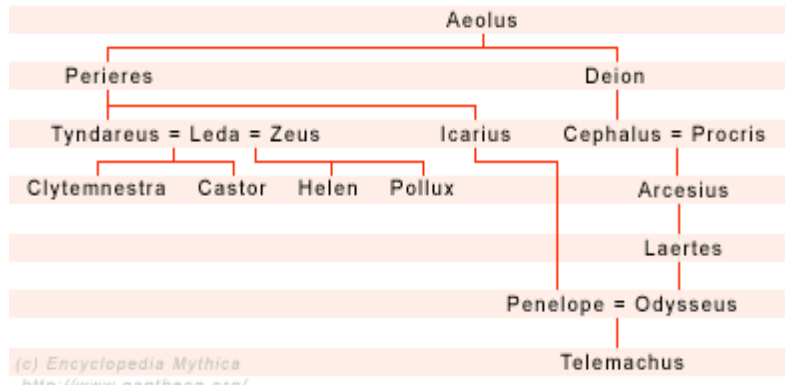
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Ancestors of Achilles



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The Family of Helen of Troy



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House of Atreus

