

## HOMER'S BATTLES IN THE SKY

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### Preamble

In my essay *The Bible's Disturbances*, I identify fifteen disturbances in the Bible to which I attribute some interruption in the normal life of Earth. And in my essay *The Ancients' World Ages Updated*, I noted that these disturbances not only terminated the Ancients' world ages, but subdivided a few of them into phases and periods which naturally coincide with historical subdivisions.

Here is the structure of what I call the **Late Prehistoric Era** or the **Turbulent Era**, which is the equivalent of the geologists' Pleistocene Period and lasted 799 years (1464-665 BC). It divides naturally into three of the Ancients' world ages:

- The ***Ancients' Missing Age*** = the Early Turbulent World = the Early Pleistocene Epoch = the archaeologists' Middle Bronze Age (1464-1008 BC).
- The ***Ancients' Heroic Age*** = the Middle Turbulent World = the Middle Pleistocene Epoch = the archaeologists' Late Bronze Age = the Greeks' Mycenaean Age (1008-754 BC)
- The ***Ancients' Iron Age*** = the Late Turbulent World = the Late Pleistocene Epoch = the archaeologists' Early Antiquity (754-665 BC).

### The Heroic or Mycenaean Age

Most versions of ancient chronology put the Mycenaean Age circa 1600-1100 BC, the Greek Dark Ages circa 1100-900 BC, and the Greek Archaic Period circa 900-500 BC. My chronology, however, which takes the Bible as its point of departure, but which also owes much to Immanuel Velikovsky,<sup>1</sup> amends this sequence. I believe (1) that the Mycenaean Age existed

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<sup>1</sup> See Immanuel Velikovsky's Ages in Chaos series:

- Volume 1: *Ages in Chaos I* (c.1450-830 BC), Doubleday, 1952.

circa 1008-754 BC and constituted what the Ancients called the Heroic Age, (2) that the Greek Dark Ages never existed, and (3) that the Greek Archaic Period existed circa 754-487 BC, which can be divided into two parts: (a) the Early Archaic Period (754-665 BC), which was the last period of the Turbulent Era (1464-665 BC) and called the Iron Age by the Ancients, and (b) the Late Archaic Period (665-487 BC), which was the first period of the Historic Era (665-2 BC) and called the Neo-Babylonian Age by me.

The age under study here is the Ancient's Heroic Age (1008-754 BC). It contains eight of the most famous events in Greek history, which alone explain why the ancient Greeks call it a heroic age:

- **The Labors of Herakles (c.855 BC)** - Although the tales of these labors certainly contain many fanciful elements, I have no doubt that these tales are based on some actual occurrences in which Herakles demonstrated great valor. As a result, Herakles became a legend in his own time. He set a standard of physical stature and prowess to which the men of the Heroic Age could aspire. Moreover, he whet their appetites for adventurous exploits that might earn them a place in Greece's pantheon of heroes.
- **The Slaying of the Minotaur (c.850 BC)** – Circa 865 BC, Androgeus, son of King Minos of Crete, competed in the quadrennial Pan-Athenian games. He did so well that some jealous Athenians killed him. Upon receiving the news, Minos sailed to Athens and demanded that King Aegeus of Athens relinquish the assassins to him. The identity of the assassins was not known, however, and so Androgeus turned over the entire city to Minos. Minos then demanded a septennial tribute of seven youths and seven maidens, who would be given to the Minotaur, a deformed and undoubtedly demented son of Minos, to devour. When the third tribute was due (c.850 BC), King Aegeus's son Theseus volunteered to be one of the seven youths. He traveled to Crete, slew the Minotaur with the help of the princess Ariadne of Crete, thereby putting an end to the tribute, and then returned to Athens with Ariadne and her sister Phaedra.
- **The Voyage of the Argo (c.845 BC)** - Jason<sup>2</sup> and his crew on the Argo undertook a voyage from Iolcus on the eastern shore of Thessaly to Colchus on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, in order to obtain the Golden Fleece, which had been hung in a sacred grove dedicated to Ares by Phrixos. This voyage resulted in one of the greatest exploratory expeditions in human history. In my opinion, the expedition took the band of mostly young adventurers (a) southeastward across the Aegean Sea to the Hellespont (=Dardenelles), (b) northeastward across the Propontis (=Sea of Marmara), and through the Bosphorus to the Euxine (Black Sea), (c) eastward across the north coast of Asia Minor to Colchus, then (d) westward back across the Euxine to the mouth of the Danube, (e)

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- Volume 2: Assyrian Conquest (830-612 BC), edited by James Lloyd, privately published.
  - Volume 3: Dark Age of Greece (phantom years), privately published.
  - Volume 4: Ramses II and His Time (612-525 BC), Doubleday, 1978.
  - Volume 5: Peoples of the Sea (525-332 BC), Doubleday, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> The Argonauts regarded Herakles as the natural commander in chief among them, but he declined the position and suggested that Jason be their leader.

northwestward up the Danube and one of its tributaries to their common headwaters (just north of modern Zagreb), (f) overland to the headwaters of the Arsia River, (g) southwestward downriver to the Adriatic Sea, (h) southward along the Dalmatian coast almost to Sicily, (i) northward along the eastern coast of Italy to the mouth of the Po River, (j) westward upriver to its headwaters south of Pavia, (k) overland to the headwaters of the Scrivia River, (l) southward downriver to Genoa on the Ligurian Sea, (m) southeastward along the Italian coast and through the Strait of Messina, (n) southward across the Mediterranean Sea into the sandbanks of the Gulf of Syrtis (off the west coast of Libya), (o) eastward overland to Lake Triton (no longer extant), (p) northeastward across the lake, (q) northward down a river (no longer extant) to the south shore of the eastern Mediterranean Sea, (r) northeastward to Crete, (s) northward from Crete to the Peloponnesus and finally back to Iolcus. This adventure provided the young Greeks with both maritime expertise and a wealth of demographic, geographic, and navigational information – to say nothing of a fund of stories to tell.

- **1<sup>st</sup> Theban War (832-831 BC)** - A Greek army invaded Egypt and besieged Thebes with the intent of restoring the Egyptian throne to Smenkhare, whom the Greeks knew as Polyneices. The army was under the command of King Adrastus of Sicyon and his six captains: (a) his brother-in-law Amphiaraus (an Argonaut) of Argos, (b) his nephew Capaneus of Corinth, (c) his brother Hippomedon of Mycenae, (d) his friend Parthenopaeus of Tegea, (e) his son-in-law Polyneices (=Smenkhare) of Egyptian Thebes, and (f) his son-in-law Tydeus of Calydon. Together they were known in Greek literature as the “Seven Against Thebes.” They were accompanied by Adrastus’s friend Eteoclus of Argos and his brother Mecisteus of Sicyon. The siege of Thebes was unsuccessful, and Amphiaraus, Capaneus, Hippomedon, Parthenopaeus, Polyneices, Tydeus, Eteoclus, and Mecisteus were killed. Only Adrastus returned to Greece with the remnant of the Greek army.
  
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Theban War (821-820)** - After the debacle of the *1<sup>st</sup> Theban War*, in which so many prominent Greek heroes were killed, the sons of the dead, who were known as “the Epigoni,” decided to seek revenge. They were (a) Aegialus, son of Adrastus, (b) Alcmaeon, son of Amphiaraus, (c) Amphilocus, also son of Amphiaraus, (d) Euryalus, son of Mecisteus, (e) Medon, son of Eteoclus, (f) Polydorus, son of Hippomedon, (g) Promachus, son of Parthenopaeus, (h) Sthenelus, son of Capaneus, and (i) Thersander, son of Polyneices. Under the leadership of possibly Adrastus (questionable: Adrastus may have died prior to the *2<sup>nd</sup> Theban War* since his son Aegialus is numbered among the “sons of the dead”) and certainly his nephew Alcmaeon, the Epigoni raised a second army from among the cities of the Argolid that were ruled by the relatives of Adrastus and launched a second invasion of Egypt and a second siege of Thebes. This time the Greeks enjoyed a measure of success. Some historians claim that they invested the city, deposed Ay, and installed Thersander on the Theban throne. I agree with them. According to my chronology, Ay was followed by Armaeus or Armais, who, I believe, was Thersander. He ruled for seven years (820-813 BC) and was succeeded by his son Ramesse, who ruled for one year (813-812 BC). Then Egypt was invaded and conquered by the Libyans.

- **The Trojan War (812-802 BC)** - Eight years after the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Theban War* ended, the Greeks began flexing their muscles again. For years they had been irked by the control which the Trojans exercised over the Dardanelles and the maritime trade between (a) the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea to the west and south and (b) the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea to the north and east. On the pretext of being outraged over the supposed abduction of Helen, the beautiful wife of King Menelaus of Sparta, by the Trojan prince Paris, King Agamemnon of Mycenae, the brother of Menelaus, led an armada of over a thousand ships filled with Greek warriors to besiege Troy and liberate Helen. The siege lasted ten years and ended with a Greek victory, which is celebrated in one of the greatest pieces of literature in the world – The Iliad by the Greek author Homer.
- **The Voyage of Odysseus (c.800-790 BC)** - In another great piece of literature, The Odyssey by Homer, the latter relates that, after the fall of Troy, the Greek hero Odysseus commenced a voyage from Troy to his home in Ithaca that lasted ten years.
- **The Voyage of Aeneas (c.800-790 BC)** - In The Aeneid, another great piece of literature by the Roman author Virgil, the latter relates that, after the sack of Troy by the Greeks, the Trojan prince Aeneas, accompanied by a loyal band of fellow warriors, sailed southwest across the Mediterranean Sea to Carthage, where he dallied with its Queen Dido, and then sailed northward to Italy, where he settled on a site in Tuscany that is now called Rome. They lived among the Etruscans until 754 BC, when a thunderbolt destroyed Volsinium and devastated the surrounding region, which included the Trojan settlement, and thereby created the opportunity for the princes Romulus and Remus of Alba Longa to seize what remained of the Trojan settlement and found Rome.

### **The Historicity of the Mycenaean Age**

Up until the nineteenth century, the above stories were dismissed as the stuff of legend and presented to young readers in school as a beautiful example of *mythology* – a term used to disparage ancient accounts of any historical event that modern scientists and scholars regard as impossible and therefore fanciful. That point of view received a serious setback in the late nineteenth century when the German businessman Heinrich Schliemann began digging up the remains of cities mentioned in the so-called legends. He uncovered the remains of Troy<sup>3</sup> in four different expeditions in 1870-73, 1878-79, 1882-83, and 1888-90. He excavated the shaft graves at Mycenae<sup>4</sup> in 1876 and Tiryns in 1884. Moreover Schliemann was followed by other archaeologists<sup>5</sup> in the decades that followed.

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<sup>3</sup> Schliemann, Heinrich, Ilios - The City of the Trojans - The Results of Researches and Discoveries on the Site of Troy and throughout the Troad in the Years 1871, 72, 73, 78, 79 (1881), Arno Press, New York NY, 1976; Schliemann, Heinrich, Smith, Philip, Editor, Troy and Its Remains - A Narrative of Researches and Discoveries Made on the Site of Ilium, and in the Trojan Plain (1875), Arno Press, New York NY, 1970; Schliemann, Heinrich, Troja - Results of the Latest Researches and Discoveries on the Site of Homer's Troy, 1882 (1884), Benjamin Blom, New York NY, 1967.

<sup>4</sup> Schliemann, Henry, Mycenae - A Narrative of Researches and Discoveries at Mycenae and Tiryns (1880), Benjamin Blo, New York NY, 1967.

<sup>5</sup> One of the later archaeologists was Carl W. Blegen, whose book Troy and the Trojans, Frederick A. Praeger, New York NY, 1963, I found particularly enjoyable and informative.

Unfortunately, any connection between (a) the characters of Homer's books, such as Agamemnon, Menelaus, Helen, Achilles, Ajax, Diomedes, Priam, Hecuba, Hector, Paris, etc., and (b) the contents of Schliemann's holes in the ground in Greece and Turkey was rejected by the scholars of antiquity for three main reasons.

- First, the dates were wrong. They identified Homer's stories with a Mycenaean Age (c.1600-1100 BC) in the dim past and Schliemann's uncovered ruins and artifacts with a more recent Greek Archaic Period (c.900-500 BC), in which the chronology of ancient played an important role.<sup>6</sup> Separating the two ages was the Dark Ages (now 1100-900 BC, but previously 1100-600 BC), during which the occupants of the land managed to live there without leaving a trace of their existence.
- Second, the size of the city was wrong. Homer described a large, populous city with imposing walls and gates, many avenues and streets, many public buildings and private homes, etc., whereas the remains of Hissarlik are nothing like that description. They may have been right. The remains of Troy may still lie nearby, as yet undiscovered
- Third, the excavator was wrong. They regarded Schliemann as a disreputable businessman who had amassed a fortune buying and selling gold, indigo, and the constituents of gunpowder (lead, saltpeter, sulfur, etc.). Moreover, they looked down on him as an amateur archaeologists who made a hash of his sites, thereby ruining them for later professionals. Overlooked was the fact that his passion for Greek literature had led him unerringly to some of the most important archaeological sites in the ancient world and that his somewhat ill-gotten gains had funded their uncovering.<sup>7</sup>

### **Homer's Iliad.**

The Trojan War stands out as the most dramatic event of Greece's Heroic Age, due in large part to the treatment of it by Homer in The Iliad and The Odyssey and by Virgil in The Aeneid.

The Iliad is actually an account of two separate wars that occur simultaneously over the course of ten years:

- A battle on the ground between (a) the Trojan defenders, who occupy and defend a walled city on the southwest coast of Turkey, which is often identified with the ruins at Hissarlik, but may eventually turn out to be underneath a large mound nearby and (b) the

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<sup>6</sup> When amateur archaeologists began work in Egypt in the early nineteenth century, they created a lengthy chronology for ancient Egypt by treating the 31 dynasties of Manetho as having existed seriatim, despite the fact that many dynasties were located in different cities and many pharaohs exhibited similar characteristics. Then, when men like Schliemann began digging up Greece and Turkey, they found artifacts from Egypt that enabled them to establish the contemporaneity of certain layers in other Mediterranean countries like Italy, Greece and Turkey.

<sup>7</sup> While I don't wish to minimize Schliemann's sharp business practices, I will point out that he does not compare unfavorably with some of the most successful businessmen of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who used devious means to acquire their wealth, but who are now touted as generous philanthropists.

Greek invaders, most of whom arrive at the battlefield aboard ships and then encamp on the shore, about four miles WSW of Troy.

- A battle in the sky among the Greek gods (a) Aphrodite or Athene, (b) Ares, and (c) Selene, with some help or hinderance from Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Apollo, and other members of the Greek pantheon, who play minor roles.

Accounts of these two battles are woven together seamlessly, with Athene serving as the proponent and champion of the Greeks, Ares serving as the proponent and champion of the Trojans, and Selene, a young maiden who wants to be included in the drama, but is being continually (a) driven off by the main combatants Athene and Ares and (b) admonished by the adult spectators like Zeus and Hera that she is too young and weak to get involved. The entire saga is both riveting and perplexing at the same time.

Historians and other have come up with many different explanations for the battle in the sky, but only a few (e.g. the Roman historian Titus Livius (Livy),<sup>8</sup> the Assyrian writer Lucianos (Lucian of Samosata),<sup>9</sup> Immanuel Velikovsky,<sup>10</sup> and Donald W. Patten<sup>11</sup>) have settled on the most obvious explanation: (a) that Earth, Earth's moon (Selene or Luna), and the wandering stars Venus (Aphrodite, Athene) and Mars (Ares) were somehow interacting in a manner that suggested mortal combat, and (b) that this celestial drama was somehow related to the siege of Troy underway on the ground (c.812-802 BC).

### Homer's Time

At this point, I need to establish when Homer lived and wrote his two masterpieces.

Herodotus lived c.484-425 BC, and he wrote that "Homer and Hesiod" created the Greek pantheon "...not more than 400 years before me," which would mean not earlier than c. 884 BC. Adam Nicolson noted that Homer was a contemporary of Isaiah,<sup>12</sup> who lived nearly a century (780-680 BC)<sup>13</sup> and whose writing career lasted almost 75 years (755-680 BC).

The first important point to note here is that, if Homer was a contemporary of Isaiah, he would have been writing The Iliad sometime during the period c.755-680 BC, or roughly 50-130 years after the end of the Trojan War (802 BC), when the memory of the event would have been fresh

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<sup>8</sup> Titus Livius (Livy)'s History of Rome (c.27-9 BC), Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. He wrote in the preface concerning Rome's parentage, "The Roman people...profess that their Father and the Father of their empire was none other than Mars."

<sup>9</sup> Lucian's Astrology (c.165-175 AD), Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. He wrote that "...it is the conjuncture of Venus and Mars that creates the poetry of Homer."

<sup>10</sup> See Immanuel Velikovsky's World in Collision (1950), Doubleday & Company, Garden City, NY.

<sup>11</sup> Donald Patten's The Long Day of Joshua and Six Other Catastrophes (1973), Pacific Meridian Publishing Company, Seattle, WA.

<sup>12</sup> Adam Nicolson's Why Homer Matters (2014), Henry Holt & Company, New York, NY, p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Judah's kings at the time were Amaziah (807-778 BC), Azariah (778-726 BC), Jotham (726-710 BC), Ahaz (710-695 BC), Hezekiah (695-665 BC). Isaiah's birth is usually estimated to have occurred near the end of Amaziah's reign and his death, shortly after Hezekiah's year 14 (680 BC).

in the minds of the Greeks of his time. He might even have talked to some elderly veterans of the war.

The second important point to note is that, if Homer was a contemporary of Isaiah, he would have lived during most of the Ancients' Iron Age (754-665 BC) and therefore witnessed at least some of the following events, all of which, I argue elsewhere, were due to close passages to Earth of the planet Mars:

- The *Azariah Disturbance* (754 BC),
- The *2<sup>nd</sup> Ahaziah Threat* (739 BC)
- The *1<sup>st</sup> Jotham Threat* (724 BC),
- The *2<sup>nd</sup> Jotham Threat* (710 BC)
- The *Ahaz Disturbance* (695 BC), and
- The *1<sup>st</sup> Hezekiah Disturbance* (680 BC).

They would have given him visible evidence that the accounts of similar events in the past were trustworthy.

The third point to stress here is that the connections between (a) the Greeks and Venus and (b) the Trojans and Mars were not neither brief nor shallow. The Greeks regarded Venus as their god, their patron, and their protector, and the Trojans regarded Mars in like manner. These attitudes were forged over centuries and must have been based on something more than fevered imaginations.

### Why Three Battles?

The Trojan War lasted ten years. If Earth, Venus, and Mars were involved in a battle in the sky, it did not last ten years, because they would have become entangled briefly during a common, close encounter, but then moved on in their orbits about the sun. So, why three battles? Well, before I try to answer that question, I want to identify the dates of possible close encounters among Earth, Venus, and Mars during the Mycenaean Age (1008-754 BC).

In studying the periodicity of the movements of these heavenly bodies in the ninth and eighth centuries BC, I came up with the following dates for close-passages to Earth of Venus and Mars:

- Venus – 957, 906, 855, 805, and 754 BC (period of 50.71 years).<sup>14</sup>
- Mars – 957, 942, 928, 913, 899, 884, 870, 855, 841, 826, 812, 797, 783, 768, and 754 BC (period of 14.83 years).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Retrograde calculations for the movements of the planet Venus prior to 754 BC are not reliable, because Venus did not enter its current orbit around the sun until that year.

<sup>15</sup> Retrograde calculations for the movement of the planet Mars prior to 665 BC are not reliable, because Mars did not enter its current orbit around the sun until that year.

Thus, the obvious dates for the phenomena that prompted Homer's three descriptions of battles involving Earth, Venus, and Mars were 957, 855, and 754 BC, with a Venus threat occurring in 812 BC, the first year of the Trojan War, and a Mars Threat occurring in 805 BC, the seventh year of the war.

Thus, I will climb out on a limb here. I surmise that there were three battles in the sky involving Earth, its moon, Venus, and Mars.

- **Homer's Cosmic Battle 1** - I believe that Venus had been travelling in a path around the sun that brought it near Earth roughly every 50 years, thereby causing the *Moses Disturbance* in 1464 BC, the *Joshua Disturbance* one cycle later in 1413 BC), the *Deborah Disturbance* three cycles later in 1261 BC, the *Samuel Disturbance* four cycles later in 1058 BC, the *David Disturbance* one cycle later in 1008 BC, and now the *Solomon Disturbance* in his regnal year 31 (957 BC), in which Mars became involved for the first time. This battle in the sky might have provided some of the details in The Iliad's Book 5.
- **Homer's Cosmic Battle 2** – I believe that (a) Venus continued travelling in a path around the sun that brought it near Earth in c. 906 BC and 855 BC, and (b) Mars began travelling in a path around the sun that brought it near Earth in 942 BC, 928 BC, 913 BC, 899 BC, 884 BC, 870 BC, and also 855 BC. Thus all the players were back together again to produce the *Jehoram Disturbance* in his regnal year 7 (855 BC). Although there is no Biblical record of this disturbance, there is an Egyptian record which refers to an unidentified affliction that fell on Egypt during the reign of Akhnaton – an affliction that the priests regarded as punishment for an unacknowledged incidence of patricide – and there are records by (a) the Greek poet Archilochus, who referred to Zeus turning mid-day into night, and (b) the Roman dramatist Seneca, whose chorus in the drama *Thyestes*, asks the sun “What has driven thee from thy heavenly course? ...Has Typhon thrown off the mountainous mass and set his body free?”<sup>16</sup> This battle in the sky might have provided some of the details in The Iliad's Book 20.
- **Homer's Cosmic Battle 3** - I believe that (a) Venus continued travelling in a path around the sun that brought it near Earth in c. 805 BC and 855 BC, and (b) Mars began travelling in a path around the sun that brought it near Earth in 841 BC, 826 BC, 812 BC, 797 BC, 783 BC, 768 BC, and 754 BC. Thus all the players were back together again to produce the *Azariah Disturbance* in his regnal year 24 (754 BC), which probably caused the “Commotion in the Days of Uzziah.” This battle in the sky might have provided some of the details in The Iliad's Book 21.

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<sup>16</sup> These quotes come from Immanuel Velikovsky's Worlds in Collision, pp 216-217. Velikovsky believed that Atreus & Thyestes were contemporaries of Ahaz, and that the event to which Archilochus and Seneca referred was the *Ahaz Disturbance*. I disagree. According to my Synchronization of the Greek Generations (see Table 11D), Atreus and Thyestes lived over a century and a half earlier than Ahaz. Also, Typhon was the name of a phenomenon that occurred during the Moses Disturbance. Because the comet Venus emerged from the planet Jupiter (Zeus), Typhon was sometimes erroneously associated with Jupiter rather than Venus, but never with Mars.