When trying to reconstruct the historical background of the Trojan war we have to cope with a great many difficulties and uncertainties. We possess a lot of data, indeed. There are a few historical facts, there is archaeological and linguistic evidence (some of it facts, some of it mere guess-work), and there is an extensive mythological and mythographical tradition, part of which may conceal historical facts. Facts we welcome but the material of mythic tradition we cannot use on its face value, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to decide as to how far this tradition is based on historical facts. Heroic poetry may pass on facts of the past but they are transformed by the poet's imagination and before him by oral transmission. Names of persons, geographical names may be historical but they are often mixed up altogether ¹). Therefore, in trying to reconstruct the history of the last kings of Troy we should be well aware that there are a great many difficulties and dubious points and we may come to a conclusion which remains hypothetical because of lack of real facts. On the other hand, some facts have lately become known which may be useful and may illustrate a historical period known formerly only by mythic tradition. In the American Journal of Archaeology 54 (1950) 162-176 W. F. Albright gave some oriental glosses on the Homeric problem which may be used in endeavouring to reconstruct the history of the last kings of Troy, and I shall try to make use of them not as an orientalist but as a mythologist.

However, before talking about Troy, the Trojans and their kings and trying to describe them from a historical point of view, we have to define our standpoint towards some aspects of the Trojan problem. Has there been a war between Achaeans or Mycenaeans and Trojans

¹) See e.g. lately Bowra, A.J.A. 54 (1950), 184-192.
and have we got to look for Troy on the site of the Hissarlik hill or elsewhere? As to archaeological evidence, we may restrict ourselves to the fact that there were several settlements on the Hissarlik hill and “that the latest excavations on this hill (by Blegen, c.s.) ¹ have, indeed, not proved that settlement VII A which is considered as the so-called Homeric Troy, was destroyed by the Achaeans but have produced no evidence to the contrary”. So J. L. Caskey ² very guardedly formulated the present state of affairs opposing Rhys Carpenter who thinks that the Greeks never went to Troy at all ³. Homeric Troy and the Greek assault may still be open to discussion, but if we combine the fact that settlement VII A was destroyed by fire about 1200 with the very strong tradition of the destruction of a town of Troy in the NW of Asia Minor by the Greeks, we may accept that Troy was destroyed by them, and on account of archaeological evidence that this Troy most likely lay on the hill where many settlements were excavated, the Hissarlik. And on the basis of archaeological evidence we may assume that the devastation of Homeric Troy occurred about 1200.

If we accept as a historical fact that there was a town “Troy” destroyed by the Greeks, this town and its people must have had a king, and if we do full justice to popular oral tradition expressed in epic poetry the only candidate to the throne is Priam. We will not discuss the question whether this name is a proper name, as I think is the case ⁴), or a title ⁵), we only state the fact that the town of Troy and its people the Trojans must have had kings, and we will call its last king Priamos and his father Laomedon, as did the poet. About these last kings of Troy I shall try to reconstruct some historical facts by comparing the philological data, which are numerous, but which have come to us in a poetic and fantastic

¹) See publications in A.J.A. 1932 sqq.
²) A.J.A. 52 (1948), 122.
³) Rhys Carpenter, Folk Tale, Fiction and Saga in the Homeric Epics, 67. See, however, e.g. Gordon Childe, The Dawn of European Civilization, 45, Hanfmann, A.J.A. 52 (1948), 143, Albright, A.J.A. 54 (1950), 162 sqq., who ardently defend the historicity of the Trojan war and consider the Hissarlik hill as the site of Troy.
⁴) See my forthcoming article Priamos in the Real Enzyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft Pauly Wissowa ch. I.
⁵) See Weizsäcker, Myth. Lex. III. 2940/1.