



## "The Trojan War" | "Der Trojanerkrieg"

### Text Information

Author | Anonymous

Language | German

Period | 15th Century

Genre | Narrative Poetry

Source | Bernoulli, A. "Bruchstücke eines Trojanergedichts." *Germania* (28), Vienna: 1883, pp. 30-38.

Collection | Writing History: Chronicles, Legends and Anecdotes

URL | <https://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/trojan-war>

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### Introduction to the Text

This unusual account of the Trojan War - a cornerstone of Ancient Greek mythology, and one which was frequently retold and reimagined in the European Middle Ages - was discovered sandwiched in a compilation of different historical works, including excerpts from the chronicles of Rudolf von Ems and Jens des Enenkels and the latter part of the Reggau chronicle. Combining excerpts from different texts to produce a single narrative was a common practice in the Middle Ages, especially in the case of historical texts. Such compilations were often produced so that the text would better suit the needs of the patron - the person paying for the production of the book. Although the manuscript in which this text was found dates to the fifteenth century and offers historical information going up to 1350, the language of this poem indicates an earlier date of composition, probably in the thirteenth century.

While today the most famous retelling of the Trojan War remains Homer's epic poem, the *Iliad* (composed c.1260-1180 BCE), it was not well known to medieval Europeans, who instead got their knowledge of the legend from a variety of purportedly historical works. It is therefore unsurprising that this thirteenth-century poem was found in a history book. However, it diverges from the well-known story by casting the hero Aeneas as a traitor, and by massively condensing ten years of war and intrigue into just a few hundred lines. One open question is whether the poem was intended to be humorous - read it and judge for yourself!



## "The Trojan War" | "Der Trojanerkrieg"

### Ektor und sein bruder Baris

leptten ze Troy in kúnklicher wis.  
eins tages ward Baris kunt getan,  
daz ze Krichen trüg die kron  
daz allerschonste wib,  
die ye getrug mutterlip.  
die was Elena genant.  
uf hub sich der degen zehant.  
er fur in Kriechenlant,  
daz er wolt beschuwen  
die wunder an der früwen.  
uu was ir vatter und Menelaus ir  
man ein hervart gevarn.  
nu wart der edel degen wis  
geschossen mit der mine stral.  
des leit sin hereze vil senden qual,  
und ward sin leben kumerlich.  
ein kindlin hat die kúngin rich,  
das ir die ame trug dike nach.  
eins tages gieng die kúngin  
fúr Baris den degen vin.  
als si fúr in kam,  
zu der erde buktte er sich  
und kuste iren fustrit.  
die ame sach den sit,  
den det sy ir fruwen kunt.  
von der selben stund  
nam sy sin besser war  
und neigt in dike gúetlich dar.  
Baris die amen grúste tugentlich

Hector and his brother Paris  
lived in Troy in a manner befitting kings.  
One day, Paris was told  
that in Greece

the most beautiful woman ever born

5 wore the crown.

She was called Helen.

The hero left immediately.

He travelled to Greece,

so that he could see

the marvels of this woman.

10 As it happened, her father and Menelaus,  
her husband, had left on military campaign.

As it happened, the noble and clever hero was

pierced by love's ray.

From this his heart suffered much yearning sorrow,

15 and his life became miserable.

The powerful queen had a little child

that her wet nurse often carried close by.

One day the queen passed by

Paris, the fine hero.

When she passed by him

20 he bent down to the ground  
and kissed her footprint.

The wet nurse saw the gesture

and informed her lady of it.

From that moment

she noticed him

25 and nodded to him in a kindly manner.

Paris greeted the wet nurse in a courtly fashion



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mit grosscr gabe herlich.  
daz kint kuste er dik lieplich.  
er und die ame begunden  
legen an  
wie er die fruwen furt von dan.  
die amme sprach:  
nú lenger súllent irs sparn.  
ir súellent heil varn  
und kóment her wider mit úwer schar  
uf dem mer gevarn.  
darine fúerent irs mannes van,  
der ist swarcz und wis getan.  
die früwe bringe ich  
in úwer schiff dan,  
so dond den, daz úch dunke gut.  
dis det der helt bochgmut.  
er kam in einem monat wider.  
do man uf der ner swimen sach,  
die amme zu der früwen sprach:  
früwe, es kunt der kúng min ber.

mit grosscr gabe herlich.  
He kissed the child very lovingly.  
He and the wet nurse began  
to conspire  
35 how he could abduct the lady.  
The wet nurse said:  
"You should not delay any longer.  
You should return home  
and come back with your men  
by sea.  
40 Fly her husband's flag,  
which is black and white.  
I will then bring the lady  
onto your ship,  
45 then you may do whatever you wish."  
This the high-spirited hero did.  
He came back in a month.  
When he sailed into view on the sea,  
the wet nurse said to the lady:  
50 "Lady, the king, my lord, is approaching.

### **Critical Notes**

#### *Transcription*

Line 35 The next line is missing from the manuscript.

Line 47 The next line is missing from the manuscript.



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wir söllent gen im gon etwo ver,  
daz wir enpfahen der heren min.  
die kúngin sprach: es sol sin.  
also kam sy in daz schiff hinin.  
Baris minenklich si enpfie  
von lant hies er die schiff stossen hin.  
also broclht er sy von dan.  
dis ward irem man  
in die reisse kunt getan,  
daz von Troy der kung rich  
het im genomen die kúngin herlich.  
uf brachen sy mit der schar  
und fúrent gen Troy dar  
mit allen den fúrsten gar,  
die uf der erden woren  
by denselben jaren,  
und slúgen uf ir gezelt  
vor Troy uf daz eben velt.  
Ektor und Paris hiessen,  
daz sy nút rúwen liessen,  
daz man mit strites sitt  
teglich mit in stritt.  
also tatten sy den Kreichen ungemach,  
daz man si selkten ruwen sach,  
iecz bi tag, den bi nacht.  
wie krefftig wer der Kriechen macht,  
so beslos man ze Troy nie kein tor,  
wand daz hat verboten Ektor.  
keinen tag lies er sie an strit.  
nu fúgte es sich ze einer zit,

We should venture out to meet him  
so that we may receive my lord appropriately.  
The queen said: "It will be done."  
And so she came upon his ship.  
55 **Paris** greeted her lovingly.  
He commanded the ship to be set sail.  
Thus he abducted her.  
It was told to her husband  
on his travels  
60 **that** the powerful king of Troy  
had taken the beautiful queen from him.  
They departed with their men  
and then traveled towards Troy  
with all the princes  
65 who were on earth  
at that time.  
They put up their tents  
on the plain before Troy.  
Hector and Paris commanded  
70 that they not cease fighting  
with them daily  
in a warlike manner.  
So they made so much trouble for the Greeks  
that one rarely saw them resting,  
75 **either** by day or by night.  
Although the Greek's power was mighty,  
at Troy they never closed a single gate  
because Hector had forbidden it.  
He didn't let a single day pass without fighting.  
80 **Now** it came to pass,



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daz Ektor so gar überhuffet ward.  
mengem er sin gewand zerzart.  
daz er müste werden siech.  
do rüffte ein edel Kriech:  
es wer schad umb disen helt.  
hora, degen userwelt,  
rúeff an den dinem kry,  
ob dir ieman so noch sy,  
der dir mûg ze helffe komen,  
daz dir der lip icht werd genomen  
Ektor horte disen wissen rat.  
er fulgtte getrat.  
do ward im helffe schin  
von den dieueren sin.  
Der kûng von Kricchen sprach:  
nûn jar hand wir dis ungemach  
getriben dis schediliche spil.  
minen sternenseher ich fragen wil,  
wie uns sülle geliogen  
den hies er fûr sich bringen.  
der kûng in fragen began.  
der meister sprach: heiten ir einen man,  
ist in Kriechen verborgen,  
so nem ein ende úwer sorgen.  
ich sag úch, wie es umb in lit.  
er ist verborgen in dire zit.  
mit frúwenkleid ist bekleid sin lip.  
sin múter ist so wis ein wip,  
daz si bekenet wol,  
wie es im ergon sol:

that Hector was completely overpowered.  
He split the armor of many,  
so that he became utterly spent.  
There, a noble Greek called out:  
85 **It would** be a pity if this hero died.  
Listen, chosen warrior.  
call out your battle cry,  
in case there is someone close by,  
who might come to your help,  
90 **so** that your life is not taken from you!"  
Hector listened to this wise counsel.  
He followed it immediately.  
There help appeared  
in the form of his retainers.  
95 The king of Greece said:  
"For nine years we have continued  
**With** this misery, this destructive game.  
I wish to ask my fortune teller  
How we might prevail."  
100 He had him brought out before him  
and the king began to question him.  
The master spoke: "If you had a man  
who is hidden in Greece  
then your troubles would come to an end.  
I'll tell you how things stand with him.  
105 He is hidden at this moment.  
His body is clothed in women's garments.  
His mother is so wise a woman  
that she well knows  
110 **what** awaits him:



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hie vor Troy erstorben  
und öch do den pris erwerben.  
von ir er gesalbet wart:  
kein woffen sneid nie so hart,  
daz in möchte versniden.  
och tût sy nicht vermeiden,  
si enpall in Schirone  
(der was halb ein ros, halb ein man),  
der lorte ir also schone  
schirmen, ringen, schiessen.  
múllstein, die si bergab liessen,  
die must er vahn uf den schilt.  
kúng, ob du den süchen wilt,  
so sende us hundert oder mer,  
daz ieklicher sy ein kremer,  
habe vielle, was fruwen gehört zu.  
eines er och tu:  
hab veile swert, messer, issengewant,  
man sicht zehant  
wa er mit deu fruwen gat,  
benamen er nicht enlat,  
er beschüwe die kufmanschaft.  
also vint man den degen ellentbaft.  
der kúng volgte getrat  
des wissen meisterg rat.  
er sant die botten uf die vart,  
wand der also funden wart.  
also wart Achilles gon Troy brocht,  
mit im sin meister Schiron.  
usreit Ekttor, als er was gewon.

to die here before Troy  
and thus win glory.  
He was anointed by her:  
no weapon ever cut so well  
115 **that** it could cut him.  
Nor did she forget  
to send him to Chiron  
(he was half horse, half man);  
he trained him very well  
120 **in** swordplay, wrestling and archery.  
Using his shield, he had to block  
millstones that were rolled downhill.  
King, if you wish to search for him,  
then send out a hundred or more men  
125 each of them should be a merchant  
and have many things for sale for women,  
and he should also have on offer  
swords, knives and armour.  
It is obvious that  
130 although he [Achilles] is among the women,  
he will not behave as one  
if he sees the merchandise.  
In this way one will find the worthy warrior."  
The king immediately followed  
135 **the** counsel of the wise master.  
He sent the messengers on the journey  
and thus he [Achilles] was found in this way.  
So they brought Achilles to Troy  
with his master Chiron.  
140 **Hector** rode out as he was accustomed.



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do bekam im an der zit  
Achilles sin erster stritt,  
und triben daz den ganezen dag.  
Ekttor ob mit krefftten lag.  
mocht er in han verschrotte,  
er het in geleit zu andren dotten.  
sust schied si die nacht.  
was Achilles barnest dar bracht,  
daz hat er im von dem libegeslagen.  
morndes ein núwen harnest mn sach tragen.  
so hub sich aber den ein stritt,  
Ekttor twang in mit nid  
und mit so grosser krafft,  
daz er in dik macht flúchthafft.  
er treib in hin und denne har  
bis daz er alles daz von im geslúg,  
daz er von harnest an im trúg.  
also entweich danne Achilles.  
Des morgens, do der dag har schein,  
Ektor reit us Troy allein

There and then he had his  
first fight with Achilles,  
and they fought the whole day.  
Hector was superior in strength.  
145 If he had been able to injure him,  
he would have added him to the other dead.  
Thus the night parted them.  
Whatever armour Achilles had worn,  
Hector had cut it from his body.  
150 In the morning he could be seen wearing new armour.  
Then, once more, a fight began.  
Hector pressed him with battle rage  
and with such great force,  
that he forced him to retreat.  
155 He drove him back and forth  
until he cut away all the armour  
that he wore.  
So Achilles took flight.  
In the morning, when the day dawned,  
160 Hector rode out from Troy alone

### Critical Notes

#### Transcription

Line 155 The next line is missing from the manuscript.



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mit grimem mut.  
daz ungemach betwang den belt gut,  
wond by aller siner zit  
nie kein man mit strit  
sich sin bet erwert als lange.  
daz was im angst und ange.  
nu was öch Achilles bereit  
ze vyentlicher arbeit.  
Ekttor sin zorn twang,  
daz der stritte mit wertte lang.  
Achilles sinen la schiit zerslug,  
daz er sin núczit dennen trug.  
er slüg im so gros búllen  
umb die arm und umb die kúllen,  
Achilles kum von in endran.  
Ekttor schied öch von dan,  
wond er múeden began.  
doch schúff Achilles dem herr gemach,  
daz man sy zwene nur stritten sach.  
Schiron fúrt Achilles an ein heimlich  
stat.

in a grim mood.  
Trouble burdened the good hero,  
for in all his days,  
no man had ever resisted  
him as long in battle.  
165 Therefore, he was afraid and terrified.  
Now Achilles was ready too  
For warlike endeavors.  
His wrath subdued Hector  
so that the fight did not last long.  
170 Achilles hacked his shield to pieces  
so that he didn't carry home a single piece of it.  
He gave him such massive bruises  
on his arms and shoulders,  
175 Achilles hardly escaped him.  
Hector left the field too  
because he had begun to tire.  
Achilles let the lord have a break,  
so that the two of them were not seen fighting  
anymore.  
180 Chiron led Achilles to a secret place.

### Critical Notes

#### Transcription

Line 174 The next line is missing from the manuscript.





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mit dritten er im drat,  
wie er im solt tretten zü:  
mit stichen also tú,  
zwiseit swert und schilt.  
ob du daz dün wilt,  
hûwe im nach der bende,  
so nimt der strit ein ende.  
do Ektor kam gon Troy hinin,  
er sprach: wie trag daz sin?  
min swert wil sin nût sndien!  
sol ich den strit nût miden,  
des han ich iemer schande  
doch bereite er sich des morgens frü  
und grieff zu dem strit hinzu.  
Achilles nam gen in den ker  
und gedach an sins meisters ler.  
damit er im daz leben angewan  
und schied frölich von dan.  
do die von Troy socheu Ektors val,  
in was gelege gar ir schall,

With advice he counseled him  
how he should get at him:  
namely with thrusting  
in between his sword and shield.  
185 "If you can do so,  
attack his hands:  
in this way, the fight will come to an end."  
When Hector entered Troy,  
He said: "How can it be?  
190 My sword cannot wound him.  
I cannot avoid the fight,  
Since it would disgrace me forever.  
And so, he prepared himself early in the morning  
and joined the fight.  
195 Achilles attacked him,  
thinking of his teacher's advice.  
Thus, he took his life  
and left the field joyously.  
When the people of Troy saw Hector's death,  
200 their cheering died down,

### Critical Notes

#### *Transcription*

Line 192      The next line is missing from the manuscript.



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und trutten öch von recht  
bede herren und öch knecht.  
Ekttors gebot gebrochen wart;  
man beslos die dor an der vart,  
und wurdent beslossen hart  
und wol beseetzt mit hûtte.  
ein tor bevolhen wart herzogen Eneas,  
damit er siner eren vergas.  
von frúeden gaebtte an daz dor  
Schiron und iesch ein kenpf davor.  
daz leid Paris twang.  
vir daz tor er do sprang  
uf Schyrones schaden gros.  
dem det er mit dem spies einen stos,  
daz im daz blitze mund und oren usflos.  
Schiron kertte die hindren fúesse dar,  
und slüg so krefftengklichen dar,  
daz im entweich Paris.  
von im reit der deggen wis  
und kertte wider uf in in mit dem  
schaft

and both lords and retainers  
rightly mourned him.  
Hector's order was disobeyed:  
The gates were closed at once,  
and were locked securely  
and well-manned by guards.  
One gate was entrusted to Duke Aeneas  
To make him forget his obligation.  
Joyfully Chiron came to the gate  
and called for a fight.  
Paris was overcome by grief.  
He leapt in front of the gate  
to Chiron's great disadvantage.  
He gave him a thrust with his lance  
so that the blood flowed out of his mouth and ears.  
Chiron spun on his heels  
and struck very strongly  
yet Paris dodged him.  
The wise warrior rode away from him  
and turned to him again with his spear

### Critical Notes

#### Transcription

Line 208      The next line is missing from the manuscript.



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und reit so mit grosser krafft.  
uff dem schilt er im gehafft,  
und doch durchbrach der schafft,  
daz Schiron tot beleib  
Paris wider in die stat hin reit.  
do Achilles sach sins meisters dot,  
sin herez leid von jomer not.  
er gedach, wie er in móch gerechen  
an Paris dem frechen.  
er reit an daz tor,  
er sprach: wo ist Paris? ich beit sin bie vor.  
kein antwurt im gegeben wart.  
er kertte wider an die vart.  
dis wart Paris geseit.  
er sprach: dis ist min höchstes leid.  
von firchten mus ich in miden,  
kein swert kan in doch sniden.  
do sprach ein wisser man:  
herre, ich dich wol geleren kan.  
niw einen kolben lang und gros.  
ja kan er nit dawider.  
du slecht in dur nider,  
und las in niemer uf,  
ubis daz sin kopff und huff  
von dir wirt zerblúwen.  
sin vart in licht mag geruwen.  
nút hor uf, bís er dot gelige.  
also gewinest du, taz cr mit gesige.  
Morndes, do es dagtte,  
Achilles an daz tor hin jagtte,

and rode at him with great force.

He hit him on the shield

yet the spear went through

so that Chiron lay dead.

225 Paris rode back into the city.

When Achilles saw his teacher's death,

his heart suffered grief's anguish.

He considered how he might take revenge

on the audacious Paris.

230 **He** rode to the gate.

He said, "Where is Paris? I challenge him to come here."

He was given no answer.

He set off again.

This was told to Paris.

235 He said: "This is my greatest worry.

Out of fear I have to avoid him.

No sword can cut him."

A wise man then said:

"Lord, I can certainly instruct you.

240 Take a long and hefty club.

Yes, he can't defend himself against that.

You must knock him down,

and never let him get up

until you have smashed his

245 **head** and skull.

He might well regret his journey.

Don't stop until he is lying dead.

Thus you will accomplish it that he doesn't win."

In the morning when the dawn broke,

250 **Achilles** rushed toward the gate.



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do was och hereit Paris  
ze füs in ritterlicher wis.  
mit sinem kolben, den er trug,  
uf sinen kopff er in do slug,  
daz Achilles muste vallen.  
über in stund Paris mit schallen:  
nút von hinan kum ich,  
bis ich dot sche dich!  
Achilles verlor do de lip.  
Paris kertte zu sinem wip.  
die was sins siges fro.  
dis gefügtte sich also.  
nun wurden die Kriechen in ein,  
Troyer kraft wer nun klein,  
sid Ekttor wer tot gelegen.  
sy wolten eines sturmes pflegen.  
alsus bercitte sich die schar  
mit starker wer dar,  
und heiltten vor dem tor den strit  
und an der mur zu aller zit.  
Dis spil wertte einen ganezen tag,  
daz nieman keiner ruwe pflag  
mit werffen und init schiessen,  
daz blut sach man fliesen  
von den Kriechen uf daz lant,  
sinen lip verlor menig wigant.  
mit leittren wolten si stigen in.  
die inren liessens nút güt sin.  
die nacht man sy scheiden sach.  
die useren zugen an ir gemach.

There Paris was ready too,  
on foot in a knightly manner.  
With his club that he carried,  
he hit him there on the head,  
so that Achilles had to fall.  
255 Paris stood over him shouting:  
"I'm not going to leave  
until I see you dead!"  
Achilles lost his life.  
Paris returned to his wife.  
260 She was pleased about his victory  
that had come about in this way.  
Now the Greeks concluded  
that the Trojan strength was diminished  
265 since Hector had been killed,  
so they wanted to carry out an attack.  
The army therefore prepared itself  
with heavy equipment  
and fought continuously before the gate  
270 and at the wall.  
This game lasted a whole day  
during which no one got any rest  
from throwing [spears], and from shooting arrows.  
You could see the blood flowing  
from the Greeks into the earth.  
275 Many a hero lost his life.  
They [the Greeks] wanted to infiltrate with ladders.  
The besieged didn't let that happen.  
In the night you could see them retreating.  
280 The attackers withdrew to their camp.



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den was die vart worden ze sur.  
die inren behutten ir mur.  
die Kriechen slichen wider her,  
ob ieunan an der were wer.  
si fundens wol behut.  
daz ducht die Kriechen niendert gû  
und sprachen: wir gewinen nicht also die stat.  
ein heinlichen tag hat  
die von Kriechen und Eneas.  
er het in gelopt daz,  
er wollte sy lossen in  
zu dem tor, des pfleger er sollte sin.  
eins nachttes daz geschach,  
daz man die Kriechen inbrechen sach.  
do ward erhaben ein hertter strit.  
der wertte vierzehen tag sid.  
bi des kûnges palas  
der strit an dem hersten was.  
Paris vacht mit maulicher kraft.  
er ward geschossen mit einem schaft,  
daz er muste bliben tot.  
erst hûb sich jomer and not.  
die stat ward angezündet.  
daz buch vir wor uns kûndet,  
daz die stat einhalb bran,

Their attempt had soured.  
The besieged guarded their wall.  
The Greeks snuck back  
to see if someone was on watch.  
285 They found it well guarded.  
To the Greeks that did not seem good at all  
and they said: "We won't take the city in this way."  
The Greeks and Aeneas  
Had a secret meeting.  
He had promised them that  
290 he would let them in  
through the gate that he was supposed to take care of.  
One night it so happened  
that the Greeks were seen breaking in.  
295 Then a hard battle began  
which lasted fourteen days.  
Close to the royal palace  
the fighting was most fierce.  
Paris fought with manly force.  
300 He was hit by an arrow  
so that he had to die.  
Now sorrow and wailing began.  
The city was set on fire.  
The book truly tells us  
305 that half of the city burned,



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in dem andren ort man  
erst in vierzhen tagen  
vernam  
als da cer strit sich endet hie,  
Elena vir iren vatter gie  
und viel im ze füssen:  
vatter, ich wii búessen,  
ich gib mich uf die gnade din!  
es was nút die schulde min,  
und bet es nút gedacht,  
daz ich soltte har sin bracht.  
Eneas mit driu tusing man  
fur vou Troy in Ittalya dan,  
der kúng sin tochtter nam  
der kúng sin tochtter nam  
mit grosser schoy  
wider in sin lant,  
da er starke geste vant:  
von Ungren der kúng rich,  
der mit gewalt gar werlich

in the other half one  
only heard after fourteen **days**  
  
As the fight ended there,  
310 Helen went to her father  
and fell at his feet:  
"Father I want to atone,  
I surrender to your mercy!  
It was not my fault  
and I didn't intend  
315 to be brought here."  
Aeneas with three thousand men  
departed Troy for Italy.  
The king took his daughter  
320 And departed Troy  
to return to his land  
with great jubilation;  
there he found many strangers:  
the powerful king of Hungary [was there].  
325 He abducted Helen, the queen,

### Critical Notes

#### *Transcription*

*Line 308* The remainder of this line is missing from the manuscript.

*Line 318* The next line is missing from the manuscript.



**"The Trojan War"**  
**"Der Trojanerkrieg"**

Elena nam die kúngin  
und fúrtte si in daz rich sin  
und behub si mit gewalt sider,  
wond si kam uiemerme hinwider.  
also endet dis getat,  
die von Troy geschriben stat.

by force of arms  
and took her to his realm  
and kept her there by force from that time onwards,  
for she never came back.

330 Thus ends this tale  
that is written of Troy.