



**The Passions of Achilles: Herbot von Fritzlar's "Liet von Troye"
and his Description of the Passions of Achilles in light of Herbot's
Historical Concept**

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1) Introduction

There once lived in Greece a King named Peleas. He was noble and powerful. He lived in splendor in his castles and in his country. Food and (costly) garments were abundant at his court. (LT 99-105)¹

With these words, Herbot von Fritzlar begins the introduction of his "Liet von Troye" (Song of Troy). But what first appears to be a fairy-tale idyll, is soon revealed as deceptive. For this king, who is supposed to

¹ All references to Herbot refer to the sole edition by Karl Frommann: Herbot's von Fritslâr liet von Troye (=LT). Special characters are represented in brackets: *Von kriche(n) landen wilēn was/ Ein kvnic der hiez peleas/ Edel vn(d) riche/ Der lebete herliche/ In burge(n) vn(d) in lande(n)/ Vo(n) spise vn(d) vo(n) gewanden/ Was die vulle in sime hofe.*

possess all sorts of virtues, lacks one very important one: he is an unfaithful person. He behaves faithlessly toward his nephew and future heir, Jason, whom he pretends to send out in search of the Golden Fleece in hopes that he will never return. And so, the history of the destruction of the city of Troy evolves, leading finally to the story of Aeneas in Italy. The battles for Troy, in which the hero Achilles plays a special role, take center stage in this work of 18,458 lines. Achilles stands out not only for his courage in battle, but also for his passions. In this paper I will outline how Herbort presents Achilles, how he integrates Achilles into the context of the work, and Herbort's historical concept, which is essential to the portrayal of his protagonist, and hope that by doing so, I will evoke further interpretations. First, it will be helpful to provide some brief information about this author.

2) Herbort von Fritzlar

The author of the "Liet von Troye", Herbort states his name at the end of his novel (LT 18450). Little is known about him. He identifies himself as a *gelarter schulere*, a learned scholar, and must therefore have enjoyed a religious or theological education. According to Joachim Bumke, it is not clear whether Herbort was a member of the clergy at the court of Thuringia or at the Monastery for Canons of St. Peter in Fritzlar. He might have been working as a master or teacher at the monastery.²

His patron was Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia, who gave Herbort the source document for his novel. Herbort includes a dedication to Hermann in his epic. During the first, that is to say, minor destruction of Troy, as Herbort portrays it, the author outfits the leader of the Greeks with the coat of arms of the Ludowingians; a red and white striped lion on a blue field (LT 1326-1335). There is evidence of this coat-of-arms being used in Thuringia as far back as 1179.³ Even though Herbort is often ranked only as a second- or even third-rate poet in the literary histories (Gustav Ehrismann, Helmut de Boor),⁴ some see him in a more positive light. Rolf Bräuer speaks of the "impressionistic - expressive scene and plot" seen in his works.⁵ Herbort's (middle German) language shows rhetorical training, and he shows a marked inclination to omit

² Bumke 1979: 165.

³ Bumke 1979: 165, Schröder 1910: 360.

⁴ To the statements of Ehrismann and de Boor compare Lemmer 1981: 31, Dorninger 2002, 145sq. note 44.

⁵ Bräuer 1990: 158.

conjunctions.⁶ His modest goal is to increase the number of poets, that is to be counted as one of them, and he seeks to reach this through his epic (LT 18456sq.). This claim should probably be counted as an introductory topic, a modesty topos. The very transmittal of the text has indeed justified this modest goal. There is only one complete manuscript of his epic, dating from the year 1333. It was written in Würzburg for the Teutonic Knight Wilhelm von Kirweiler. In this text, the "Liet von Troye" is seen as a prelude to Heinrich von Veldeke's "Eneit." In addition to this one complete manuscript, only three fragments from the 12th century have been preserved. However, the novel may have been more widely distributed than is apparent.⁷ It is considered to be the first extant German-language version of the Trojan material, since the 12th-century 'Vorauer Alexander' by Pfaffe Lamprecht only mentions a description of the conflict in passing. The German-language portrayals of the material reach their zenith in Konrad of Würzburg's "Trojanerkrieg" (Trojan War).

3) Herbort's Sources

Herbort himself is aware of the material's tradition and writes:

*Ze kriechen was sin erste stam/ In latin ez dannen quam/
Hine(n) ist ez an daz welhishe kvme(n)* (LT 49-52)

*Its beginning was in Greece, then it came into Latin and from
there into French.*

Herbort does not refer directly to Homer's work, which, according to Hugo von Trimberg, had not yet been translated into Latin by the turn of the 13th to 14th century. There was a rather suspicious attitude toward Homer during the Middle Ages, since he had, after all in some sense, given the gods to Greece as Hesiod had done. However, Homer was

⁶ Worstbrock 1964: 256, Steinhoff 1981: 1027f., Fromm 1993: 253-256.

⁷ With regard to Wilhelm von Kirweiler, see Bumke 1990: 422. For further literature, the manuscripts, their dating (one complete in Heidelberg and three fragments, two of them of the 13th century), and the dissemination of Herbort's epic, see Dorninger 2002: 146 note 45. Heinrich von Veldeke's "Eneide" and Herbort's "Liet" are linked together by similar features in diverse episodes, like the battle between Camilla and Tarcho (Eneide 8970-90004) and that of Penthesileia and Thelamon (LT 14511-14521).

available in a pseudo-translation by the so-called Pindar Thebanus, the "Ilias Latina."⁸ For the most part, the works of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis were consulted for information about the Trojan War. Both were regarded as eyewitnesses to the events and therefore considered authentic. A certain Cornelius Nepos (5th century) and L. Septimius are named as translators. Their claims to be eyewitnesses made the works of these two authors a welcome alternative to Homer. Not only poets, but also historians like the 12th century's Otto von Freising referred to them (e.g. "Chronik" I,26). The old French "Roman de Troie" by Benoît de Sainte-Maure was based on both of these Latin sources. This novel of 30 000 verses was written near Tours by a cleric in the circle of King Henry II and Eleanore of Aquitaine.⁹

Herbort refers to these Latin sources for the Trojan War material himself (LT 53,14945), but specifically chooses the *welsche[] buch[]* (LT 65-70) as the basis for his own poem. He received it through the intercession of the Count of Leiningen, through his Landgrave Hermann of Thuringia. The dating of Herbort's novel is determined by the period of Hermann's reign (1190-1271) and the early 90's of the 12th century is the most accepted date. One basis for this is the intention to see the "Liet von Troye" as an extension of Heinrich von Veldeke's "Eneit," to which Herbort also refers (LT 17381).¹⁰ However, Herbort shortens the French original to about half as many verses, thereby keeping his promise to the reader of *brevitas* (LT 96f), at least to some extent. This is especially apparent in the reduction of the descriptions (of battles), the omission of portraits and avoidance of repetition. He has also reordered the episodes. In addition, courtly tendencies are not as prominent in Herbort's work as they are in Benoît's. Approximately one fifth of his verses can be counted as his own. Herbort is aware of his role as a type of protagonist who is

⁸ Regarding Homer and the (skeptical) attitude towards him during the Middle Ages, see Opitz 1998: 18sq., 34., Dunger, p. 20, Dorninger 2002: 138sq note 14, Dunger 1869: 20., also Worstbrock 1964: 249, and for Hugo von Trimberg *ibid*: 250.

⁹ Regarding Benoît and the dating of his novel about 1170 or between 1155-1160 see Bumke 1979: 14, 346 note 211, 413 note 32, Constans 1968 (Benoît, vol. 6): 190, Schöning 1991: 18, Dorninger 2002: 140sq. note 25.

¹⁰ For the scholarly discussion concerning the dating, see Fromm 1993: 246, Steinhoff 1981: 1028, Lengenfelder 1975: 97.

putting the material into German (LT 79f.).¹¹

4) The "Liet von Troye"

Whenever he portrays the war, Herbort mentions his sources again and again. As Benoît does, Herbort begins with the inception of the war and demonstrates the continuation of the events that led to the fall of Troy in a type of chain reaction. Thus the beginning of greater wars is revealed as a tragic linkage of misunderstanding, misconduct, and smaller armed conflicts, and insults that escalate in the end.

King Peleas in Greece, who is *untruwe* (LT 116), is gripped by envy of his nephew Jason. He sends Jason out to win the Golden Fleece, hoping that he will never return. On the journey to Kolchis, Jason and his companions, Hercules among them, make a stop at Ilion (Troy). Since they have not asked permission, they are driven out by King Laomedon, which infuriates Hercules. Therefore, after they have successfully won the Golden Fleece, Hercules returns with an army to Ilion and destroys it, killing King Laomedon. The Greek hero Thelamon kidnaps Hesiona, the sister of the future Trojan King Priam and makes her his concubine, a humiliation Priam cannot forget. After Troy has been rebuilt, a delegation sent under Antenor fails to win Hesiona back and, to make matters worse, Antenor is shamed further by his treatment in Greece. This moves Priam to revenge. With the aid of Paris, he has Helen kidnapped, which, in turn, leads to the well-known Trojan War. Although it ends successfully for the Greeks, the victory is not all it appears to be, for the victors meet with disaster while still in Troy or upon their return home.

5) The portrayal of Achilles and his passions

i) Achilles the Fighter

One of the most important warriors on the Greek side is Achilles, the son of King Peleus and the Sea-nymph Thetis. Almost invincible, he becomes one of the most important heroes in the battle for the besieged Troy. Herbort gives us the first description of Achilles with his

¹¹ For Herbort's method of composition see Fischer 1883: 87, 98, 101, Menhardt 1929: 173-200, Hahn 1996: 102-111. Concerning the descriptions of persons, see in particular Masse 2004.

characterization and description of the heroes fighting on both the Trojan and Greek sides. In contrast to Benoît, Herbort boasts of Achilles' incomparable physical power and his anger in battle, that nothing can resist and no one can quell:

There was no one like Achilles. He was such a bold hero. The crown would probably fit him well. Strong, courageous, splendid, completely one who made much effort. Possessions meant little to him. A happy appearance, strong, solid, limbs well-connected to each other. His weapons, with which he had done such wondrous deeds had been forged by Vulcan the Smith. If he became angry, he fumed like a ferocious bear, then no one could quiet his anger. (LT 2977-2992)¹²

The narrator, who in the course of the plot also sketches a rough biography of Achilles,¹³ repeatedly emphasizes the hero's bravery and militant power. It is on the march toward Troy that Achilles provides the first proof of this boldness and in a certain sense, also of his anger that knows no mercy. On the way the Greeks seize the city Tenedon in Trojan territory and indiscriminately kill all the inhabitants, even women and children (LT 3688ff, 3694f., 3893-3928). Achilles is sent out with 3000 others to seize booty and get provisions for the army. Wherever they go, he and his troops leave behind plundered people and burned land, so that the whole country glows with fire (3903ff.). This makes it clear that war knows no or little mercy. In his anger, Achilles becomes a true "terminator" (LT 4575f.).¹⁴ The heroic super-elevation of Achilles that one finds in Homer, is reduced, however, in the medieval stories. In Herbort's work, Hector proves to be an equal match in battle to Achilles and throws him out of the saddle. Moreover, in their later conflicts, it is

¹² *Anchilles gliche(n) nie gwan/ Er was ein also bederbe man/ Im gezeme wol die kronel/ Starg kvne schone/ Gar ein zerere/ Im was daz gut vmmere/ Harte liep die geste/ Grozze lide feste/ Vzzer mazze wol gelidet/ Im hette sin waffen gesmidet/ Volka der getruwe smit/ Da beginc er wu(n)ders gnuc mit/ Swen(n)e im sin zorn ane quam/ Als ein grimer ber er bram/ So enkonde sine(n) willen/ Niema(n) gestillen.*

¹³ See his education by the centaur Chiron LT 6287-7823.

¹⁴ Lengenfelder suggests Achilles' negative assessment and description starting with Hector's death, Lengenfelder 1975: 83. Nevertheless the description of Achilles' mercilessness seems to contradict this argument.

often unclear who will win the upper hand and survive.¹⁵

In fact, Achilles proves himself to be weak and malleable by becoming easily angered. Agamemnon exploits this when he consciously reminds Achilles of Patroclus' death, in order to spur Achilles on to his full fighting strength for the battle with the Trojans.¹⁶ In this he is successful. In the ensuing conflict, Achilles fights alone against a large number of Trojans and wins:

Achilles went in alone among them to hit, sometimes against a leg, sometimes against a foot, against a knee. His arm never rested before he had hacked everything to bits wherever his hand led the sword (LT 6754-760).¹⁷

Time and again it is his anger over the death of Patroclus that leads Achilles to aggression and thereby to success in battle.¹⁸ His aggression and speed in battle are also reflected by Herborn's descriptive techniques. He often uses asyndeta and employs isocolon and anaphora to emphasize the explosiveness and tempo of the battles in which Achilles fights. At the same time, the horror and pitilessness of war is clear. In the following description, one can imagine the different directions of slash and stab. They come from top to bottom, from back to front, from below to above:

Achilles no longer held back. He struck there and here, through the leg, through the knee, through the belly to the gut, through the hand into the arm, through the mouth and deep into it, through the teeth to the cheek, a blow to the head, to the nose up to the end of the nose-guard, through the palate to the tongue and then further into the lung and further down all the way to the saddle. (LT 8888-8898)¹⁹

¹⁵ See LT 6309—6355. also the fight between the two over the horses, LT 7771-7832. Regarding Hector's equality in battle and reputation, see also Lengenfelder 1975: 84.

¹⁶ LT 6625-6631.

¹⁷ *Achilles ginc da houwe(n)/ Vnder in allen eine/ Wilen gein dem beine/ Wile(n) gein fvzze gein dem knie/ Sin arm der gelac nie/ E er allez daz zv sluc/ Swar im die han daz swert truc.*

¹⁸ LT 10014ff.

¹⁹ *Achilles langer niht enhilt/ Er sluc da vn(d) hie/ Durch daz bein durch daz knie/ Durch den buch in de(n) darm/ Durch die hant in den arm/ Durch den mv(n)t vn(d) darinne/ Durch die zene vnz an daz kinne/ Vf daz houbet eine(n)*

Achilles allows himself to be governed by his anger (over Patroclus' death), but the anger also causes difficulties in his peace negotiations with the Trojans. Achilles is a member of a delegation. During the conversations with Hector, he is so angered that Hector has caused the death of his friend that the two almost come to blows. This can only be prevented by Priam and Agamemnon. Finally, both heroes see the inappropriateness of their actions and are ashamed of it (LT 8177-8292); they can still learn from their mistakes. However, Achilles is not the only person led to aggression in battle by anger, by the thirst for revenge. Other heroes on both sides experience such passions. For example, Hector, enraged over the death of his half-brother Margarito, lunges into battle (LT 10090-97). Achilles' fighting advantage over Hector is clear in the last man-to-man battle with Hector, in which Hector is killed, but Achilles is also wounded (LT 10337-134280).²⁰ The aggression of these two men is compared to that of beasts fighting each other - of a lion and a bear. Without Achilles, the victory over Troy would not have been possible, and the other Greek heroes are well aware of this. (LT 12277-12300). By giving way to his anger, however, he exceeds permissible knightly behavior. For example, Achilles wants to heap upon the dead Troilus the further humiliation of being dragged (LT 13215ff), and when the noble Menon tries to prevent this, Achilles chops him up into a hundred pieces (LT 13280ff.). Like many other epic heroes, Achilles possesses high-quality, costly armor and weapons, which give him an advantage over many others, so that not only his heart, but also his appearance makes him a warrior who is to be reckoned with (LT 7395ff.).

ii) Achilles as a Lover

One year after Hector's death, Achilles is struck by another passion. He observes the Trojans mourning Hector and among these mourners he sees Polyxena, the daughter of Priam and sister of Hector. If before, it was his aggression, anger and impulse that led him into battle, now it is the power of love, the encounter with a woman, that has shaken him to the core. In Homer's epic, it is not Polyxena, but Briseis, who is the

slac/ Zv der nase vnz an den tac/ Durch den gume(n) vnz an die zu(n)ge(n)/ Vn(d) vurbaz in die lunge(n)/ Vn(d) vurbaz vnz an den satelboge(n)!!

²⁰ Concerning Achilles' superiority in battle to Hector versus Hector's moral superiority (humilitas versus superbia), see Lengenfelder 1975: 84sq.

cause of a withdrawal from the fight. But above all, it is Achilles' love for his comrades-in-arms and his friend Patroclus that makes an impression. Benoît also makes reference to these homoerotic components. There are indications of this in his novel in the scenes of mourning and in Achilles' lament over his dead friend. These are also taken up by Herbort (LT 6073-6104). However in the medieval novels, as also in Dares' work, Patroclus must take a back seat to the love of a woman.

When Achilles sees the beautiful Polyxena, it is love at first sight (LT 3277f.). The sight of her and love for her initiate a complete change in Achilles' behavior. In the light of her radiance his power dissolves:

The same young woman took from him his most precious qualities: strength and dependability. The heart of a (fighting) man did not help him when he encountered her, so it seemed to him that her figure glowed like the sun. Any virtues that he had developed were completely gone. Up until this point in time he had been a man. But then his masculine courage (manly essence) disappeared. The love for Polyxena brought him to a state of weakness and he was completely changed within. (LT 11160-11175)²¹

He himself feels this complete change through love, which as it seems to him, takes himself away, and gives him to another (LT 11198-202). For this love he would give even the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Samson and the handsome features of Absalom.

He would be ready to give every service, follow any command of his lady.²² Then, with horror he remembers that he has killed Hector, Polyxena's brother. The sharp divisions between friend and foe have suddenly shifted, even disappeared. With the signals *wibe tore*, *Samson* and *Salomo*, Achilles gives signals in Herbort's work that we do not find in Benoît's. Benoît's Achilles senses that this love for a woman of the enemy could lead to his downfall.²³ He sees the problems of war. In

²¹ *Die selbe maget im nam/ Das beste daz er hetel/ Sterke vnd stete/ Im half ma(n)nes herze niet/ Sint er dar ane geriet/ Daz in des duchte/ Das ir varwe luchte/ Gliche wol der sv(n)nen/ Im was gar entru(n)ne(n)/ Der tuge(n)de der er ie gwan/ Vnz dar was er gewese(n) ein man/ Do zv ginc im der manheit/ Er bleip in einer cranheit/ Durch polixene(n) mi(n)ne/ Vzze(n) vn(d) inne(n)/ Was er aller vurkart.*

²² For Achilles' great love monologue see LT 11175-11250.

²³ Benoît: Roman de Troie 20691-20813. To Herbort compare LT 11181-11232.

contrast, Herbort's Achilles sees himself as a fool, as a slave of his love or of the beloved, completely at her mercy and who has made him throw all caution to the wind. He would give up everything for his *minne*, the whole world and its riches. Only now does he understand the men who have had similar feelings and whom he has taunted. He sees himself among the ranks of the famous slaves of women, like Samson or Solomon, indirectly hinting at his downfall. Samson lost his life when Delilah betrayed him; Solomon turned from God because of his love of women.²⁴ Nevertheless there is an important difference between Delilah and Solomon's women on the one hand and Polyxena on the other. Polyxena is a truly loving woman, who is being used as bait for Achilles without her knowledge. He becomes the victim of his own incautiousness.

Achilles has a serious problem: just as he fought with complete passion, so he loves. He wants to marry Polyxena (LT 11299) and with the help of a messenger, he appeals to Queen Hecuba, her mother, while simultaneously sending gifts to his beloved. King Priam turns out to be a pragmatic fellow and permits the marriage on one condition: Achilles is to negotiate a peace settlement and make the Greeks withdraw. Achilles declares himself ready to do this, calls the Greek princes together and suggests a peace agreement (LT11489-11526). In the arguments he presents to them, Achilles appears more a wise hero than a passionate one. In his presentation against the Trojan War, the guilt of both parties and the senselessness of the war is apparent; it can be understood as a *bellum iniustum* in the Augustinian sense. For this war was not waged as a defensive war, but only added to injustice. This was the result of the kidnapping of King Priam's sister Hesione by the Greeks, revenged by the kidnapping of Helen by the Trojans. Moreover, Achilles appeals to the regard for the free will of man: not only had the Greeks caused the Trojans a great deal of sorrow already, but Helen's wish to remain in Troy should also be respected. Her wish calls the reason for going to war

²⁴ See the corresponding passages about Samson and Solomon in the Book of Judges 16 and I Kings 11. Concerning the topos *minne*-slave, see Maurer 1998: 235 ff. and its representation in art, Ott 1987: 107-125. Rüdiger Schnell emphasizes a distinction between slave of love (Minne-) and slave of woman (Frauensklave), whereas Irene Erfen regards this as problematic and sees a strict distinction not always possible, see Schnell 1985: 476sq., 490sq, Erfen 2001: 755, Dorninger 2002: 376 note 2. In Herbort's work the distinction between these two seems vague. Lengenfelder 1975: 88sq. interprets this kind of minne by which Achilles is touched as negative. He is represented as far from the ideal of Minne.

into question for him and for many others. In the battles that followed, Achilles is consistent in not interfering - to the detriment of the Greeks.²⁵ When asked for his help in battle, however, he does not act in a wise manner. He is not even polite, but behaves like a stubborn child; he doesn't look at the questioner and doesn't say a word (LT 11932-34). Only Diomedes is able to account for his strange behavior, since he is also affected by it. He recognizes in Achilles the symptoms of love-sickness, which is described several times by Herbot in a manner similar to Ovid's:

*He is pale and wan and looks very bad. How well I can recognize it in his eyes and his cheeks. The lord is caught and completely without courage on account of a woman or a girl (LT 12198-204)*²⁶

With this, he hits Achilles' sore spot. Achilles can hardly keep his anger (*zorn*) (ZT 12222) about this revelation in check, and it almost causes a duel with Diomedes. In the subsequent battles the Greeks are vanquished by the Trojans. This results in an inner conflict between the power of *Minne* and Achilles' anger, but at first love prevails (LT 12819-12875). In a later battle against the Trojans, a reversal for the Greeks threatens to end in catastrophe. Only now does Achilles act. His anger and his eagerness for war now overcome any love.

*And when Achilles recognized it, a great anger seized him. Therefore his benevolent mood caused by [his] love disappeared. His anger was so rapid that it overcame him and pushed back the love as if it were nothing. Indeed, he valued any love very little. Anger was in him. As he fumed in anger, he threw on his hauberk, tied on his helmet, on to the horse, the spear in his hand, and at his side shield and spear. See how eager the lion is that seeks [prey] because he is hungry (LT 12996-13013).*²⁷

²⁵ Lengenfelder regards Achilles' reaction as close to treason in refusing to fight against the Trojans, Lengenfelder 1975: 90.

²⁶ *Er ist bleich v(n) missenuare/ V(n) vil vbel getan/ Wie wol ichz ersehe(n) han/ An ouge(n) v(n) an wange(n)/ Der herre ist gefange(n)/ V(n) gar verzaget/ Vm ein wip oder vm ein maget.*

²⁷ *V(n) als er [Achill] ez rechte gesach/ Vil zorne im wart/ Des verging im der zart/ Den er vo(n) mi(n)nen hete/ Sin zorn wart also drete/ Daz in der zorn*

But this breach with love has dire consequences for Achilles. In the battle against Troilus, he receives a serious wound that forces him to leave the battle (LT 13062-64). Although judged by the Trojan royal couple as *vnstet/* inconstant (LT13088), he now receives word of Polyxena's love (LT13100-110). Achilles' reentry into the battle, which causes a bitter loss for the Trojans with the death of Troilus, enrages Queen Hecuba. She wants to kill him by devious means, since she judges him to have betrayed them and wants to repay him in kind. Hecuba calls Achilles to the house of prayer near the gravestone of Troilus and Hector under the pretext of giving him Polyxena as his wife in order to save country and family. Achilles falls for it. Since he loves Polyxena, he forgets caution, *as so happens to many whom love has blinded* (LT 13558f.)²⁸ Twenty armed men under the leadership of Paris (obliged to do so because of a hasty promise) wait for him and his comrades and kill them (LT 13563-136720). Thus his love for Polyxena turns into a trap for Achilles. A beautiful gravestone for Achilles with the picture of Polyxena tells the reason for his death (LT 13748-790). His son Pyrrus avenges his death (LT13861) after the fall of Troy by killing the innocent Polyxena on his father's grave (LT 16412-482).

6) Epilogue

Herbort describes the hero Achilles as a man, but also as a great warrior and hero who is led by his passion for war and battle. This was also sparked by revenge for the death of his friends. Only his love for Polyxena seems to be able to tame this passion for a short time. Achilles' character is not portrayed as a superman. Led by his passions, passions which could have been expressed in socially acceptable ways, he nevertheless sometimes behaves in an unknighly manner, as a child or

vberwant/ V(n) die mine verswant/ Als ez ein niht were/ Im was ioch v(n)mere/ V(m)me deheine mi(n)ne/ Der zorn was im inne/ Do er vo(n) dem zorne enbran/ Do schut er sine(n) halsberc an/ Sine(n) helm er vf bant/ Vf daz ros sper an die hant/ Zv site(n) schilt v(n) swert/ Seht wie der lewe gert/ Der schaffe als er hungerec ist. For military activity as remedy for a lovesick person as Ovid recommends, see Lengenfelder 1975: 89. However, the situation in the "Liet" appears different. Achilles did not fight because he had given his word and not due to lovesickness.

²⁸ *Als manige(m) geschiet/ Der durch mi(n)ne wirt betroge(n).*

by throwing all caution to the wind.²⁹ On the one hand, he is an almost invincible hero, but he also shows weakness even in battle and is thereby portrayed as humanly fallible. His death comes by betrayal, when he is led into a trap.

Like Achilles, the other protagonists in the "Liet von Troye" are shown as defined by human feelings or rather, passions. Hecuba's trick had led to Achilles' death. But her trick in turn came from the desire for revenge, since she could not get over the deaths of her sons Hector and Troilus. She legitimizes her behavior by citing Achilles' breaking his pledge not to enter the battle, but to try to make peace. Anger, sadness, revenge often define the characters. Thus the war also becomes a place of revenge, where the blood of a victim spurs another on to revenge. No one appears to remain free of blame and negative behavior. Even the Trojan women are portrayed not only in their righteous mourning over their dead, but also in spiteful, negative gossip (LT 12790-808). Even positive feelings seem to have negative results - for example, the honest message of love from Polyxena (LT13100-110) results in Achilles' rash actions. Within the chain of passion and blame in which human life is enmeshed, Herbort presents the fall of Troy as something that can only have occurred through *untruwe* and *vurretenisse* (LT 1787f.) The point of origin for the process of disaster is the *untruwe* of King Peleas in Greece (LT 116), which finally culminates in the conquest of Troy, but does not bring happiness to the victors. Murder and death are soon to be found in their camp. However, even the betrayers Antenor and Aeneas quarrel and separate. Achilles' fate, in which *untruwe* (betrayal, breaking his word) and deception are mirrored, demonstrates essential elements of Herbort's concept of the depiction of the fall of Troy. Moreover, Herbort is clear about the influences to which the Trojans and Greeks were subject. Their gods, their religion, is clearly assigned the role of the opponent of God, for example, when Herbort identifies Apollo (to whom the Greeks appeal) with Satan (LT 3462).³⁰ The unfolding of the fall of Troy, as well as the fate of the individuals, thereby falls into a role of opposition to God. This opposition allows us to integrate it into the concept of *civitas Dei* and *civitas terrena*, that Augustine had outlined in his "City of God" and which had been revived in the 12th century by

²⁹ Legenfelder 1975: 88 f., 91 f. regards Achilles in Herbort's description as an Anti-hero. He does not behave or succeed as a courtly knight but instead is drawn by Herbort as a exponent of vices - as a counterpart to Hector.

³⁰ For the presentation of religious cult in the "Liet of Troie" compare Dorninger 2002:140sq note 25.

Otto of Freising.³¹ The destruction of Troy becomes a deterrent *exemplum* within the *civitas terrena*, demonstrating what wrong actions and passions lead to in the long run, even destroying the lives of the victors. King Peleas' behavior, his envy and desire to destroy his successful nephew Jason, appear to refer to the motif of the snake and its role in the Fall of Adam.³² For here we also find the motif of jealousy that can destroy a person's life and has resulted in unspeakable sorrow during the course of history. Within the *civitas terrena*, however, the epic portrays a world without forgiveness and mercy and therefore doomed.

The safe distance of the time in which the events of the epic play out is sometimes breached and approaches the present time of the reader. For example, Cassandra prophesies the life of Jesus and the events of the Last Judgment; for this she is counted as a Sibyl (LT 1697ff, 3271).³³ Other references, such as those to the *artes liberales* (LT 7663-7676), bring the events into the present and destroy the illusion that such things could only have happened in antiquity, in a non-Christian world. The vehemence with which Herbort again and again portrays the horrors of war, deceit and *untruwe*, as the results of passion, appears to transmit a message for his day. It is possible that Herbort was writing at a time marred by armed conflict. Since the death of Emperor Henry VI in 1197, the Empire had been plagued by conflict between the Staufers and the Guelfs. The landgrave himself contributed to this by siding with the party that was most advantageous for him at the moment, but he was unable to protect the principality of Thuringia from war's great destruction.³⁴ *Untruwe* and deceit were the order of the day in the Empire and could have had a destabilizing effect leading to its downfall. Central questions of the *civitas terrena* could be discovered in their own time and the fall of Troy could serve as a cautionary example for a Christian Empire.

³¹ Regarding the *civitas terrena* compare Augustinus, De civ. dei XV,2sq. or XIX,17,26. For the concept of *civitas terrena*, Augustinus and Herbort, see Dorninger 2002: 148 note 46, Lengenfelder 1975: 94sq.

³² Concerning the snake's motivation, see Genesis 3. Envy as motivation, or as similarly related to it - hostility, hatred, and jealousy - is given in numerous literary works, e.g. in "Wiener Genesis" (1060-1080), "Anegenge (12th century).

³³ For Cassandra and her equivalence or identification with the Sibyl of Marpepos, see Dorninger 2002: 157sq. note 63.

³⁴ See Lemmer 1981: 14 ff., 121, Bumke 1979: 160-168. Grundmann describes the political situation in the Empire. He describes Hermann of Thuringia as "bestechlich", corrupt, id. 1973: 17-26.

Inexorably, Herbort depicts the destruction of Troy, driven by human passions and feelings. Only once does it come to a halt, and for a brief moment in the midst of war, peace and reconciliation between Greeks and Trojans seems possible: this is the moment when Achilles abandons himself to another passion, to love, which can bridge the gap between friend and foe.

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