

Manipulating against Fate in the Trojan Cycle

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Abstract:

Is it possible for someone to use tricks against fate? A question which hasn't got an answer yet in the available studies concerned with Greek culture. I may say that former studies on fate were concerned -mostly- with three topics; First, the concept and terms of fate according to Greeks. Secondly, the role of gods compared with the role of fate in determining people's destiny. Thirdly, is there a free will of choice as well as a definite irrevocable fate?

This research differs from the preceding studies on the same subject. I will make effort to answer the question passed at the beginning of the research. Had one of the gods or humans tried to make tricks against fate? Had anyone succeeded in such an attempt? In responding to this question, I will rely on some evidence from the legends of Trojan cycle.

I shall make use of both analytical and comparative methodologies, thus, supporting my viewpoint by means of mythical narratives outside the framework of Trojan cycle.

Keywords: Fate, Greek Myth, Trojan Cycle, Manipulating.

التحايل على القدر فى الدائرة الطروادية

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المخلص: هل من الممكن أن يتحايل شخص ما على القدر؟ سؤال لم أجد له إجابة فى الدراسات المتاحة المعنية بالثقافة الإغريقية. يمكننا القول إن الدراسات السابقة عن القدر اهتمت فى معظمها بثلاثة موضوعات: أولاً، مفهوم القدر ومصطلحاته عند الإغريق. ثانياً، دور الآلهة مقارنة بدور القدر فى تحديد مصائر البشر. ثالثاً، هل توجد إرادة حرة للاختيار مع حتمية القدر؟

يختلف هذا البحث عن الدراسات السابقة فى موضوعه، وسوف نجتهد فيه أن نجيب على التساؤل الذى طرحناه فى مستهل البحث. هل حدث وحاول أحد من الآلهة أو البشر أن يتحايل على القدر؟ وهل نجح أحد فى ذلك؟ سوف نعتمد فى الإجابة على هذا التساؤل على شواهد من أساطير الدائرة الطروادية. وسوف أستعين بالمنهجين التحليلي والمقارن، مما يسمح لى بتعزيد وجهة نظرى بروايات أسطورية خارج إطار الدائرة الطروادية.

الكلمات الدالة: القدر، الأسطورة الإغريقية، الدائرة الطروادية، التحايل.

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Is it possible for someone to use tricks against fate? A question which hasn't got an answer yet in the available studies concerned with Greek culture. I may say that former studies on fate were concerned -mostly- with three topics; First, the concept and terms of fate according to Greeks. Secondly, the role of gods compared with the role of fate in determining people's destiny. Thirdly, is there a free will of choice as well as a definite irrevocable fate?¹

Most studies tend to believe in the inevitable fate with gods having apart, particularly Zeus. Such a role goes in parallel with that of fate if not outweighs it. Most of studies agree that both gods and people have a free will of choice between submitting to fate or rejecting it, although people are usually helpless towards their fates and unable to change them².

The shortcoming of these studies lies in the fact that in confirming the existence of the human free will, they rely on inconclusive evidence³. There is no proof that a character managed, practically, to act against fate. I don't go far if I say that most evidence, if not all, aren't deeds but mere sayings. Morrison argues that such evidence is no more than means of literary Pleasures, by creating an atmosphere of suspense⁴. Greene believes that fate represents the hidden distant power, while the deities, led by Zeus act as agents, epics tend to involve the present forces active in the events and create a role for them, so the role of gods is similar to the role of fate as agents for it⁵. I may add to above that Zeus, despite his desire to save his beloved son Sarpidon, he didn't interfere to save him⁶, nor did either of the gods to save Hector, although Zeus demanded that⁷. Likewise, none of the gods tried to save Achilles, though they felt pity for him his bad destiny, even his mother, Thetis, didn't try to do that. At the same time, gods who didn't care about the suffering of Aeneas who was about to meet his end by Achilles hurried to save him when Poseidon declared that he wasn't doomed to death in this war.⁸ Zeus' argument of balance in determining the fate of Hector⁹, is one of the

¹ Many philosophers and thinkers have been interested across successive eras of issue of "free will". The Greek and Roman philosophers contributed to the discussion of this issue. For the history of the issue of "free will" cf.: D. Amand, *Fatalisme et liberté dans l'Antiquité grecque, : recherches sur la survivance de l'argumentation morale antifataliste de Carnéade chez les philosophes grecs et les théologiens chrétiens des quatre premiers siècles* (University of Louvain, 1945); M. Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, (University of California Press, 2011); H. Dilman, *Free Will: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction*, (London: Routledge, 1999).

² J. Duffy, "Homer's Conception of Fate", *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 8 (May, 1947), 477-485.
W. R. Agard, "Fate and Freedom in Greek Tragedy", *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Nov., 1933), 117-126.

C. Lui, "The Motif of Fate in Homeric Epics and Oedipus Tyrannus", (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of California, 2010); M.Z. Giritli, "Individual Freedom and the Position of the Supernatural in Ancient Greek and Modern American Tragedy", (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Kadir Has University, 2010).

³ In his study of the inevitability of fate, Jowsey emphasizes that evidence that is not compatible with this is not certain.; N. Jowsey, "The Meaning of Moira: Fate, Measure and Glory in the Iliad", (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York, 2011), 11ff.

⁴ J.V. Morrison, "The Dictates of Fate and the Will of Zeus in the Iliad", *Arethusa*, 30 (1997), 284.

⁵ W.C. Greene, *Fate, Good and Evil in Early Greek Poetry*, New York: Harper Torchbook, 1963, 83.

⁶ Hom. Il.16.433-438.

⁷ Hom. Il.22.174-176.

⁸ Hom. Il.20.293-308.

⁹ Hom. Il.22.209-13.

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most important evidence, for those who believe in of the intervention of the gods in the work of fate, nevertheless this evidence may be understood vice versa. If Zeus can control fate why did he need to resort to one of the tools of goddesses of the fate?¹ Morrison believes that Homer could not have altered the epic and mythical heritage known to his audience, which represents the results of what had already been determined by fate². Therefore, Sarpidon mightn't be saved for his heroic glorious deeds resulted from his courage in the battles and his death in defense of Troy. Homer didn't allow Achilles to go away from the battle to enjoy calm elderliness in his palace. If Achilles had done so, he wouldn't have been known for his heroic deeds and exploits. Hector should have been died as well in execution of the will of fate and fulfillment of the demands of his heroic history. If Aeneas had been killed by Achilles, who would have inherited the throne of Troy? His descendants were a great race, who established Rome afterwards³. Neither Homer nor his gods mightn't let Agamemnon leave with his troops from Troy before being fallen into the hands of those troops⁴.

I agree with the former studies that the matters of fate are irrevocable and inevitable. This is affirmed definitely by the evidence presented afterwards.

Greeks used various terms to refer to fate, some of which are **Μοῖρα, Αἴσα, μόρος, πότμος, δαίμων** The Arabic meaning most close to these terms is "القسمة" or "النصيب", which also includes the meaning of fate. Moreover, Greeks used terms such as **χρεών, ἀνάγκη** holding the meaning of "fate" as well as "the inevitable necessity"⁵.

The idea of fate personalization in the three goddesses was not apparent in Homer's epics⁶. Their first appearance was seen in Hesiodos's epics which talks about the female goddesses of fate "**Μοῖραι**", the female goddesses of the bad omen Keres "**Κῆρες**" who were taking revenge with hearts of stone. They are Colotho "**Κλωθώ**",

¹ R. Slattery, "The Extent of Destiny: Gods, People, and Fate in The Iliad" <http://docplayer.net/21112370-The-extent-of-destiny-gods-people-and-fate-in-the-iliad-reile-slattery-pepperdine-university.html> (retrieved 15/6/2017)

² Morrison, "The Dictates of Fate and the Will of Zeus in the Iliad", p.284ff.

³ The Aeneid speaks of the arrival of Aeneas and the founding of Rome.

⁴ Agamemnon was frustrated after a dream he saw in his sleep. He decided to gather his forces and prepare to leave, believing that they were not destined to take over Troy. (Hom. II.2.155f.)

⁵ For the terms that refer to fate and its meanings, and associated vocabulary, cf.

E. Leitzke, "Moirai und Gottheit im alten Griechischen Epos: Sprachliche Untersuchungen", (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Georg-August-Universität, Göttingen, 1930), Passim

E.G. Berry, *The History and Development of the Concept of Θεία Μοῖρα and Θεία Τύχη down to and Including Plato*, (The University of Chicago, 1940).

W. Krause, "Zeus und Moira bei Homer," *Wien. Stud.* 64 (1949), 10–52.

B.C. Dietrich, *Death, Fate, and the Gods: The Development of a Religious Idea in Greek Popular Belief and in Homer*, London: B. C., Athlone Press, 1965, p.249-83.

Greene, *Fate, Good and Evil in Early Greek Poetry*, Passim.

E. Eidinow, *Luck, Fate and Fortune: Antiquity and Its Legacy*, (Oxford University Press, 2011), 40ff.

H.M. Roisman, *The Encyclopedia of Greek Tragedy*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), S.V. Fate and Chance.

⁶ Fate is always mentioned in singular in Homer, except once came in plural (Hom. II. 24. 49). The fate is embodied in one, two or three goddesses. For the number problem cf.:

W. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1870), Vol.2, 1110.

J. Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, (London: T. And T. Clark, 1912), Vol.5, p.787f.

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Lachesis "Λάχεσις", and Atropos "Ἄτροπος" daughters of the goddess of night Nyx or daughters of Themis from Zeus¹, who grant men, at the time of birth, tendencies of good and evil. Moreover, they monitor the breaches of both gods and humans. They don't stop feeling furious till they punish the sinful person violently². Homer points out to three means of determining people's lot and destiny; they are the two jars with which Zeus mixes good with evil for men, the balance with which Zeus sets the fates of men in the battles and thread which defines human's ages. The gods of fate are largely connected, in Homer's view with the inevitable unfortunate fate of men, namely death³.

Each one of the three goddesses was concerned with a particular task in estimating the age of man being spinned in the form of thread beginning with Colotho stretching it to Lachesis to be measured and cut by Atropos⁴.

The reader of the Greek sources finds that their decision is irrevocable and inevitable and is submitted to by both gods and humans on equal footing. Their judgment is powerful as well as Zeus' will. Nevertheless, Zeus himself submitted to fate if his will contradicted with it⁵. Following are the literary evidence of this idea pertaining to the inevitability of fate and the submission of both gods and people to its judgment. Herodot conveys the saying of the priest Apollo in Delphi:

"τὴν πεπωμένην μοῖραν ἀδύνατα ἐστὶ ἀποφυγεῖν καὶ θεῶν"⁶

"No one may escape his lot, not even a god."

Prometheus explains, in Aeschylus' play "Prometheus Vincitus", that although he knew his fate well, he would endure because the inevitable necessity "Ananke" is difficult to resist:

"τὴν πεπωμένην δὲ χρὴ
αἶσαν φέρειν ὡς ῥᾶστα, γινώσκονθ' ὅτι
τὸ τῆς ἀνάγκης ἔστ' ἀδήριτον σθένος."⁷

**"I must bear my destined fate
as easily as may be, knowing that
the power of Necessity is unchallengeable."**

He explains, in a dialogue with the chorus in another situation, that his attempts to get rid of its chains were made because the fate didn't determine his destiny yet, he acknowledged that his trick was weaker than the irrevocable necessity. When he was asked of the inevitable necessity, he replied that they are the goddesses of fate and the Erines:

**"Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες"
"The three-shaped Fates and mindful Furies"¹.**

¹ Hes., Theo.901ff.

² Hes., Theo. 217ff.

³ Dietrich, *Death, Fate, and the Gods*, p.87ff.

⁴ Dietrich, "The Spinning of Fate in Homer", *Phoenix*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer, 1962), 86-101.

⁵ Eidinow, *Luck, Fate and Fortune*, p.32.

⁶ Hdt.1.91.

⁷ Aesch., P.V. 103-105.

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He astonishingly asked the chorus: Can it be that Zeus has less power than they do? Prometheus gave an affirmative definite answer:

"οὐκουν ἄν ἐκφύγοι γε τὴν πεπρωμένην"

"Yes, in that even he cannot escape what is foretold."²

In one of Semonides' fragments, he argues that the inevitable necessity couldn't be resisted, even by gods

"μηδὲν αἰσχρόν: ἀνάγκη δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται"³

" for against necessity not even the gods make war."

Achilles explained, in Iliad, how Hercules had been the victim of fate and Hera's range:

"οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ βίη Ἡρακλῆος φύγε κῆρα,
ὅς περ φίλτατος ἔσκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι:
ἀλλὰ ἔ μοῖρα δάμασσε καὶ ἀργαλέος χόλος Ἥρης.
ὧς καὶ ἐγών, εἰ δὴ μοι ὁμοίη μοῖρα τέτυκται"⁴

**"For not even the mighty Heracles escaped death,
albeit he was most dear to Zeus, son of Cronos, the king,
but fate overcame him, and the dread wrath of Hera.
So also, shall I, if a like fate hath been fashioned for me "**

The ghost of Patroclus talked to Achilles saying that his fate determined since his birth had been executed. Achilles' fate was he would meet his end at Troy walls:

"ἀλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν κῆρ
ἀμφέχανε στυγερή, ἣ περ λάχε γιγνόμενον περ:
καὶ δὲ σοὶ αὐτῷ μοῖρα, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ,
τείχει ὑπο Τρώων εἰρηφενέων ἀπολέσθαι."⁵

**"but for me has loathly fate
opened its maw, the fate that was appointed me even from my birth.
Aye, and you yourself also, Achilles like to the gods,
art doomed to be brought low beneath the wall of the wealthy Trojans."**

When Apollo hindered the attack against the castle by Patroclus, he declared that Troy couldn't be defeated by Patroclus or even by Achilles:

¹ Aesch., P.V. 516.

² Aesch., P.V. 518.

³ Plato Protagoras (345d) = Simonides fr. 37.1.27ff (=Diels – Kranz fr. 420)

⁴ Hom., Il.18.117-120.

Homer, The Iliad, with an English Translation by A.T. Murray, (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1924).

⁵ Hom., Il.23.78-81.

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"χάζεο διογενὲς Πατρόκλεες: οὐ νύ τοι αἶσα
σῶ ὑπὸ δουρὶ πόλιν πέρθαι Τρώων ἀγερώχων,
οὐδ' ὑπ' Ἀχιλλῆος, ὅς περ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων."¹

**"Give back, Zeus-born Patroclus. It is not fated,
I tell you, that by thy spear the city of the lordly Trojans shall be laid waste,
nay, nor by that of Achilles, who is better far than you."**

Athena acknowledged to Telemachus the reality that gods were unable to save anyone from death if he was doomed to die:

"ἀλλ' ἦ τοι θάνατον μὲν ὁμοίον οὐδὲ θεοὶ περ
καὶ φίλῳ ἀνδρὶ δύνανται ἀλαλκέμεν, ὅπποτε κεν δὴ
μοῖρ' ὀλοὴ καθέλῃσι τανηλεγέος θανάτοιο."²

**"But of a truth death that is common to all the gods themselves
cannot ward from a man they love, when the fell
fate of grievous death shall strike him down."**

Therefore, when Zeus tried to urge gods so that one of them may save Hector out of the hands of Achilles, Athena objectionably asked him how he dared to ask for help for a man whom fate had precedently decided his death. At that time Zeus restored to the balance to make his decision.

"ἄνδρα θνητὸν ἐόντα πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴση
ἄψ ἐθέλεις θανάτοιο δυσσηχέος ἐξαναλύσαι"³

**"A man that is mortal, doomed long since by fate,
art you minded to deliver again from dolorous death?"**

When Zeus thought of interference to save his beloved son Sarpidon who was doomed to death, Hera turned his attention to the fact that gods will not favor such behavior, and interference would pave the way for all gods to save the lives of the persons they loved ⁴. On the contrary, when god didn't interfere to save Aeneas, Poseidon declared that gods should interfere in order to avoid Zeus' anger as Aeneas wasn't doomed to die in that war. Undoubtedly, Achilles's fate known to all is the best example of gods and men being submitted to the decision of fate. Therefore, Achilles didn't escape from the battle and none of the gods interfered, even Zeus, to save him at the moment of his death.

This research differs from the preceding studies on the same subject. I will make effort to answer the question passed at the beginning of the research. Had one of the gods or humans tried to make tricks against fate? Had anyone succeeded in such an attempt? In responding to this question, I will rely on some evidence from the legends of Trojan cycle. Thus, such evidence will be events had done not mere sayings as they will be represented in the events occurred in the legendary time and were reserved by

¹ Hom., Il.16.707-709.

² Hom., Od.3.236-238.

³ Hom., Il.22.179-180.

⁴ Hom., Il.6.441-9.

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the oral memory, thus they are not used for literary Pleasures as described before. This affirms their validity and excludes any doubts in this regard. As to the fact that resisting fate exceeds the limits of free will in acceptance or rejection to be an actual procedure affirming the intent of rejection, the research allows us to put forward our points of view in the issue of free will. It is worth mentioning that I will basically rely on sources from legendary narratives rather than depending on references because of the nature of study and novelty of presentation. I shall make use of both analytical and comparative methodologies, thus, supporting my viewpoint by means of mythical narratives outside the framework of Trojan cycle. What is remained is to point out that the word "tricks" may lead to confusion in believing that the issue may be formerly dealt with in the collection of research published in the book "Les ruses de l'intelligence. La mètis des Grecs" (1989) edited by Jean Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne". It is worth to be mentioned that such praised work has nothing to do with the contents of this research generally and in details, although it may be classified as a contribution to this topic.

Fate plans in the past for the future events. This is apparently clear in Athena's talk about Hector: "**A man that is mortal, doomed long since by fate**" The decision of Hector's death had been made a long time ago, but the incidence happened in "the future". Consequently, revelation of what fate had hidden is a revelation of the future. The hidden facts can't be revealed unless the plans of fate be executed. For this reason, Prometheus hasn't known his fate till this moment.

"ὄ ταῦτα ταύτη Μοῖρά πω τελεσφόρος
κρᾶναι πέπρωται"

**"Not in this way is Fate, who brings all to fulfillment,
destined to complete this course."**¹

Some peoples and religions depicted the judgments of fate as engraved on tablets indicating that they couldn't be erased or manipulated, while the Greeks depicted the acts of the fate differently. They embodied them through the spinning processes or the balance or a mixing of two jars. This is caused, from my point of view, by the fact that the peoples who imagined fate written on tablets had a literate culture where as Greeks at the age of Homer, the dark age, had on oral culture with limited dependence on writing.

The Greeks as well as other peoples believe in the possibility of predicting the future events which are considered as divine secrets which the goddesses of fate were concerned with planning. They are led by Zeus who was named "guide of fate" μοιραγέτης, who shared fate the knowledge of men's destiny². Seeking to foresee the

¹ Aesch., P.V.513-14.

² Orphic Hymns, 58.19-22.

"Μοῖρα γὰρ ἐν βιότῳ καθορᾷ μόνον, οὐδέ τις ἄλλος
ἀθανάτων, οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου,
καὶ Διὸς ὄμμα τέλειον· ἐπεὶ γ' ὅσα γίγνεται ἡμῖν,
Μοῖρά τε καὶ Διὸς οἶδε νόος διὰπαντὸς ἅπαντα."
"For Fate alone with vision unconfin'd,
Surveys the conduct of the mortal kind.
Fate is Zeus's perfect and eternal eye,
For Jove and Fate our ev'ry deed descry."

T. Taylor, *The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus*, (Chiswick: C. Whittingham for the Translator, 1821).

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future events resorting to predication, the Greeks intended to know what fate had decided for them, that embodies their future.

The means of foreseeing future were represented in the predication of fate judgments, dreams and foreseeing fortune in many ways applicable in that field. Certain gods and ancient powers were famous for their ability to predict future events such as Gaia, Dione, Thetis, Prometheus, Zeus, Apollo and many others. Moreover, some individuals were famous for their cleverness in making prophecy derived from gods such as Treisias and Calchas. Some of them were similar to gods in predicting fate judgments like Treisias¹.

The prophecy of fate, spreading its plans had urged some mythical characters to not only choose their fate but to interfere trying to change the judgments of fate as a result, manipulating by changing premises leading to results. This research will be restricted to monitor and analyze such attempts in the light of the myths included in the Trojan Cycle, comparing them, as much as possible, with the Greek mythical heritage because of the role assumed by fate within the Trojan epic Cycle particularly the "Iliad"².

Many tricks had been innovated for manipulating fate according to the Trojan Cycle myths. They may be classified into three types; tricks of salvation, tricks of saving and tricks of exploitation.

1- Tricks of salvation:

These mean the tricks made by some persons to escape from an imminent danger foreseen by a prophecy or a dream. This danger is represented in the birth of a child leading to unfortunate results as to these personalities.

Zeus and Poseidon manipulation against Achilles' fate:

Zeus and Poseidon individually sought to court Thetis' love. One day Zeus heard a prophecy attributed to either Prometheus or Themis. Such prophecy warns Zeus that Thetis would get married and give birth to a child more glorious than his father. What about if his father is Zeus or Poseidon? Which glory is greater than that? In this case, he would be the greatest god and might be turned against them to be the master of Olympus. Hence, Zeus consulted Poseidon and they both decided that Thetis's husband must be mortal in order for her son not to be a god³.

Zeus's knowledge about the destiny of Thetis's son urged Zeus and Poseidon to manipulate against fate by making tricks as to the premises in order to achieve their interests. Here, we note that spreading the judgment of fate by means of prophecy had been a major condition. If they hadn't known, they wouldn't have taken any action.

Morrison, "The Dictates of Fate and the Will of Zeus in the Iliad", 287f.

¹ W.R. Halliday, *Greek Divination: A Study of its Methods and Principles*, (London: MacMillan and Co. Limited, 1913).

Eidinow, *Oracles, Curses, and Risk among the Ancient Greeks*, (Oxford University Press, 2007).

M.A. Flower, *The Seer in Ancient Greece*, (University of California Press, 2008).

² Robert Solomon describes the Iliad as the greatest Western text full of fate.

R.C. Solomon, "On Fate and Fatalism", *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Oct. 2003), 444.

³ Pind. Isth.8.27ff, Aesch, P.V.908ff, Apollon.Rhod., Argon.4.790ff., Apd., 3.8.5, Ov., Met.11.217ff., Hyg.Fab.54; Astron.2.15, Quint. Smyr., Posthom.5.338ff, Sch.Hom.II.I.519.

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Priam and Hecuba manipulation against Paris' Fate:

When Hecuba got pregnant with Paris, she saw a dream that she gave birth to a flaming torch. This dream was interpreted by the seer Aesacus as a foretelling of the downfall of Troy, and he declared that the child would be the ruin of his homeland. On the day of Paris's birth, it was further announced by Aesacus that the child born of a royal Trojan that day would have to be killed to spare the kingdom, being the child that would bring about the prophecy. Though Paris was indeed born before nightfall, he was spared by Priam; Hecuba, too, was unable to kill the child, despite the urging of the priestess of Apollo, one Herophile. Instead, Paris's father prevailed upon his chief herdsman, Agelaus, to remove the child and kill him. The herdsman, unable to use a weapon against the infant, left him exposed on Mount Ida, hoping he would perish there, he was, however, suckled by a she-bear. Returning after nine days, Agelaus was astonished to find the child still alive and brought him home in a backpack

The prophecy reached Hecuba in the form of a dream. Thus, She, and her husband, manipulated to change the premises leading to such destiny hoping to change its results.

The manipulation with the premises leading to the destiny of coming baby on the basis of a prophecy had been a familiar motif within the Greek myths. Examples are as follows:

Cronus manipulation:

Gaea and Uranus had predicted that Cronus, would have an infant who would exclude him and seize the throne. Cronus's manipulation after having known the prophecy, was that he swallowed his sons from Rhea one after another. No one was saved except Zeus who excluded him from the throne.

Cronus's trick was to manipulate the premises that would lead to the inevitable fate and the knowledge of prophecy was the basis of his action.

Zeus' trick:

Zeus lay with Metis but immediately feared the consequences. It had been prophesied that Metis would bear extremely powerful children: the first, Athena and the second, a son more powerful than Zeus himself, who would eventually overthrow Zeus. In order to forestall these dire consequences, Zeus tricked her into turning herself into a fly and promptly swallowed her. He was too late: Metis had already conceived a child. In time she began making a helmet and robe for her fetal daughter. The hammering as she made the helmet caused Zeus great pain, and Hephaestus either clove Zeus's head with an axe, or hit it with a hammer at the river Triton, giving rise to Athena's birth. Athena leaped from Zeus's head, fully grown, armed, and armored, and Zeus was none the worse for the experience¹.

The trick of Zeus was to swallow Metis with her baby. Zeus' action was derived from his knowledge of prophecy. Zeus tried to prevent the imminent danger from the very beginning by changing the premises. His attempt seemed to be successful as Metis didn't give birth to that son who would have undermined the throne of Zeus.

¹ Hes., Th.886-900, Apd.1.3.6.

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Laius' trick:

When Laius, king of Thebes, consulting the the Oracle of Delphi asking for advice, the oracle told his prophecy revealing that if he ever had a son, the son would kill him and marry his mother. The day came when his wife Jocasta gave birth to her son Oedipus. Three days after the child's birth, Laius gave him to one of his servants and ordered the latter to throw him in the river of Cithaeron¹.

Knowledge of prophecy was the reason behind manipulation in the premises.

The manipulation of Acrisius:

King Acrisius of Argos worried about the fact that he was deprived from having a child, Acrisius had a daughter called Danae. He consulted the Oracle of Delphi, who warns him that he will one day be killed by his daughter Danae's son. Danae is childless and to keep her so, he imprisons her in a bronze chamber open to the sky in the courtyard of his palace. Zeus impregnates her in the form of golden rain drops (or her uncle had raped her). Acrisius manipulated again against his fate; he put Danae and her baby in a box and threw them in the sea, but Zeus demanded Poseidon to maintain her life².

Acrisius took a way different from that of his precedents in manipulating against fate. As usual, prophecy was the incentive and the motive.

The manipulation of Astyages:

Herodotus narrates a legendary story about the childhood of Cyrus. Astyages had a dream in which his daughter, Mandane, gave birth to a son who would destroy his empire. Fearful of the dream's prophecy, Astyages married her off to Cambyses I of Anshan, who had a reputation for being a "quiet and thoughtful prince" and whom Astyages believed to be no threat. When a second dream warned Astyages of the dangers of Mandane's offspring, Astyages sent his general Harpagus to kill the child Cyrus. Harpagus, unwilling to spill royal blood, gave the infant to a shepherd, Mitridates, whose wife had just given birth to a stillborn child. Cyrus was raised as Mitridates' own son³. So, Cyrus' life was saved in the same way as Oedipus and he succeeded his grandfather to the throne.

The former examples reveal that manipulating against the destiny determined had been a familiar motif reflecting the resistance against the vicissitudes of fate by heroes as well as gods. Such resistance ought to be preceded by prophecies that let news of the fate's plans pass around. Free will had exceeded the limits of choice further to planning to prevent the vicissitudes of fate or change their implications and results by means of manipulating the premises leading to them.

¹ Soph., Oed. Tyr.

² Soph. Ant. 944ff, Apd. 2.4.1, Sch.Ap. Rhod., Argon. iv.1091, 1515.

³ Hdt.1.107ff.

B. Sorensen, "Τύχη: Fortune, Fate and Chance in Herodotus and Thucydides", *Saber and Scroll*, Vol. 3: Iss. 2, Article 4. (2014).

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2- The saving tricks:

These mean the interference of either gods or humans as a result of a prophecy indicating someone's death, with the intent of saving him from his ill-omened fate by manipulating the premises hoping to change the result.

Thetis manipulation against Achilles' fate:

The goddess Thetis, known by her predicative abilities, knew what the goddesses of fate had planned for her beloved son Achilles. He had been doomed to die in his youth, but he would be more glorious than his father. Such prophecy can't be read in isolation of that reached Zeus about the fate of Thetis' son. It appeared most likely that Thetis knew, since she had got married to a mortal human, that she would give birth to a child who would die in his youth, thus she wanted to avoid him such a tragic end. From my point of view, she manipulated twice to save her son from his inevitable destiny: the first time when she attempted to grant him immortality by burning him with fire, greasing his body with "Ambrosia"¹ or submersing him into the river of Styx². She had previously tried to make sure of the immortality of her former sons³ or to grant them immortality. One of the means she followed in addition to burning is to put the baby into a bowl of boiling water. She was about to do that with Achilles if not Peleus interfered at the last moment⁴. His interference in the last trial hindered granting immortality to Achilles⁵. She might make those repetitive attempts secretly to manipulate his fate. If she granted him immortality she would avert him his unfortunate destiny which would break her heart. the second time when she hid him in the palace of Lycomedes, king of Scyros, and dressed him as a girl in order not to be taken to the campaign against Troy which would witness his death⁶.

It may be added to these two attempts a third one made by Thetis after Achilles sailed with the Greek leaders towards Troy as Thetis heard about a prophecy revealing that the first Greek man reaching the shores of Troy would be killed. So, she warned Achilles not to be the first one descending these shores. Achilles obeyed his mother's advice. The first Greek man to descend was the Thessalian leader Protesilaus whose name indicates that he is the first of his people⁷.

Thetis' behavior resulted from her knowledge about the prophecy. When she realized that her son would definitely meet his end, she couldn't leave him suffering from the bitterness of grief and brokenness at the end of his short life. Thus, she asked Zeus not to leave him suffering before his death. It seemed as a last wish on behalf of a person about to die. Achilles also knew his expected end, as well as the immortal gods did

¹ Ap. Rhod., Argon. iv.869ff., Apd.3.13.6.

² Stat., Achil.1.133-34, 1.268-70, 1.480-81.

³ sch. Hom.II.16.37, sch. Pind., Pyth. 3.178, sch. Aristoph., Clouds 1068; Tzetzes. in Lycoph. 178-79 (with Lycophron 178-79).

⁴ sch.Ap. Rhod. Argon.4.816= Hes. Fr.300 M-W.

⁵ Bergess presented a study of the repeated attempts of Thetis to grant her children immortality and the last of them Achilius in the Greek and Latin sources, and the relationship of what she did in the way that Achilles died.

J. Burgess, "Achilles' Heel: The Death of Achilles in Ancient Myth", *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Oct., 1995), 217-244.

⁶ Apd.3.13.8, Bion, Epith.2.5ff, Philostratus Junior, Imag.1, Sch. Hom. II.9 .668, Hyg. Fab.96.

⁷ Apd. Epit.3.29.

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while mother's heart refused such unfortunate end of her dear son, Achilles courageously accepted his fate and didn't escape. As we noted, the knowledge of the fate plans is indispensable in arranging to manipulate against the fate. We also saw that the acts of fate are inevitable, consequently they are related to the inevitable necessity "Ananke"¹. All Thetis' attempts were doomed to failure. Moreover, gods themselves interfered in the execution of the acts of fate to maintain discipline as it has been previously mentioned.

Althaea manipulation to save Meleager:

Seven days after the birth of Meleager, the goddesses of fate came to his home and predicted he would only live until a piece of wood, burning in the family hearth, was consumed by fire. His mother hurried immediately and took the burning log from the fire and kept it in a box to protect him from his irrevocable fate².

Such case was unique among other cases; there hadn't been any prophecy passed around. It is rather a direct disclosure on the part of the goddesses of fate of what they had previously planned to do. As a result of this direct knowledge, Althaea hurried to save her baby by taking the piece of firewood quickly hiding it in a box, so as to guarantee a long life for his child. The judgment of fate here was conditional. As long as the piece of firewood hadn't completely burned, Meleager wouldn't have been died. Manipulation in this case was presented in the prevention of the premise and consequently avoiding the subsequent result. Because the condition hadn't been fulfilled. Meleager died When his mother knew that he had killed her brothers, she got angry, opened the box, brought the piece of firewood and threw it in the house's fireplace till it turned, by fire, into ashes.

The manipulation of Apollo to save Admetus:

When Admetus was about to meet his end, Apollo interfered as he had been grateful to him. He tried to save him from his definite fate. Apollo restored to an unprecedented trick. He convinced the goddesses of fate to drink successive cups of wine to become drunk. Therefore, he asked them to tell him how to save Admetus from being died as they formerly determined. The drunk goddesses of fate told him that his death may be delayed if another person replaced him at the moment of "his" death³. Admetus asked one of his parents to voluntarily replace him, but they refused. So, his sincere wife Alcestis hurried to do that⁴.

This case is considered a unique one as Apollo here wasn't manipulating by premises, he rather dealt directly with the goddesses of fate in order to find a way out and gain their satisfaction at the same time. In this case, the advice was given by the source of judgment. Therefore, the trick succeeded as the sacrifice of Alcestis resulted in delaying Admetus' death. It is worth nothing that this trick was a dual one as he cheated the goddesses of fate first, then he manipulated their judgment. The fact that Apollo managed to get a solution from them changing their decision by making them drunk, means that they couldn't accept that in the normal circumstances. Apollo's

¹ Pind.Fr.21, Plato, Rep. 617c.

² Aesch., Choe.604ff, Bacchyl., Epinic.136ff, Diod. Sic.,4.34.6f., Apd.1.8.2., Paus., 10.31.4, Anton.Lib., Met.2, Sch.Hom.II.9.534, Hyg., Fab.171.

³ Aesch.Eum.728ff.

⁴ Eur., Alcest.

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interference to guarantee the escape of a mortal human from the judgment of fate was unprecedented compared to the attitudes of gods in Homer's view. Such interference, if repeated, would lead to universal chaos and disorder, as humans would be immortal like gods. We saw in Hera's advice to Zeus, as seen by Homer, that gods don't desire a god to save one of his beloved persons from death. So, Apollo did something which is very odd and strange.

The tricks of salvation may include what I call salvation counter tricks which were in favor of the execution of the judgments of fate, most of which are represented in saving the lives of those whom some characters wanted to get rid of. Such tricks aimed at executing the judgment of fate. The goddess Rhea had saved the life of Zeus by replacing him with a stone so that his father might swallow it instead of him. Moreover, the she-bear had saved Paris's life by breast feeding him and taking care of him. The shepherd saved the life of Oedipus and brought him up. Through the counter tricks, Zeus carried out the will of fate. When he impregnated Danae, she gave birth to a child in the form of drops of moisture. He saved her again with her child from drowning in the sea Because the gods hate to oppose their judgments.

Oedipus tried to manipulate against the judgment of fate after he knew about the prophecy that he would kill his father and get married to his mother, but he misunderstood it as he didn't know that the shepherd and his wife were not his legal parents. When he went away from the city in order to escape from his fate, he didn't know that he started executing the judgment of fate. This seems, from my point of view, a contrary trick also in which manipulation led to the enforcement of the judgment of fate, not to prevent it from taking its course. Undoubtedly, there are numerous examples revealing that gods interference had contributed to the enforcement of the will of fate in such legends. This is clearly explicit in the examples formerly included to indicate that gods couldn't resist fate, in comparison with the types of manipulation against fate.

3- Tricks of Exploitation:

Certain types of manipulation against fate are represented in trying to change the premises to gain advantages and make benefits, taken into consideration that such trials didn't aim at opposing fate but just adapt it to benefit from it.

Aphrodite's manipulation against Troy's fate:

Aphrodite knew about a prophecy concerning the succession to throne which fate had planned. The prophecy said that the Trojan war would break out at the age of Priam's sons and Anchises's descendants¹. Therefore, the goddess of sexual temptation disguised herself as the daughter of king Otreus, king of Phrygia and made a chance allowing Anchises who was tending his sheep at the foot of the mountain Ida to have a sexual intercourse with her so, she gave birth to a child called Aeneas² whose descendants ruled Troy and Rome after Priam descendants had passed away. Undoubtedly, he had been one of the few heroes who were saved in the Trojan war.

Aphrodite managed to convince Paris to love Helen. After he kidnapped Helen, Aphrodite pretended to support Trojans and fight at their side, but in fact she was

¹ Acus., Fr.39.

² Homeric Hymns, 5 (to Aphrodite).

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alleviating them after being defeated in order not to be desperate and return Helen as a result¹.

Knowledge about the prophecy passed around concerning the judgment of fate was the starting point as usual. The enforcement of the judgment of fate was the definite end. Aphrodite's manipulation to benefit from the judgment of fate was evidence of her opportunism. She was even driving the Trojans to meet their unfortunate destiny. Her attempt revealed that she was keen on enforcing fate, not out of her feeling of responsibility as a goddess, but to attain a personal aim namely to gain the honor of her descendants' rule of two great kingdoms: Troy and Rome.

The manipulation of the Greek leaders against the fate of Troy:

The fate of Troy was to be inevitably seized by the Greeks. The Trojans hoped, all over the war, that the gods might change their fate which had been the motive to be brave and with stand. At times, there had been prophecies relieving the fall of Troy at the hands of the Greeks based on certain conditions². The prophecies reveal that Troy cannot fall without the Achaeans first: Killing Troilus, a son of Priam, before reaching twenty years old, Persuading Philoctetes (in whose power were the Bow and Arrows of Heracles) to come from Lemnos³, fetching Neoptolemus from Scyros⁴, Relocating the shoulder bone of Pelops to their attacking forces outside Troy⁵. And stealing the Palladium, a wooden statue that once had fallen from Heaven⁶, since if it were carried off Troy could not survive.

Achilles watched the boy Troilus and killed him in the temple of Apollo. The Greek leaders looked for Pelops' bones and brought them. Moreover, Odysseus and Phoenix went to the palace of Lycomedes in Scyros in order to convince him to let Neoptolemus accompany them. When they reached the camp, they gave him his father's weapons and he joined them in the battle. Odysseus and Diomedes penetrated the city at night. Diomedes waited whereas Odysseus disguised as a beggar so that no one could know him. However, Helen recognized him and helped him to steal the Palladium. He and Diomedes carried it to be loaded on the Greek ships. Consequently, come the trick of the wooden horse. It may be worth noting that Odysseus who was resourceful had taken part in most of those attempts.

The case here is different as the judgment of fate concerning the fall of Troy had been dependent on certain conditions and circumstance which, undoubtedly, would have occurred. The one who thought to enforce the judgment of fate wasn't a god but the mortal humans, with the aim of making benefits and exploiting the judgment of fate that may serve their interests.

The examples of gods and men presented in this research had exceeded the limits of choice to deliberate interference based on a prophecy making the pre-determined

¹ Acus., Fr.39.

² For these prophecies and their requirements, cf.:

R. Hard, *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology: Based on H.J. Rose's Handbook of Greek Mythology*, (London: Routledge, 2008), 471ff.

³ Ilias parva, Fr.1 (Evelyn-White).

⁴ Iliupersis, Fr.1; Ilias parva, Fr.1, Fr.12, Fr.14 (Evelyn-White).

⁵ Apd., E.5.10; Paus. 5.13.4; Tzetzes, Posthomerica 571-579; Tzetzes, Chiliades vi.508-515.

⁶ Apd. E.5.10; Conon 34; Serv. Verg. A. 2.166.

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judgment of fate pass around. I claim that proving such interference affirms the idea of free will and goes beyond it. Nevertheless, the judgment of fate, in most of those cases, was enforced in spite of the strenuous efforts and attempts to manipulate with the aim of changing it. If we let aside the tricks of exploitation that conformed to the fate predetermined by the goddesses of fate, the tricks which bore fruits were those of Zeus made against Thetis and Metis and the trick of Apollo to save Admetus. However, it may be said that Zeus' manipulation against Thetis didn't change the fate of Achilles who, unexpectedly, was glorious than his father, but Zeus managed to isolate that glory from his and from that of Poseidon. Apollo failed to change Admetus' fate in such a way as making things get out of fate's control because the goddesses of fate themselves had set the means to save Admetus. The trick made by Apollo did nothing but delaying the fate regarding Admetus' death which had been definite. Thus, the only case that had been successful in changing the judgment of fate was that of Zeus against Metis.

It seems that the Greek idea about the knot of fate's thread as being difficult to be dealt with differs from that regarding the knot of weaving made by humans. The knot of Penelope's weaving might be solved each night, on the contrary, the knot of fate couldn't be solved.

I haven't yet got sufficient sources that may determine the mechanism of the acts of fate. So, we don't know if they randomly happen or occur in accordance with systematic laws. Is the fate's nature of work differing from that of Tyche? Whose work is dependent on chance which may sometimes relate to fate. I can't assure that. If the work of the goddesses of fate was depending on chance, this justifies the fact that the goddess of luck and chance "Tyche" was deemed to be the master of universe at the Hellenistic period. The acts of Tyche had turned to be more powerful than those of fate¹. But the tools used by the goddesses of fate made their judgments as being compatible with certain criteria. I don't know exactly when the thread will be cut, neither I know the basis upon which Zeus will draw from the jars of good and evil. I can't also distract the basis concerning the process of weighing ages in the balance held by Zeus.

¹ Sorensen, "Τύχη: Fortune, Fate and Chance in Herodotus and Thucydides", *passim* Eidinow, *Luck, Fate and Fortune*, p.45ff.

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