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ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE *ILIAD*:

THE TROJAN WAR IN HOMER AND HISTORY

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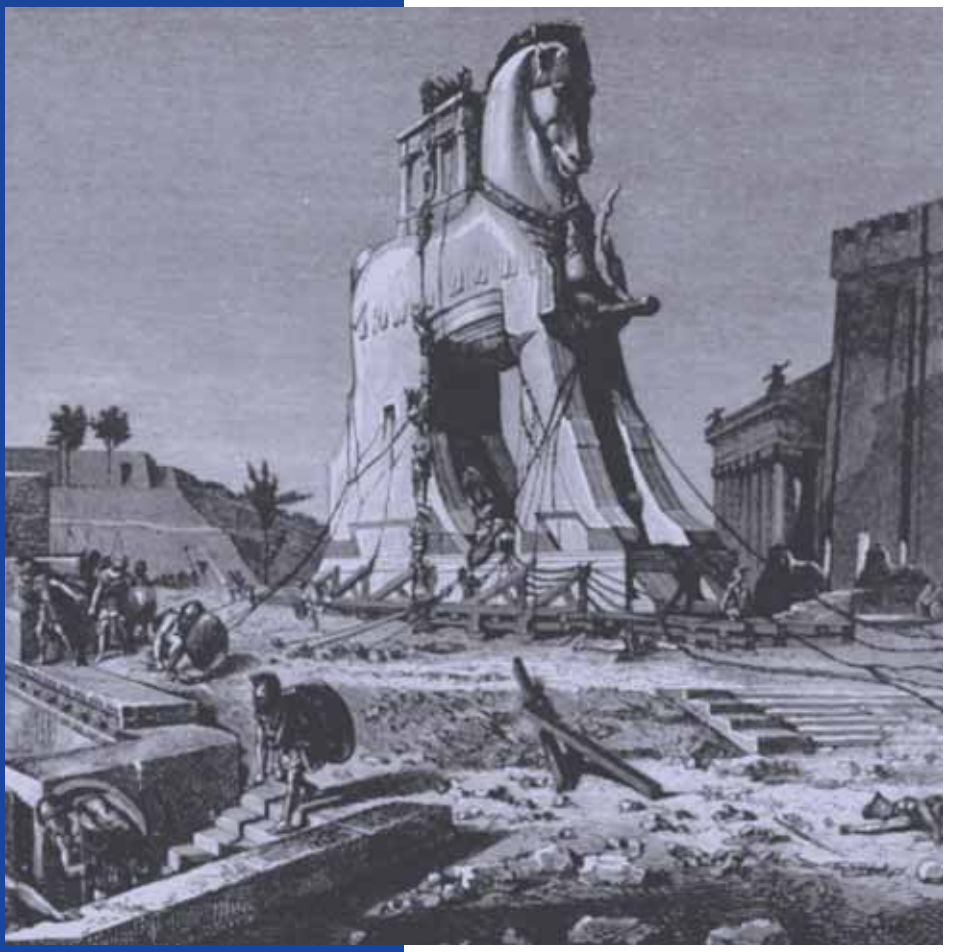

Professor Eric H. Cline

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Archaeology and the *Iliad*:
The Trojan War in Homer and History

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The George Washington University

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Course Syllabus

Archaeology and the *Iliad*:
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Photo courtesy of Eric H. Cline

About Your Professor

Eric H. Cline

Dr. Eric H. Cline, a former Fulbright scholar, is chair of the Department of Classical and Semitic Languages and Literatures at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where he holds a joint appointment as an associate professor in both the Classics/Semitics Department and the Anthropology Department.

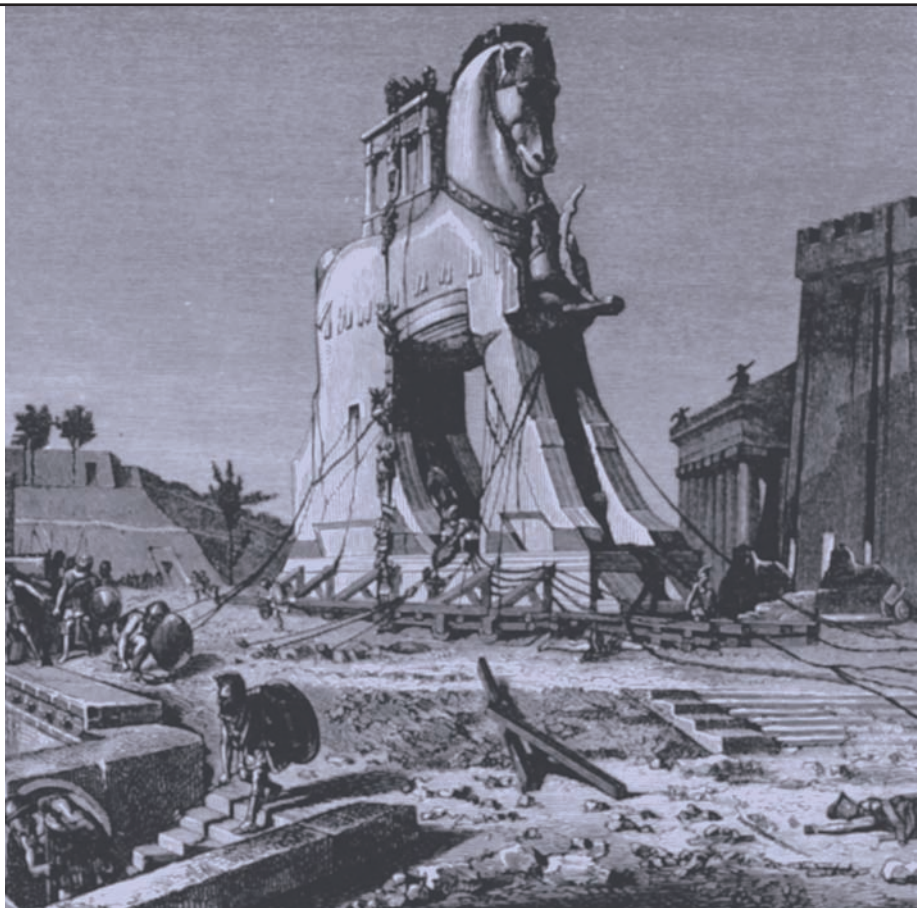
A prolific researcher, Dr. Cline is the author or editor of seven books and has more than seventy articles and book reviews to his credit. His books include *The Battles of Armageddon: Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley from the Bronze Age to the Nuclear Age,* which received the 2001 Biblical Archaeology Society (BAS) Publication Award for "Best Popular Book on Archaeology"; *Jerusalem Besieged: From Ancient Canaan to Modern Israel; Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: International Trade and the Late Bronze Age Aegean; Amenhotep III: Perspectives on His Reign* (co-editor); *The Aegean and the Orient in the Second Millennium BC; Thutmose III: A New Biography*; and a book for young adults entitled *The Ancient Egyptian World* (coauthor with Jill Rubalcaba).

Professor Cline received the Morton Bender Award for Teaching at the George Washington University in 2004 and the Archaeological Institute of America's National "Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching" Award for 2005. He currently teaches a wide variety of courses, including Troy and the Trojan War, History of Ancient Greece, History of Rome, and Art and Archaeology of the Aegean Bronze Age.

Professor Cline has lectured at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Skirball Museum in Los Angeles. His research has been featured in the *Washington Post,* the *New York Times, US News & World Report,* the *London Daily Telegraph,* the *London Mirror,* and many other publications around the world.

In addition, Professor Cline has been featured on numerous radio and television broadcasts such as the BBC World Services, National Public Radio, the Discovery Channel, the National Geographic Channel, and the History Channel.

Dr. Cline is married, with two children, two cats, and varying numbers of fish.



Introduction

The events of the Trojan War, captured forever in Homer's epic poem the *Iliad,* resonate to the present day in the popular imagination. As evidenced by a recurring interest in tales of the beautiful Helen, heroic Achilles, and history's greatest trick, the Trojan Horse, this magnificent confrontation continues to exert a tremendous influence on modern audiences.

But did Troy actually exist? And if so, where is it located? Was the Trojan War actually fought? If it was, did it take place over the course of ten years, as Homer wrote, or was it a much longer series of battles? And why was the war fought? Could Helen's face alone really have launched a thousand ships?

In this course, esteemed professor Dr. Eric H. Cline examines the real history of Troy and delves into the archaeological discoveries (which continue to the present day) that help to answer the questions above. Through an entertaining and incisive analysis of known data, Professor Cline provides a fuller, richer understanding of this historic clash.

Lecture 1:
The Tale of the Trojan War:
Introduction and Overview

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

Calamitous battles, breathtaking Helen, lovestruck Paris, cuckolded Menelaus, a giant wooden horse—Homer's famous tale of the Trojan War has fascinated readers for centuries and given rise to countless scholarly articles and books, extensive archaeological excavations, epic movies, television documentaries, stage plays, art and sculpture, and even souvenirs and collectibles. Even for those who had never heard of Troy and its story before, the plot and the names of those involved are now familiar territory, courtesy of Brad Pitt, Peter O'Toole, Orlando Bloom, Eric Bana, Sean Bean, and Diane Kruger. They appeared in an epic of their own—the movie *Troy,* made by Warner Brothers and released during the summer of 2004. "*I've fought many wars in my time*," says Priam. "*Some are fought for land, some for power, some for glory. I suppose fighting for love makes more sense than all the rest.*"

The tale of the Trojan War, as traditionally related by the blind Greek poet Homer in the eighth century BCE, is easily told. Paris, the son of King Priam of Troy, sails to mainland Greece on a diplomatic mission to Menelaus, the king of Sparta, and falls in love with Menelaus's beautiful wife, Helen. When Paris returns home, Helen accompanies him—either voluntarily, according to the Trojans, or taken by force, according to the Greeks. Enraged, Menelaus persuades his brother Agamemnon, king of Mycenae and the leader of the Greeks, to send an armada of a thousand ships and 50,000 men against Troy to get Helen back. A ten-year war follows in which Greek and Trojan heroes such as Hector and Achilles are distinguished by acts of singular courage. In the end, the Greeks are victorious, gaining entry to Troy by the stratagem of appearing to leave, but hiding warriors inside a huge wooden horse left outside the walls. Troy is sacked and Helen returns home to Sparta with Menelaus.

Here is the basic story of the Trojan War, replete with scenes of warfare and themes of love, honor, betrayal, heroism, and cowardice. Indeed, it is these very themes—universal themes—that have given the *Iliad* and the whole story of the Trojan War their staying power. This timeless tale of love and war, rivalry and greed, and glorious death has held audiences riveted and captured the imagination of people during the Greek and Roman periods, throughout the Middle Ages, and now into our modern era. But did it happen? Was there really a Trojan War? Did Troy even exist? How much truth is there behind Homer's story? Did Helen really have a face that launched a thousand ships? Was the Trojan War fought because of one

man's love for a woman . . . or was that merely the excuse for a war fought for other reasons—land, power, glory?

In this series of lectures, we will explore the story behind the story, looking at archaeology on the one hand and literature on the other, with a bit of ancient history thrown into the mix for good measure. We will be excavating down through the layers of myth and legend surrounding Troy and the Trojan War in order to get to the nugget of truth around which everything else is wrapped—and we will determine how much is fact and how much is fiction, to the best of our abilities today.

We will begin with a brief overview of the tale of the Trojan War and then introduce some of the problems and questions that we will be investigating during the various upcoming lectures.

We will then take a look at some of the major players involved, or potentially involved, in the story, including separate lectures on the Mycenaeans, the Hittites, and the Sea Peoples. More is known about these three groups of peoples than about the Trojans themselves, which is a curious situation indeed.

We will then examine the literary evidence. Here we will begin with the relevant Greek works, including not only the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* but also the so-called *Epic Cycle*, where we find the story of the Trojan Horse and the actual fall of Troy. We then move on to a discussion of whether Homer's tale reflects the reality of the Bronze Age and 1250 BCE, when the warriors in his story are supposed to have lived and died, or whether it reflects the reality of the Iron Age and 750 BCE, some five hundred years later, when he himself is thought to have lived. A third possibility is, of course, that the story as we now know it may be a compilation put together over the course of those five intervening centuries. We will look also at the flip side of the equation, discussing the story of the Trojan War and investigating the literary evidence that we have (or can infer) from the Hittite, Trojan, and Luwian perspectives.

We will be concerned with the archaeological evidence for Troy and the Trojan War. Our lectures will proceed chronologically, beginning with the earliest excavations conducted by Heinrich Schliemann during the late nineteenth century, with an aside on the famous "Priam's Treasure" that Schliemann claimed to have found. We continue on with the explorations of Wilhelm Dörpfeld, Schliemann's architect and immediate successor at the site, touch base with Carl Blegen and his team from the University of Cincinnati, who excavated at Troy in the 1930s, and then focus on the most recent series of excavations, conducted by Manfred Korfmann from the University of Tübingen, and the important discoveries made at the site since 1988. Within these lectures, we will also discuss the various cities of Troy, a total of nine layered one upon the other, and follow each excavator as they grapple with the question of which city belonged to Priam and was besieged by Agamemnon, Achilles, and the vengeful Mycenaeans.

Finally, we will begin to conclude our discussions and try to survey, in a few lectures, what we have learned and what we now believe. Here we will take a look at the possible motivations for fighting the Trojan War—why was it fought? Was it really for Helen? Or was it for some other reason, like greed, money, or glory? And if it did take place, when was it fought? Was it fought

during the time of Troy II, as Schliemann thought? Or during the time of Troy VI, as Dörpfeld thought? Or during the time of Troy VII, as Blegen thought? Could Homer have been describing a process rather than an event; that is, could he have been telescoping several centuries of intermittent warfare into a single story, as befits an epic poet? And what of the recent excavations? The discoveries of Korfmann have shed new light on the city, but have they helped to solve any of our questions about the Trojan War?

So join with us now, as we enter the world of the Late Bronze Age. The time is 1250 BCE, more than a thousand years before the birth of Christ. The location is Northwestern Turkey, known back then as Anatolia. The city is Troy, an international and cosmopolitan city commanding the straits of the Hellespont leading into the Black Sea. The two opponents are the Trojans on the one hand and the Mycenaeans from Mainland Greece on the other: two peoples separated only by the Aegean Sea and little else—two peoples perhaps more closely related than either cared to admit.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What is it about stories of the Trojan War that resonates with people even to the present day?
2. What is the basic story of the Trojan War?

Suggested Reading

Wood, Michael. *In Search of the Trojan War*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Other Books of Interest

Bryce, Trevor. *Trojans and Their Neighbours: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2005.

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Bryce, T.R. “The Trojan War: Is There Truth Behind the Legend?” *Near Eastern Archaeology*, 65/3 (2002), 182–195.

Lecture 2:
The Mycenaeans

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

What was the world of the Mycenaeans like? And what was it like to be a Mycenaean warrior? We can reconstruct life at the time, to the best of our ability, from a combination of archaeological and literary sources.

The archaeology comes from the excavations done at a number of Late Bronze Age sites: on Mainland Greece, Crete, Rhodes, the Cycladic Islands, and the western coast of Anatolia. These include Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Knossos, and Troy itself. If the names sound familiar, we shouldn't be surprised, for they are well known to us from Greek mythology—these places figure prominently in the stories that the Greeks told about their ancestors and the world in which they lived, such as the story of Theseus and the Minotaur, which took place at Knossos on Crete.

We can also reconstruct life during those days from a series of clay tablets that have been found at most of the major Mycenaean sites on Mainland Greece and even on Crete. The tablets are inscribed with a curious writing system, scratched into the surface while the clay was still wet. Linear B, as the writing is called, turns out to be an early form of Greek; it was successfully translated by a British architect named Michael Ventris in 1952.

Linear B was the syllabic writing system used by both the Mycenaeans on Mainland Greece and the Minoans on the island of Crete during the Late Bronze Age. It was used predominantly by an administrative bureaucracy that required permanent records of inventories and commercial transactions involving lists of people and goods. Such records, written and preserved on clay tablets, have been found at major palatial sites throughout the Aegean.

The largest number of these Linear B tablets has been found at Pylos, legendary home of the old and wise king Nestor, which was excavated in the 1930s by Professor Carl Blegen of the University of Cincinnati. The city, located in the southwest of the Greek Mainland, was destroyed about 1200 BCE—part of the larger series of catastrophes that brought an end to the Mycenaean civilization. The fiery destruction accidentally baked the clay tablets, preserving them where they fell, to be discovered and deciphered thousands of years later.

The texts inscribed on these tablets are not literary masterpieces. They are neither myths nor legends, neither poems nor historical accounts. They are simple economic texts, mundane inventories of goods either entering or leaving the palace: line after line of the number of chariot wheels that need to be repaired, the number of bolts of cloth sent to Mycenae, the number of slaves that need to be fed.

Interestingly, several female workers named in the Linear B texts found at Pylos have ethnic names interpreted as western Anatolian in origin. These women came from Miletus, Knidus, and Halikarnassus on the western coast of Turkey, and others came from the Dodecanese Islands located just off this coast. They were probably slaves bought or captured by the Mycenaeans in the years before the Trojan War.

It is from these dry and dusty lists, in conjunction with the other material finds made by archaeologists, that we can reconstruct the lifestyle of the Mycenaeans during the Late Bronze Age.

The Mycenaeans, based as they were on the Greek Mainland, had an economy that was based on the so-called "Mediterranean triad"—grapes, olives, and grain. It was a primarily agrarian lifestyle, based on farming with a little fishing thrown in, at least for most of the people.

The higher classes were able to indulge in a bit more luxury, owning goods and objects made of gold, silver, bronze, ivory, and glass. A middle class of merchants, artisans, and long-distance traders sustained and provided these indulgences. A textile industry and a perfume industry were among the most profitable, as was the production of olive oil.

Some of these goods—especially textiles, perfume, and olive oil—were apparently in demand not only in Greece itself but as far away as Egypt, Canaan (modern Israel, Syria, and Lebanon), and even Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). Mycenaean pottery was also in demand both at home and abroad, although it is not always clear whether it was valued in and of itself or for the contents that some of the vessels held.

The so-called Mycenaean "stirrup jars" are a good example of such pottery. Exported all over the Mediterranean area—including westward to Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia, as well as eastward to Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean—these closed vessels usually held liquids of some kind or another: possibly wine, possibly olive oil, possibly perfume. The jars themselves seem to have been of value as well, for local imitations have been found in many of the countries to which the real jars were sent.

We will discuss more of the Mycenaeans' contacts with the outside world below. However, many of these overseas contacts seem to have been conducted by, or on behalf of, the Mycenaean palaces located at the eponymous site of Mycenae, as well as at Tiryns, Nauplion, Pylos, and elsewhere.

The palaces were where the kings lived—built on the highest hills in each area or section of Greece, as befitting the highest levels of authority of the land. However, the palaces were much more than simply the residences of the kings. They also served as storage and redistribution centers for goods created at home or abroad and for agricultural products gathered at harvest time for later use. Around the palace, contained within the fortification walls of the so-called "citadel," were also the houses of the king's courtiers, administrators, and family members, as well as the workshops of the palace craftsmen.

On the slopes of the hill, spreading out below the citadel of virtually every Mycenaean palace in Greece, were the houses of the Lower Town. Here, and in the surrounding smaller villages, lived the everyday farmers, merchants, tradesmen, and craftsmen upon whom each kingdom depended.

The majority of these people, both men and women, did not know how to read or write; probably less than 1 percent of the population was literate. Such people were undoubtedly held in high esteem, and many probably held positions as scribes and accountants. They worked in the palaces, keeping the inventories by writing in Linear B on clay tablets, like the ones that were accidentally preserved and left to be found by the archaeologists.

The picture of the Mycenaean warrior's life can be reconstructed from the same combination of archaeological and literary sources. Some of the weapons and other accoutrements used by Mycenaean warriors have been found in archaeological excavations at the major sites on the Greek Mainland and Crete, especially in tombs such as the famous Shaft Graves at Mycenae. Although several centuries too early to have been Agamemnon and his compatriots, as Heinrich Schliemann first thought when he discovered the tombs and their contents, the men in these graves were buried with a phenomenal number of swords and other war gear.

At the nearby site of Dendra, an entire set of bronze armor—known as a cuirass—was found in a tomb, along with the remnants of a boar's tusk helmet of just the type described by Homer. If the warrior buried in this tomb had donned the armor, he would have been the walking equivalent of a Late Bronze Age tank!

The Linear B tablets do not shed much light on the lifestyle of a Mycenaean warrior, apart from listing quantities of weapons, chariots, bronze, and other items relevant to the warfare of the period. And yet our major window into the derring-do of Mycenaean warriors does come from a literary source—Homer—for it is Homer who gives us more details than we might have ever wanted, from the order in which a warrior donned his various pieces of equipment to the catastrophic results when such equipment failed its user. We know how many spears each warrior held, what their swords looked like, how tight they tied their greaves around their shins, and how they used their chariots in battle.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What is Linear B?
2. What was the basis of the Mycenaean economy?

Suggested Reading

Wood, Michael. *In Search of the Trojan War*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Other Books of Interest

Dickinson, Oliver T.P.K. *The Aegean Bronze Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Hooker, J.T. *Mycenaean Greece*. Boston: Routledge, 1976.

Vermeule, Emily T. *Greece in the Bronze Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

Lecture 3:
The Hittites

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

Within these discussions, we must also consider the Hittites—those warlike people who ruled over most of Anatolia (ancient Turkey) throughout the second millennium BCE and to whom the people of Troy may have owed at least a passing allegiance.

Just who were the Hittites? When this question began to be asked, a little more than a century ago, our only knowledge of the Hittites came from the Hebrew Bible. For instance, Abraham buys a burial plot for his wife Sarah from "Ephron the Hittite" (Genesis 23: 3–20). King David falls in love with Bathsheba, the wife of "Uriah the Hittite," as he watches her bathe (2 Samuel 11: 2–27). David's son Solomon chooses "Hittite women" to number among his wives (1 Kings 11:1).

From such biblical references, one would gather that the "country of the Hittites" was in northern Israel or Syria. After David commands that the people of Israel be counted, for instance, the census-takers visit, among other places, "Kadesh in the land of the Hittites" (2 Samuel 24: 6), probably referring to a Syrian site that David is said to have conquered. The problem was that scholars could find no evidence of a Hittite kingdom in that region.

In the late nineteenth century, however, German and Swiss archaeologists began investigating the ruins of a strange, unknown civilization far to the north, in modern Turkey. Here was a classic conundrum: ancient historians could name a people (the Hittites), but not their homeland, and they could name a homeland (ancient Anatolia), but not its people.

Thanks largely to archaeological excavations by German archaeologists—including Hugo Winckler in the first decade of the twentieth century and Kurt Bittel in the years before World War II—we now know that those Anatolian ruins are the remains of a great Hittite empire that flourished in the second millennium BCE. The Hittites developed from little-known kingdoms into a fledgling empire in the mid-seventeenth century BCE, when they built their capital at Hattusa (modern Bogazköy, 100 miles east of Ankara). Some decades later, they were powerful enough to attack Babylon, bringing down the Old Babylonian dynasties. Thereafter, until the collapse of the Hittite civilization in the twelfth century BCE, they rivaled Egypt as the main Near Eastern superpower.

The name "Hittites" is something of a misnomer. Because the Bible referred to Hittites, the term was simply adopted by scholars to refer to this Late Bronze Age Anatolian kingdom. The Hittites, however, never referred to

themselves as Hittites; rather, they called themselves the “people of the Land of Hatti.” Had we learned about the Hittites in a more orderly way, we would probably have called them “Nesites” or “Nesians,” for the earliest Hittite rulers based their kingdom at the city of Nesa (about 200 miles southeast of Hattusa), where a dagger with Anitta’s name on it was discovered. Nesite was also the name the Hittites gave to their language, an Indo-European tongue that we instead call Hittite.

Our knowledge of the early Hittite kings comes from chronicles found at Bogazköy/Hattusa. These documents consist of cuneiform tablets inscribed in Hittite and Akkadian, a Semitic language spoken by the Babylonians and Assyrians. Two documents concern the first clearly attested Hittite king, Hattusili I (1650–1620 BCE), who established the capital at Hattusa (Hattusili means “man of Hattusa”). These documents, known respectively as the *Annals* and the *Testament of Hattusili I*, provide information about his military activities and the internal politics of the kingdom during his rule.

However, it is the *Proclamation of King Telipinu*, who lived just over a century later, that sheds the most light on the early history of the Hittite kingdom. Among other historical entries, Telipinu’s *Proclamation* records the longest “drive-by shooting” in history. This occurred in 1595 BCE, when Hattusili I’s grandson Mursili I marched the Hittite army hundreds of miles from Anatolia to Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), attacked the city of Babylon for no particular reason whatsoever, brought the dynasty of the famous king Hammurabi to an abrupt end, and then just as suddenly marched his men back to Anatolia, leaving Babylon and Babylonia in ruins. Whatever the rationale for Mursili I’s campaign to Babylon, it was long remembered as one of the major military triumphs of the early Hittite period—the Old Kingdom, as it is known, which came to an end about 1500 BCE or so.

After a period of anarchy lasting approximately half a century, the Hittite New Kingdom was established about 1450 BCE. One of the kings who

helped to reestablish Hittite dominance in Anatolia was a man known as Tudhaliya I/II (it is unclear whether he was the first or second king by that name, hence the reference to I/II). During his reign, a coalition of small vassal kingdoms in western Anatolia, known collectively as Assuwa and located at or near the region of Troy on what is now the western coast of Turkey, rose up in rebellion about 1420 BCE. Tudhaliya was forced to march his army westward from central Anatolia to crush this rebellion, not once but twice. This rebellion may be of particular interest to us, for texts dating to his reign imply that the rebels may have been aided and abetted by Mycenaeans from mainland Greece.

The floruit of Hittite power came during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE, particularly during the reign of Suppiluliuma I and the kings who came after him, during which time the Hittite Empire expanded into northern Syria and came into repeated contact, and occasionally conflict, with the New Kingdom Egyptians.

One of the strangest instances of contact—known as the "Zannanza Affair"—took place during the reign of Suppiluliuma I, ca. 1350 BCE or thereabouts. Suppiluliuma I was one of the most powerful kings ever to rule the Hittites, and certainly among the most feared by the other great nations of the civilized world in a very long time. At one point, he received an unexpected letter, from the queen of Egypt, who wrote asking for the hand of the Hittite king's son in marriage, for her own husband—the Pharaoh—had recently died. Suppiluliuma I had difficulty believing that this letter was indeed from the queen, especially since the Egyptians and the Hittites had been busy fighting for several decades over possession and domination of North Syria. Nevertheless, after additional letters were sent back and forth, he was convinced of the authenticity of the writer and the veracity of the request. However, today we are not exactly sure who the dead Egyptian Pharaoh was nor who his widow was. Some scholars argue that the dead king was the famous heretic Pharaoh Akhenaten and that the queen writing to Suppiluliuma I was his beautiful widow Nefertiti, but most believe that the dead king was none other than the prematurely deceased King Tut, as he is known to the modern world, and that the author of the letter was his young widow Ankhesenamun. In any event, Suppiluliuma I sent one of his younger sons, a prince named Zannanza, to Egypt, anticipating a royal marriage of alliance between two of the greatest powers in the ancient world, Egypt and Hatti. Unfortunately, the marriage never took place, for Zannanza and his party of Hittites were ambushed on their way to Egypt and murdered.

The last great Hittite king, Tudhaliya IV (1227–1209 BCE), is perhaps best known for completing the rock-hewn religious shrine at Yazilikaya, less than a mile from Hattusa. Tudhaliya IV, however, was no stranger to international campaigns. He claims to have conquered Cyprus, for example, carrying away gold and silver. However, the Hittite Empire collapsed soon thereafter, around 1200 BCE, perhaps destroyed by the mysterious Sea Peoples—who, according to Egyptian documents, destroyed the "Land of Hatti"—or perhaps by unfriendly neighbors located just to the north of the Hittite capital city of Hattusas.

After the empire proper fell, the so-called Neo-Hittite city-states, former small vassal kingdoms located in northern Syria, survived for another four or five hundred years. These small kingdoms continued to use variants of the Hittite writing system, as well as art and sculpture, traditions and mythology. It is these neo-Hittites, existing into the Iron Age and the early centuries of the first millennium BCE, with whom the writers of the Old Testament were familiar, and so it is not at all surprising that when the early archaeologists and historians of the past century started to look for the Hittites, it was in and around the land of modern Israel that they first, and erroneously, began their search.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Why is the name “Hittites” a misnomer?
2. What is the “Zannanza Affair”?

Suggested Reading

Wood, Michael. *In Search of the Trojan War*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Other Books of Interest

Bryce, Trevor R. *The Kingdom of the Hittites*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

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Journal Articles

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Lecture 4:
The Sea Peoples and the End of the Late Bronze Age

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

For some historians, the story of the Sea Peoples is a dramatic one. In this version of their story, the Sea Peoples came sweeping across the Mediterranean ca. 1200 BCE, wreaking havoc and creating chaos, leaving smoking ruins and destroyed cities in their wake. To them is attributed the collapse of the Hittite Empire, the downfall of Cyprus, the destruction of Syria-Palestinian and Canaanite petty kingdoms, and perhaps even the demise of the Mycenaeans and the Minoans. Indeed, the Sea Peoples may be responsible for the very collapse of Bronze Age civilization in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean and for bringing on the centuries-long Dark Ages that followed.

In reality, the Sea Peoples continue to perplex and mystify historians and archaeologists of the ancient Mediterranean. During the thirteenth and especially the twelfth centuries BCE, they are a major and aggressive force in the eastern Mediterranean, upon which they had an impact that to some scholars seems catastrophic. Yet the Sea Peoples, on present evidence, seemed to come suddenly from nowhere, cause widespread disruption, take on some of the greatest powers of the region, and equally abruptly disappear from history, save for one or two historic peoples of later times.

In this lecture, we are especially interested in the question of whether the onset of the Sea Peoples had anything to do with Troy and, in particular, with the Trojan War.

We know of the Sea Peoples from two separate attacks upon the country of Egypt, in 1207 BCE, during the reign of Pharaoh Merneptah, and again in 1186 BCE, during the reign of Pharaoh Ramses III. It is the Egyptians who give the invaders this name—the "Peoples of the Sea," for they describe them as coming from the north, from islands in the midst of the sea:

> "The foreign countries made a conspiracy in their islands. All at once the lands were removed and scattered in the fray. No land could stand before their arms, from Khatte, Qode, Carchemish, Arzawa, and Alashiya on, being cut off at [one time]. A camp [was set up] in one place in Amor. They desolated its people, and its land was like that which has never come into being. They were coming forward toward Egypt, while the flame was prepared before them. Their confederation was the Philistines, Tjekru, Shekelesh, Denye(n), and Washosh, lands united. They laid their hands upon the lands as far as the circuit of the earth, their hearts confident and trusting: 'Our plans will succeed!' "

So the Sea Peoples, coming in two separate waves twenty years apart, were responsible for the destruction of the Hittites (= Khatte), Cyprus (= Alashiya), and various other places in Turkey and Syria (Arzawa, Carchemish, and Qode), as well as possibly Greece and Crete, but who were the Sea Peoples, and where did they come from? The one country that they did not defeat and conquer was Egypt, and so it is from the victorious Egyptian sources that we get the names of at least nine separate groups of Sea Peoples. In the texts of Pharaoh Merneptah, it is recorded that Egypt was attacked by contingents of Sea Peoples, namely, the Eqwesh, Teresh, Lukka, Shardana, and Shekelesh. In the texts of Ramses III, the groups of Sea Peoples mentioned include the Peleset, Tjeker, Shekelesh, Danuna, and Weshesh. For a variety of linguistic and philological reasons, these names are usually linked to Sicily, Sardinia, Italy, Greece, and Turkey, and it is thought that the various groups of the Sea Peoples may have come from these regions—for example, the Shardana from Sardinia, the Shekelesh from Sicily, the Eqwesh and Danuna from the Aegean, and the Lukka from Lycia in Turkey. (An alternate suggestion is that these groups settled down in these regions after being defeated by the Egyptians and gave their names to these areas, but this seems less likely.) In any event, the only group that we have even heard of before is the Peleset, who are thought to have become the Philistines, and whom we know from both archaeology and the Bible. But even about these people, we still know next to nothing.

The primary Egyptian sources on the Sea Peoples from Merneptah's reign include a wall inscription at Karnak Temple, a stela from Kom el Ahmar, one column in the Cairo Museum, and a column from Heliopolis. The sources from the time of Ramses III include a series of large scenes along the external north face of his mortuary temple at Medinet Habu (western Thebes) and a long text with an accompanying scene on the west wall of that temple's first court. In addition, his defeat of the Sea Peoples is briefly described in the Papyrus Harris, a document prepared during his successor's reign:

> "I extended all the boundaries of Egypt. I overthrew those who invaded them from their lands. I slew the Danuna [who are] in their isles, the Tjeker and the Peleset were made of ashes. The Shardana and the Weshesh of the sea, they were made as those that exist not, taken captive at one time, brought as captives to Egypt, like the sand of the shore. I settled them in strongholds bound in my name. Numerous were their classes like hundred-thousands. I taxed them all, in clothing and grain from the store-houses and granaries each year."

We also have a clay tablet found at Ugarit, in northern Syria, which was found in a kiln, about to be baked and sent off in great haste. The tablet was being sent by the king of Ugarit to the king of Cyprus:

> ". . . the ships of the enemy have been coming. They have been setting fire to my cities and have done harm to the land. . . . all of my infantry and [chariotry] are stationed in Khatte and all of my ships are stationed in the land of Lukka. . . . They haven't arrived back yet, so the land is thus prostrate. . . . Now the seven ships of the enemy which have been coming have done harm to us. Now if other ships of the enemy turn up, send me a report somehow so that I will know."

The tablet was never sent, for the city of Ugarit was sacked and burned before the tablet had finished baking. Obviously, other ships of the enemy had turned up.

The Sea Peoples brought an end to much of the civilized world at the end of the Late Bronze Age, about 1200 BCE, but were then brought to an end themselves by the Egyptians. The damage that they wreaked across the Mediterranean region was irrevocable. However, in their defense, it seems that they were much more than simple raiding parties and may actually have been more of a migration of entire peoples, complete with men, women, children, and possessions piled high upon carts pulled by oxen or other draft animals. Why they began their movements is a greatly debated question; the most likely scenarios involve natural catastrophes, such as a prolonged drought or even earthquakes back in their homelands.

But did they ever attack Troy, and did they have anything to do with the Trojan War?

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Why do the Sea Peoples continue to perplex historians?
2. Who gave the Sea Peoples their name?

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Lecture 5:
Greek Literary Evidence for the Trojan War and Its Sequence of Events

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

The Greek literary sources for the Trojan War are, first and foremost, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, both usually attributed to the eighth-century BCE poet Homer. There is also the *Epic Cycle*, containing fragments of other lost epics dating to the same time or later, as well as treatments of the story by famous playwrights of Classical Greece (fifth century BCE) and more modern times. Of all these, the most helpful to us today are the *Iliad* and the fragmentary pieces in the *Epic Cycle*.

But we must be careful and continually question the accuracy of Homer's account. Does his story reflect the real world of the Late Bronze Age or his own period, living as he does some five centuries after the events he describes? We shall see in a future lecture that these are valid questions, but that they do not always have satisfactory answers.

One of the most immediate questions concerns Homer himself—did he exist? The answer is a guarded "yes" . . . guarded because seven different places in antiquity claimed that they were his birthplace—the island of Chios off the coast of Turkey seems most likely—and because we are not certain whether there was one Homer or many. One theory holds that "Homer" was not a person, but rather a profession—that is, a "homer" was a traveling bard, one of the many people literally willing to sing for their supper, as after-dinner entertainers telling the stories of derring-do by heroes of long ago. Although this is an intriguing idea, it seems more likely that Homer was indeed a person rather than a profession, although it is by no means clear whether he actually wrote both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—some computer analyses indicate that the two books were written by two different people.

What most people don't generally realize is that we have other Greek sources, in addition to Homer, that talk about the Trojan War. We are especially concerned with the information to be gleaned from the so-called *Epic Cycle*, which consists of fragments from epics now long lost but which originally included the *Cypria*, the *Little Iliad*, the *Sack of Ilium*, and the *Returns*. Since the *Iliad* only deals with the last one hundred days of the final year of the war, and ends before the final destruction of Troy, and the *Odyssey* is only concerned with the travels and travails of Odysseus as he makes his way home after the war, we are dependent upon these other lost epics for more details that flesh out the story of the Trojan War, including the entire episode and description of the Trojan Horse.

One of the most important of these lost epics is the *Cypria*, which apparently came immediately before the *Iliad* in terms of telling the story of the Trojan War. Within the *Cypria*, which starts out with the gods and goddesses interacting, we are told about the original journey made by the Trojan Paris/Alexander to the kingdom of Menelaus and Helen, and the fact that Menelaus then goes off to Crete, leaving Paris and Helen alone—in other words, here is the beginning to the story that everyone knows, which then continues along familiar lines, including the gathering of the Mycenaean forces at Aulis and the preparations for an attack on Troy.

However, then comes a rather interesting element to the story, which is not usually told. When the Mycenaeans first set out from Aulis to attack Troy, they—apparently mistakenly—attacked a city on the Anatolian coast named Teuthrania, rather than attacking Troy itself. Only after capturing the city did they realize their mistake and return back to Aulis to regroup before venturing out again, this time to properly attack Troy and retrieve Helen. It is unclear how long a period of time elapsed between these two expeditions, that is, the first mistaken one to Teuthrania and the second one to Troy itself; some authorities suggest that as many as eight years elapsed, which would go a long way toward explaining why the Trojan War took ten years in all. Even more interesting is that there is some evidence that the attack on Teuthrania may well be a memory of a small war in which the Mycenaeans apparently took part during the fifteenth century BCE, that is, approximately two hundred years before Homer's Trojan War.

There is a German school of thought, known as the Neoanalytical School, which contends that there are strands within the *Epic Cycle*, as well as in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, that contain fragments of even older epics and stories, from events that took place even earlier during the Middle or Late Bronze Age, and that were woven by Homer and others into these stories of the Trojan War proper. For example, the hero of *Ajax* seems to be a figure from an earlier period who has been inserted into the story of the Trojan War, for his huge rectangular shield, described as hitting him on his neck and his ankles as he walks with it slung over his back, is a type known as a

"Tower Shield," which had been used by the Mycenaeans and Minoans, but which had gone out of use long before the thirteenth century BCE and the time of the Trojan War.

This school of thought will be important when we discuss the so-called "Homeric Question"—does Homer accurately reflect the Bronze Age or is he really reflecting a time closer to his own, in the Iron Age?—but it is relevant here as well, for it looks like this first expedition by the Mycenaeans, in which they took Teuthrania rather than Troy, may well have a basis in reality, albeit from a time several hundred years prior to Homer's war. This leads us in turn to the further question of whether Homer could have been "telescoping" several hundred years of warfare in northwestern Anatolia into a single ten-year-long war, as was his right as an epic poet, and thus whether the Trojan War may really have been a "process" rather than a single "event."

After the *Cypria*, we must insert the *Iliad*; after the *Iliad* comes first the *Little Iliad* and then the *Sack of Ilium* as the next installments in the ongoing saga. These two texts provide us with a number of additional details that add to the story and allow us (and the later Greek playwrights) to flesh it out even further. These include discussions about the weapons of Achilles, the description of Ajax's rapid descent into insanity and the destruction that he wrought upon the herds of the Mycenaeans before killing himself, and so on. We also get the full story of the Trojan Horse here, including the name of the man who actually built it—Epeius (not Odysseus, as most would have it)—and the events that led to the Trojans sealing their fate by bringing the horse within the walls of their city. Following the destruction of Troy, the *Returns* is concerned with the return voyages of many of the other Mycenaean heroes, including Agamemnon and Menelaus, with the exception of Odysseus, for his story is saved for the *Odyssey*, which follows immediately in the cycle.

Thus, it is only through all of these tales, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Epic Cycle*, that we get the full story, with all of the gory details, of the Trojan War. It is these texts that comprise the Greek literary evidence for the Trojan War, to be fleshed out even further by the later Greek playwrights who used these texts, and perhaps others that are now missing, in order to create their own epic masterpieces in turn.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What are the different theories regarding the actual existence of Homer?
2. What story is told in the *Cypria*?

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Other Books of Interest

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Lecture 6:
The Homeric Question:
Bronze Age or Iron Age?

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

Our major window into the derring-do of Mycenaean warriors comes from a literary source—Homer—for it is Homer who gives us more details than we might have ever wanted, from the order in which a warrior donned his various pieces of equipment to the catastrophic results when such equipment failed its user. We know how many spears each warrior held, what their swords looked like, how tight they tied their greaves around their shins, and how they used their chariots in battle.

And yet, Homer contributes just as many problems as he does solutions. As we have suggested in a previous lecture, we must be careful and continually question the accuracy of Homer's account. Does his story reflect the real world of the Late Bronze Age? Or does it reflect his own period, living as he does some five centuries after the events he describes? Or could the story be a potent mixture, combining five hundred years of elements and details, from the time of Helen until the time of Homer?

We honestly do not know whether Homer is faithfully recording a Late Bronze Age warrior's life, and the weapons that he used, or if he is recording the weapons, armor, and tactics used during his own lifetime, some five hundred years after the Trojan War was fought. Most likely it is a combination of the two, for as the legends and stories of the Trojan War were handed down by word of mouth for five centuries, the traveling bards who kept the stories alive would undoubtedly have changed them incrementally as time went on, to make them more relevant and contemporary to their audiences. We should not be surprised to find that the stories that Homer finally wrote down in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are an amalgamation—a complex jumbling and interweaving—of facts, some truly from the Late Bronze Age, others inserted from the later Iron Age, and still others from the intervening centuries.

Five hundred years is, after all, a very long period of time for stories to be handed down accurately, and we should not be surprised if anachronistic elements, and even outright inaccuracies, crept into the stories. For instance, we know that chariots were not used in the Late Bronze Age in the manner that Homer says they were; he has them used as "battle taxis"—transporting the warriors to the battlefield, where they get off and fight hand to hand:

> "Thereupon each man gave orders to his charioteer to rein in the horses once again by the ditch, in good order, while they themselves, dismounted and armed in their war gear, swept onward to the ditch, and their incessant clamour rose up in the morning." (*Iliad* XI.47–50)

Instead, depictions and inscriptions from the Near East, Egypt, and elsewhere show that chariots were used during the Late Bronze Age in squadron formation, with the charioteers and warriors fighting from their wheeled platforms, wreaking havoc and causing carnage as they drive through the enemy forces. The use of chariots as "taxis" is from Homer's period, in the eighth century BCE, long after the time of the Trojan War, and is thus an anachronism inserted into the story long after the events themselves had taken place.

Similar examples include the fact that, instead of two horses, as was common in the Bronze Age, Homer's chariot teams consist of four horses, which was common in the Iron Age. In addition, Homer's warriors often have individual encounters and duels—one-on-one fights between major opposing heroes, designed to enhance the glory of the individual warriors. As scholars have remarked previously, this appears to be an Iron Age method of fighting, rather than Bronze Age, and probably was derived from the obligation to fight in the front ranks because of their high rank in society.

However, there are other instances and details from Homer's story that do seem to be an accurate reflection of the Late Bronze Age. For instance, Homer says that because of the unusual batter (that is, angle and construction) of the walls of Troy below the perpendicular ramparts, Patroclus is able to climb the walls up to a point where Apollo casts him down, and that he does this three times:

> "Three times Patroclus tried to mount the angle of the towering wall, and three times Phoibos Apollo battered him backward . . ." (*Iliad* XVI.702–703)

This description is matched by the physical remains visible in the walls of Troy VI, which have this batter below the ramparts. Carl Blegen, one of the excavators of Troy, notes in his report that there were sections in the walls of Troy VI where the blocks were not close-fitting, which his workmen could easily scale in just this fashion. However, Homer could not possibly have seen this in the eighth century BCE, as only the top courses of the walls of Troy VI were visible at that time. Thus, his description must have been accurately handed down via oral tradition for five centuries. Furthermore, Homer's precise memory of a weak stretch in the city wall of Troy, apparently on the west, was confirmed by the excavations at Troy. Homer writes:

> ". . . draw your people up by the fig tree, there where the city is openest to attack and where the wall may be mounted." (*Iliad* VI.433–434)

Wilhelm Dörpfeld, another of the excavators of Troy, found that the circuit wall of Troy VI had been "modernized" everywhere except for one short stretch of inferior construction on the western side. This suggests that Homer was reporting an authentic detail from Troy VI, which he could not possibly have seen.

Homer also knew some surprising details that meant nothing to his own age and which can only be memories of the Mycenaean world. Four times he repeats the full armor and equipment (panoply) of the Homeric warrior, in a stock passage describing the arming of a major hero for battle. The equipment is always donned in the same order: greaves, corselet, sword, shield, helmet, and then spear. He also consistently speaks of bronze weapons,

and although he knows about iron, he rarely mentions that it was used for war (as it was in the Iron Age). Homer also speaks of such characteristic Mycenaean items as "silver-studded swords"; that is, sword hilts riveted with silver or gold studs:

> "Across his shoulders he slung the sword, and the nails upon it were golden and glittered, and closing about it the scabbard was silver, and gold was upon the swordstraps that held it." (*Iliad* XI.29–31)

This description sounds very much like the swords found in the earlier Shaft Graves at Mycenae. Most interestingly, Homer describes Odysseus as wearing a helmet made of wild boars' tusks sewn onto a felt cap stretched over a framework of leather thongs. Such helmets were common in the Mycenaean world before 1300 BCE, but went out of use soon afterwards and were certainly not around in the Iron Age.

And so we are left with the so-called "Homeric Question": does the story of the Trojan War as found in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* reflect the Late Bronze Age, the Iron Age, or a mixture resulting from five centuries of oral storytelling? The answer is not readily forthcoming, for good arguments can be made for all three scenarios.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What is an example of anachronism found in Homer?
2. What aspects of Homer's story are accurate reflections of the Late Bronze Age?

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Lecture 7:
Hittite Literary Evidence for Troy:
The Mycenaeans and the Trojan War

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

In 1991, a bulldozer operating near ancient Hattusa's famous Lion Gate uncovered a dramatic find: a bronze sword on which was engraved an inscription reading: "*As Duthaliya [Tudhaliya] the Great King shattered the Assuwa-Country, he dedicated these swords to the Storm-God, his Lord.*"

This discovery confirmed previously known Hittite texts that describe a rebellion by a group of small vassal kingdoms or polities, collectively known as Assuwa and located along the western coast of Anatolia. Tudhaliya, the account tells us, marched west to crush this so-called Assuwa rebellion. This is potentially extremely important for the history of Troy, for it seems that the city may well have been a member of this Assuwa coalition that rebelled against the Hittites. Within the Hittite records, the list of polities that made up the coalition of Assuwa included *Wilusiya*, which is frequently interpreted as "Ilios," and *Taruisa*, which may be related to the Troad.

The Assuwa rebellion was long thought to date to the time of the Hittite king Tudhaliya IV, during the thirteenth century BCE—that is, about the time of the Trojan War—and early scholars sometimes hypothesized that these records may have been accounts of the Trojan War from the Hittite point of view. However, the texts have since been redated and the Assuwa rebellion is now generally accepted as having taken place at a much earlier time, during the reign of Tudhaliya I/II at the end of the fifteenth century BCE, rather than during the time of Tudhaliya IV at the end of the thirteenth century BCE. Still, it is interesting that the inscribed bronze sword that was uncovered by the bulldozer at Hattusas looks suspiciously like a Type B sword, a weapon manufactured in Mainland Greece—and used by Mycenaeans—during the late fifteenth century BCE, which would imply that Mycenaeans themselves may have been involved in the rebellion.

Indeed, the literary texts from Tudhaliya I/II's reign suggest that one of the allies of the Assuwa league were men from "Ahhiyawa." This place-name comes up frequently in Hittite documents. It has been the cause of debates among Hittitologists since at least the 1920s, when the Swiss scholar Emil Forrer claimed that "Ahhiyawa" was a Hittite transliteration of the Greek "Achaea," the word Homer uses to refer to Mainland (or Mycenaean) Greece. Initially, identification of the Ahhiyawans with the Mycenaeans won little support; but nowadays more and more scholars are coming to believe that the Ahhiyawans were in fact either Mycenaeans from the Greek Mainland or Mycenaean settlers living along Anatolia's Aegean coast.

This is extremely important, because if the Mycenaeans can be equated with the Ahhiyawans (Ahhiyawa = Achaia = Achaeans = Mycenaeans), then there is substantial textual evidence for contact between the Hittites and the Mycenaeans throughout the course of the Late Bronze Age. If the Mycenaeans are not the Ahhiyawans, then they are never mentioned by the Hittites. The argument most frequently used today is that Ahhiyawa must, almost by default, be a reference to the homeland of the Mycenaeans, for we have, on the one hand, an important Late Bronze Age culture and civilization otherwise unmentioned in the Hittite texts (the Mycenaeans) and, on the other hand, an important textually attested Late Bronze Age "state" without archaeological remains (Ahhiyawa). It seems most reasonable to equate the two. Although locations for Ahhiyawa have been sought in Thrace, on Rhodes, on the western coast of Anatolia, and on the Greek Mainland, it seems most logical that Ahhiyawa and the Ahhiyawans of the Hittite texts are a reference to the mainland of Greece and to the Mycenaeans.

So then, here in Hittite annals and a bronze Mycenaean sword, we may well meet the Achaeans who, according to Homer, crossed the Aegean and fought at the city of Troy. However, this event was apparently two hundred years before Homer's Trojan War . . . and the evidence suggests that in this conflict the Mycenaeans and the Trojans were allies, not enemies, fighting together against the Hittites. Confusing as this may seem, it leads to an intriguing suggestion that the Trojan War may not have been simply a one-time conflagration; instead, it might have been the consummation of centuries-long contacts—sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile—between Mycenaean and Trojan peoples, which Homer then telescoped into a single, ten-year-long battle fought for Helen.

There are, to date, some twenty-six Hittite texts that mention Ahhiyawa or Ahhiyawans, from the time of Tudhaliya I/II in the fifteenth century BCE until the time of Tudhaliya IV in the thirteenth century BCE. These Ahhiyawa texts document distinct, and often close, relations between the Mycenaeans and the native residents of Arzawa, Aššuwa, the Seha River Land, and other regions in western Anatolia, but they also document the fact that it was apparently the policy of Ahhiyawa to actively support prominent dissidents against Hittite authority in these regions of western Anatolia and to encourage the anti-Hittite activities of these people. The Ahhiyawa texts also document the fact that Mycenaean relations with the Hittites were sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile over the course of these three centuries.

Of particular interest is a text from Tudhaliya IV's reign (1227–1209 BCE): a treaty drawn up between the Hittites and Sausgamuwa, the ruler of Amurru, a small kingdom on the coast of North Syria. The treaty is primarily concerned with prohibiting trade with Assyria, with whom the Hittites were then at war. The most interesting part of the so-called Sausgamuwa Treaty, however, has to do, once again, with those pesky Ahhiyawans—or Mycenaeans/Achaeans—whom Tudhaliya IV's ancestor, namely the above Tudhaliya I/II, had defeated in the Assuwa Rebellion two hundred years earlier.

In the treaty, Tudhaliya IV places an embargo on trade between Ahhiyawa and Assyria, saying, "*let no ship of Ahhiyawa go to him [Assyria]*." That this is a directive aimed at stopping Mycenaean ships from reaching Assyria is the

usual interpretation, although that would have been difficult enough, since Assyria was a land-locked region in the area of what is now modern Iraq. The implied embargo is apparently directed toward Assyria, with whom the Hittites were at war at that time, rather than toward the Mycenaeans.

However, even more interesting is the fact that, for some reason, in the surviving draft of the treaty the name of the king of Ahhiyawa was crossed out from the list of kings whom Tudhaliya considered to be of equal rank with himself: "*The king of Egypt, the king of Karadunia [Kassite Babylonia], the king of Assyria, the king of Ahhiyawa*." A line was drawn through the last phrase, thus deleting the king of Ahhiyawa from the list of equal rulers. Why Tudaliya first included, and then omitted, the king of Ahhiyawa remains a mystery . . . perhaps it was a simple mistake on the part of the scribe, who then attempted to erase, or at least cross out, his error. No matter what, however, it is clear that the Ahhiyawans were still a presence in the Aegean, Anatolia, and the Eastern Mediterranean at the end of the thirteenth century BCE, a time when the destruction of the great Late Bronze Age city of Troy was taking or had already taken place.

Finally, we should mention that there also exists part of an epic that may be the opening lines of a Luwian poem resembling the *Iliad,* but written from a Trojan or Hittite perspective. Only a single sentence remains from this possible epic, however, and it is impossible to tell anything more from this single scrap of evidence.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Why is the Assuwa rebellion important for the history of Troy?
2. What is the significance of equating the Ahhiyawans with the Mycenaeans?

Suggested Reading

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Lecture 8:
Heinrich Schliemann and the City of Troy

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

The story of the search for Troy is wrapped up in the story of Heinrich Schliemann—the man modern archaeologists love to hate. Schliemann was a German self-made millionaire who loved to dig in exotic places and then bedecked his wife with jewels dug from the ruins of ancient civilizations. He succeeded where the professional archaeologists failed and proved that the city of Troy existed.

This "father of archaeology" was among the luckiest individuals ever to put a shovel into the earth. But he was also a lying scoundrel who falsified his excavation journals and who cannot be believed concerning details of either his professional or private life. He failed to give credit to Frank Calvert, the man who led him to the site of Hisarlik—ancient Troy—and completely made up his account of finding "Priam's Treasure" (which is neither Priam's nor a treasure *per se,* but more likely a collection of valuable artifacts that date to fully a thousand years before the Trojan War).

Sometime during the late 1850s or 1860s, Schliemann decided to devote his life to finding the site of ancient Troy and proving that the Trojan War had taken place. In 1868, after a fruitless attempt to find the site on his own, Schliemann befriended the American Vice-Consul to Turkey, a man named Frank Calvert. Calvert told Schliemann that he had already discovered Troy and that the ancient site—a mound called Hisarlik—lay on property that he owned. He offered to let Schliemann excavate the mound, an offer that Schliemann gladly accepted.

In 1869 in Athens, Schliemann, at the age of forty-seven, married Sophia Engastromenos—then sixteen years old—primarily because she could read the *Iliad* in the original. Together, they made their way to northwestern Turkey, to begin digging for Troy. Excavation began in 1870.

Cutting a huge trench right through the middle of the mound, Schliemann had his workmen dig as quickly and as deeply as they could, for he believed that a city 3,000 years old would be buried far below. He and his men cut through layer after layer of ancient settlements, first one, then two, then three, until finally they had identified remains from nine cities built one on top of the other.

Schliemann was convinced that it was the second city from the bottom—Troy II, as he called it—that was Priam's Troy. This, he felt, was the city that the Mycenaeans had taken ten long years to capture, and did so only then with the help of a trick, the famous wooden horse. Schliemann announced to the

world that he had found Troy and that the Trojan War had indeed taken place long ago. His news was met with worldwide enthusiasm, even though it flew in the face of accepted scholarly opinion of the time. An amateur had shown up the scholars! Troy existed! Helen's face had indeed launched a thousand ships! However, whether accidentally or deliberately—probably deliberately—Schliemann neglected to mention except in passing that it was Calvert who had introduced him to the site and who had already suspected that it was ancient Troy. Instead, he took all of the credit for himself, leaving aside poor Calvert. It was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that Schliemann was willing to play fast and loose with scholarly and personal ethics.

Scholars have documented fairly convincingly that Schliemann was frequently a bit shady or underhanded in his personal life. For instance, he occasionally found ways around laws that he did not agree with or could manipulate to his advantage. In one instance, he obtained a divorce from his first wife by persuading a friend to testify that he (Schliemann) had lived in the state of Indiana for a year—the minimum requirement necessary to procure a divorce—even though he had really been there for less than a month.

Schliemann seems to have even lied to himself upon occasion. In an entry for February 1851 in one of his private diaries, he records the fact that he was in Washington, D.C., and visited for an hour and a half with President Millard Fillmore during an extravagant reception. While this is not entirely out of the question, it seems highly unlikely that the president would have met with an unknown twenty-eight-year-old German boy for such a long time, and the account has been rightly called into question by scholars. Similarly, an ostensibly eyewitness account written by Schliemann of a great fire in San Francisco in June 1851 is doubtful, for it appears that the fire actually took place in May and that Schliemann was in Sacramento rather than San Francisco at the time. He had simply copied a newspaper account from the front page of the *Sacramento Daily Union* verbatim into his journal, changing the story slightly by inserting himself into it!

Schliemann's autobiographical account that he had decided, just before turning eight years old, to find Troy and prove that the Trojan War had taken place also seems to be an embellishment that he made up. In his book *Ilios: The City and Country of the Trojans* (published in 1881), he recounts seeing a woodcut engraving of the Trojan Aeneas fleeing from the burning city of Troy with his aged father upon his back and his young son holding his hand.

Schliemann told his father that the story must have happened, and that Troy must have existed, otherwise the artist could not have known how to engrave the picture. Such is the reasoning of a nearly eight-year-old! He then informed his father that he would find Troy when he grew up. It is a marvelous autobiographical story, and one that shows a lifelong passion and quest, but unfortunately the story does not appear in any of Schliemann's writings until after he had already discovered Troy and announced to the world that the Trojan War had really happened. The scholarly consensus is that Schliemann made up the tale much later in life, when he was in his mid-forties or even after, for reasons known only to himself.

As mentioned, Schliemann first thought that Priam's Troy was the second city from the bottom, of the nine cities that he had uncovered at the site. He

and his men had dug hastily through the cities lying above, in their efforts to get down quickly to the proper layer of Troy II. Much of the material from these upper cities was simply thrown out. This, it turned out, was very unfortunate, for toward the end of his life Schliemann finally admitted that he had been mistaken and that Troy II was a thousand years too early.

In fact, it was probably Troy VI or Troy VII—the sixth or seventh city that belonged to the time of the Trojan War. Unfortunately, Schliemann's men had hastily dug through these layers in their great trench and had destroyed the very buildings and thrown out the very objects for which he had been searching. He had not realized that the later Greeks, and then the Romans, had shaved off several feet of earth and debris from the top of the mound, in order to build their temples and other structures on a level surface, and that Priam's Troy lay much closer to the modern surface than either he or anyone else had suspected.

Schliemann began preparations for a new campaign at the site, but before he could begin, death caught up with him. He died at Christmas time in 1890. It was left to his architect, Wilhelm Dörpfeld, to continue the excavations, this time digging among the ruins of the sixth city—Troy VI.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What was Schliemann's method for excavating the Hisarlik mound?
2. Why must Schliemann's findings be so closely scrutinized?

Suggested Reading

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Other Books of Interest

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Lecture 9:
Priam's Treasure

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

Knowing that Schliemann was untrustworthy in his personal life sends up a red flag—a warning signal as it were—that we might not want to take his word at face value when it comes to his professional life, especially the details that are recorded in his excavation journals. Indeed, it is when we come to Schliemann's own account of discovering "Priam's treasure" that the issues become dicey.

Schliemann tells us that he was wandering around the excavation one morning, keeping an eye on all of the workmen, when he suddenly noticed one of them uncovering a wooden chest in which Schliemann could see a glint of gold. He quickly announced to the workers that he had forgotten it was his birthday and that they could all have the day off, as long as they dropped their tools and left immediately.

Schliemann then quickly called to his wife Sophia and together they unearthed the wooden chest and all of its contents, including bronze, silver, and gold vessels, jewelry, and other objects. This they did at great personal risk, for towering above them was a high bank of earth that threatened to come down upon them at any moment. Sophia gathered the smaller objects together in her apron or shawl and carried them into the house, while Schliemann followed with the chest and the larger objects.

Once inside, they made a quick inventory list, packed everything up in several large crates, and arranged for it to be smuggled out of Turkey and across the Aegean Sea to their house in Athens. When it was safely in Athens, Schliemann bedecked his wife in the gold jewelry and took her picture, before announcing to the world that he had found Priam's treasure.

There are many problems with this treasure, but first and foremost is the fact that Sophia was not at Troy on the day that Schliemann said the treasure was found! Schliemann's own diaries record that Sophia was in Athens at the time. He later admitted as much, saying that he just wanted to involve her in his life so much that he wrote her into the story, thinking that it would get her more interested in what had become his life's passion and obsession.

More recently, the treasure has been the focus of much scholarly investigation. It is abundantly clear that it cannot be Priam's treasure, for Schliemann identified its findspot as within Troy II, the second city at Troy, which we now know dates to about 2300 BCE, more than a thousand years before the time of Priam and the Trojan War. In fact, the items found in this "treasure" look remarkably like other items of jewelry found across a wide swath of territory,

from the so-called “Death Pits” of Ur in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) in the east to the site of Poliochni on the Aegean island of Lemnos in the west, all dating to the same approximate time period, just after the middle of the third millennium BCE and more than a thousand years too early to have belonged to Priam, Helen, or anyone else involved with the Trojan War.

Moreover, many scholars are convinced that Schliemann made up the entire story of its discovery—not just placing Sophia at the site when she wasn’t there, but making up the very existence of the treasure in the first place. While there is little doubt that Schliemann did find all of these objects at Troy, there is a good chance that he did not find them all together in a wooden chest. Instead, it is now thought that he had made a series of smaller discoveries all over the site throughout the excavation season, but had held off announcing these finds until he had accumulated enough to put them together as one big “treasure” that would amaze the world when he announced its discovery.

Ironically, if Schliemann had not erroneously labeled these items “Priam’s Treasure,” they would not hold nearly the value nor interest that they do today. But Schliemann was a master showman and he knew that giving the items this label, whether accurate or not, would draw the world’s attention to his site and his claim to have found the city of Troy, as indeed it did.

And now, of course, Priam’s treasure—though it is definitely not Priam’s and might not be a “treasure”—has acquired a life of its own. Schliemann sent it to Germany, where it was displayed in the Berlin Museum until near the end of World War II, when it simply disappeared. Lost for nearly fifty years, the Russians admitted in the early 1990s that they had had the treasure the whole time, since “liberating” it from Germany as part of what they considered to be war reparations.

Now on display in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, the treasure has been claimed by no fewer than four separate countries: Turkey, because the objects were found at Troy and smuggled away illegally; Greece, because that’s where Schliemann had his house to which he smuggled the objects; Germany, because Schliemann had presented the objects to the Berlin Museum, where they had subsequently been displayed for decades before disappearing; and Russia, because they had acquired them during wartime and viewed them as partial reparation for the twenty-million Russian citizens who died during World War II. To whom do they really belong? Are they spoils of war? Are they stolen antiquities? The objects remain in Russia to this day, while the dispute continues.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Why could “Priam’s treasure” not have been Priam’s?
2. What became of Priam’s treasure?

Suggested Reading

Wood, Michael. *In Search of the Trojan War*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

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Lecture 10:
Wilhelm Dörpfeld and the City of Troy VI

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

Wilhelm Dörpfeld was Heinrich Schliemann's architect. Just before Schliemann died in 1890, Dörpfeld persuaded him that he had been incorrect about labeling Troy II as Priam's Troy. After Schliemann's death, Dörpfeld took over as director of the excavations at Hisarlik, financed by Sophia Schliemann, and promptly focused his attention on the sixth city.

It was the sixth city at Troy, Troy VI as it is known, that expanded during its 500-year lifetime to become a spectacular city, built on a par with Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, and other palatial sites on Mainland Greece. First begun about 1700 BCE, Troy VI underwent many renovations, resulting in sub-phases detectable by archaeologists and labeled a-h, before its destruction in approximately 1250 BCE.

Although there is not much to see today, the final version of this city, Troy VIh, was impressive, sporting high walls and towers of stone surrounding the citadel and protecting the palace and massive buildings inside from potential invaders. Elaborate gates provided guarded entryways into the city. These gates were easy to protect, but hard to capture. Large houses graced the interior areas of this city, high up on the citadel. The palace itself was situated in the very center of the citadel, but by the time of Dörpfeld it was long gone—destroyed by the earlier Greeks and Romans, who had leveled off the center of the city in order to build temples to Athena and Jupiter respectively, as well as by Schliemann and his workers, who dug straight down through this area in his quest to find Priam's Troy.

Although Schliemann had excavated much of the central part of the citadel at Hisarlik, he had left the outer edges undug, and it was here that Dörpfeld spent most of his time, money, and energy. His efforts paid off when he uncovered tremendous walls and entryways, all built of stone and worthy of Homer's heroic epics. It is the remains of these fortification walls, large houses, broad streets, and elaborate gates that can be seen today when one visits Hisarlik/Troy. It is these remains that Homer seems to be describing, and yet he could not possibly have seen them, for they would have been buried under many feet of earth long before Homer was born, as we have discussed previously.

This was a wealthy city, a desirable plum commanding the Hellespont—the passageway from the Aegean to the Black Sea—and growing wealthy from a combination of trade and taxation. The winds and the current in the Hellespont frequently presented adverse conditions for ships wishing to sail

up to the Black Sea, and so these ships would be forced to linger, sometimes for weeks on end, until the weather turned in their favor. Troy, and presumably its harbor facilities at Besiktepe, would have played host to the crews of these ships and their passengers, be they merchants, diplomats, or warriors.

The goods found by archaeologists in the ruins of Troy VI provide evidence of the city's wealth, as do texts found in countries as far away as Egypt. Imported objects from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Cyprus were discovered during the careful excavations by Dörpfeld in the years after Schliemann's death and then again during the excavations conducted during the 1930s by Carl Blegen and the University of Cincinnati and during the 1980s and 1990s by Manfred Korfmann and the University of Tübingen. Mycenaean imports were also found in Troy VI, which may seem strange in light of the ten-year siege of the city by Agamemnon and his warriors, until one remembers that the Mycenaeans and the Trojans were friendly enough before the war that Paris had visited Menelaus and Helen in their own city.

Dörpfeld found that Troy VI, after going through a series of phases, was ultimately destroyed after an unprecedented five hundred years of continuous inhabitation. What caused its destruction is still debated today. Dörpfeld believed that the Mycenaeans had captured the city, burning it to the ground, and that it was this event that formed the basis of Homer's epic tales. Carl Blegen, digging several decades later, disagreed, publishing what he said was indisputable evidence for a destruction not by humans, but by Mother Nature.

Blegen felt that Troy VIh had been destroyed by an earthquake, not by humans. His evidence is indeed indisputable—walls knocked out of kilter, huge towers collapsed, and everywhere the signs of tremendous force and upheaval. Troy is not the only place that may have suffered from an earthquake during the late twelfth and early eleventh centuries BCE (1225–1175 BCE), for there is evidence for earthquake damage at many sites in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean during this time period, including at Mycenae and Tiryns on Mainland Greece, although it is also clear that these earthquakes did not all take place at the exact same time but were rather part of a series of earthquakes that hit this entire region over the span of approximately fifty years.

Some scholars argued, and indeed still argue, that the Mycenaeans could have taken advantage of the earthquake that hit Troy and waltzed in through suddenly ruined walls that they had been unable to bring down despite ten years of effort. However, this all leads to an identification problem, for Troy VI fits with Homer's description in every possible way—its walls are big enough, its houses are grand enough, its streets are broad enough; it was wealthy enough—except for the manner of its destruction, for Homer makes no mention of an earthquake.

Into this situation comes the Trojan Horse. Although a number of scholars have suggested that the Trojan Horse was actually a battering ram or some other machine of war, one theory in particular holds that the Trojan Horse was not a machine of war, but was instead a poetic metaphor for an earthquake. The reasoning is simple: Poseidon was the Greek god of earthquakes. Poseidon was usually represented by a horse (just as Athena was represented by an owl). The pounding of his horses' hooves not only created

the crashing sound of the ocean's waves, according to the ancient Greeks, but also the sound that accompanies an earthquake. Therefore, the Trojan Horse was Homer's way of depicting the earthquake sent by Poseidon to level the walls of Troy. The Trojan Horse is the earthquake, metaphorically speaking. This is indeed an ingenious suggestion, but perhaps a bit far-fetched. However, if we put ourselves into Homer's position, it is one of the only ways to end the story without actually changing the real historical ending of the city. Besides which, there is no other way, if one wants Troy VI to be Priam's Troy, to explain why the city fits Homer's description in every way except for the manner of its destruction.

Then again, perhaps Troy VI was not Homer's Troy. Carl Blegen certainly didn't think so, for he believed that it was the following city—Troy VIIa—and so he began a new series of excavations at Hisarlik/Troy in the 1930s.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. How is Troy VI consistent with Homer's Troy?
2. How could the story of the Trojan Horse be made consistent with the theory that Troy was actually destroyed by an earthquake?

Suggested Reading

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Other Books of Interest

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Lecture 11:
Carl Blegen and the City of Troy VIIa

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

Carl Blegen, of the University of Cincinnati, did not believe that Troy VIh was the city that the Mycenaeans captured. According to Blegen, not only had Schliemann been incorrect in thinking that Troy II was the city of Priam, but his successor Dörpfeld had also been incorrect in thinking that Troy VI was the city of Priam. The very next city, known to archaeologists as Troy VIIa, was not really a new city, Blegen said; it was simply Troy VIh rebuilt—the walls were patched up and the houses restored. Even the pottery and other remains left from everyday life remained the same.

In Blegen's experience—and it was considerable—when the material culture of a city remained essentially the same, it frequently meant that the population had also remained essentially the same. In other words, it looked to Blegen as if the survivors of the earthquake that leveled Troy VIh had simply picked up the pieces of their lives, rebuilt, and carried on as before. If Dörpfeld had not already labeled this new city "Troy VIIa," Blegen may well have preferred to call it "Troy VIi" instead, for it was simply the next phase of this long-lived sixth city, which had already been built and rebuilt in a series of different phases for more than five hundred years by this point. There is even Mycenaean pottery found in Troy VIIa, which would make no sense if the Mycenaeans had completely destroyed the city at the end of Troy VI and left it a smoking ruin, as Homer describes; instead, it looks like the Mycenaeans were still trading with the Trojans, or at least their pottery was still reaching the city of Troy VIIa.

However, this city was also a bit unusual. Although there was very little left still to excavate up on the citadel of Troy, Blegen made the best of what had been left to him and proceeded to make a series of spectacular discoveries. Blegen noticed that the large and prosperous houses located within the citadel of Troy VIh were rebuilt in Troy VIIa with many party walls subdividing their interiors, as if many families were now living where a single family unit had lived previously. He also noticed other indications that the population of this fortified citadel had suddenly expanded to many times its previous size. A prime indication of this expansion was the many storage jars—*pithoi,* as they are known—not only within the houses but also buried beneath the floors, so that only their tops were visible and accessible. By so burying these jars, the inhabitants were not only able to keep some perishable items cold, even in an era that had no refrigeration, but were also able to double or even triple their capacity for storing grain, wine, olive oil, and other necessities of life.

Blegen soon became convinced that he was excavating a city that had been besieged and that the population from the Lower City and perhaps from the surrounding villages had flooded the wealthy upper citadel of the town in the face of an advancing enemy force. His suspicions were confirmed, he believed, by the discovery that Troy VIIa had been destroyed by humans—in a terrible battle about the year 1175 BCE. Blegen found skeletons, or portions of unburied bodies, in the streets within the citadel. He found arrowheads, of specifically Aegean manufacture. He found evidence of fire and of houses destroyed by burning. Clearly, it was Troy VIIa, not Troy VIh, that had been captured and put to the torch by the Mycenaeans, at least according to Blegen.

As further proof, he could point to the next city, the city that was constructed directly upon the ashes and burnt debris of Troy VIIa. This had already been labeled Troy VIIb by Dörpfeld, but Blegen would probably rather have called it Troy VIII, because it was so different. It was not simply the second phase of the same city; now the town plan was completely altered, the architecture of the houses completely unlike what had come before, and the pottery was new and different. In the annals of archaeology, we frequently say "pots do not always equal people"—in other words, new types of pottery do not necessarily indicate the presence of newcomers—but in this case, it seemed that they did. The inhabitants of Troy VIIb were different; it was as if the previous occupants of Troy VIIa had completely vanished, or been killed. Blegen believed that they had—he thought that the Mycenaean warriors led by Agamemnon, who had burnt the city to the ground, had also killed or enslaved all of its inhabitants before returning to Mainland Greece and their homes after ten long years of war.

On the face of it, it seemed that Blegen was correct, that both Schliemann and Dörpfeld had been incorrect, and that it was Troy VIIa that was Priam's Troy. He had finally solved the mystery and identified the city of the Trojan War. However, we still have a problem, for Troy VIIa does not fit Homer's description of a wealthy city—of a city with towering gates, high walls, broad streets, large houses, and a magnificent palace. The city that Blegen had excavated was a city under siege; it was a poor city, a reconstructed city, with its large houses subdivided by party walls and with storage jars buried underfoot. It wasn't a city that would have taken ten years to capture and it certainly wasn't a city worth writing an epic about. The only way in which Troy VIIa matches Homer's story lies in the manner in which it was destroyed, for this city was certainly destroyed by humans in a deliberate act of war.

And yet, how should we resolve this dilemma? Which city was Homer describing? Troy VIh or Troy VIIa? Both? Neither? Could Dörpfeld have been correct after all? But then who had destroyed Troy VIIa? Or could Homer have been writing about the magnificent city of Troy VI but the destruction of Troy VIIa and taking a poet's liberty by telescoping events in order to create a grand and epic tale? Not everyone agreed with Blegen that Priam's Troy was the city of VIIa, but it would be another half century before the next series of excavations at Hisarlik/Troy began.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Why would Blegen have preferred to label Troy VIIa as Troy VIi?
2. Why was Blegen sure that Troy VIIa was Priam's Troy?

Suggested Reading

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Lecture 12:
Manfred Korfmann and the Results of Recent Excavations

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

In 1988, Manfred Korfmann of the University of Tübingen and his international team of archaeologists and other scientists began re-excavating the Bronze Age levels at Troy. They have made amazing discoveries, including a new lower city and an underground water system constructed during the Early Bronze Age and used for the next two thousand years. He also found evidence of destruction of the city by fire and war.

Korfmann and his team were concerned with reinvestigating the cities of Troy VI and VII, in order to determine how large the cities were, what life was like there during the Late Bronze Age, and what exactly happened to these cities that brought each of them to such dramatic endings. Korfmann steadfastly maintained that he was not investigating the Trojan War, nor was he even interested in either proving or disproving the legend, but rather that he was investigating a very interesting Late Bronze Age city that had international connections and was a powerhouse in the region during the end of the second millennium BCE.

Regardless of his protestations, every find and every discovery that Korfmann and his team made were closely followed both by the archaeological world and the media. Particularly newsworthy was the discovery of a small inscribed stone seal with a man's and a woman's name written on it in Luwian, which was the first time that any writing at all had been found at the site; unfortunately, it was found in a layer dated to Troy VIIb and apparently has no bearing on our questions regarding Troy and the Trojan War.

This brings up an important question that has yet to be resolved: namely, where are the royal archives of Troy, which must have existed at one point in time? Why have no letters been found, no correspondence to and from the rulers of Troy and the rulers of other countries? Korfmann found no such archive, nor did Blegen or Dörpfeld before him, although such archives have been found at the Hittite capital city of Hattusas, the Egyptian capital city of Tell el-Amarna, and similar royal sites. Perhaps no such archives ever existed, although this seems unlikely if Hisarlik is indeed Troy. More likely is the possibility that Schliemann and his men may have thrown out the clay tablets on which the royal archive would have been written, not recognizing them during their hasty excavations through the palaces of Troy VI and Troy VIIa. If Schliemann is not guilty, then the earlier Greeks and Romans were the ones responsible, for as mentioned earlier, they had cleared the central part of the mound in order to build temples to Athena and Jupiter, and may well have tossed out the royal archive without knowing or caring that they were doing so.

Korfmann and his team made many important discoveries. For our purposes, in discussing Troy and the Trojan War, the most important of their discoveries was that they were able to prove, through excavation, the existence of an enormous lower city, complete with a defensive ditch and walls, which increases both the size and the population of Troy more than ten-fold, and makes it clear that Troy was indeed a wealthy and prosperous city. It now becomes apparent that Schliemann, Dörpfeld, and Blegen were all excavating just the citadel or upper part of the city, where the palace lay, rather than the whole city itself, and that there is now a huge area waiting to be excavated. It is not surprising that there is a lower city at Troy, for most of the contemporary Mycenaean palatial sites have both a citadel and a lower city; it is only surprising that it had not been discovered for so long, but it took modern scientific equipment, fancy technology, and some educated guesswork to determine where Korfmann and his team should dig.

Korfmann's team also completely excavated an underground water system lying outside the walls of Troy. The main tunnel had been discovered early on during the renewed excavations, but it was thought to date to the Roman period, because of the remains of fish ponds and other constructions in and near the entrance to the tunnel. Indeed, these remains do date to the Roman period, but Korfmann and his team were able to date the construction of the tunnel system itself back to the Early Bronze Age, during the third millennium BCE, and to show that it had been in use for the better part of two thousand years.

The fancy technology sometimes led Korfmann and his team astray, as seen in an initial announcement that their equipment indicated the presence of a tremendous fortification wall surrounding the lower city at a distance of one hundred meters or more away from the citadel. Upon excavation, it turned out that it was not a fortification wall that was present, but rather a defensive ditch, which had filled up with dirt and garbage over the millennia and thus appeared on their scans as a solid mass that they interpreted as a wall. It is still an important discovery, nevertheless!

Among the most exciting of Korfmann's discoveries was evidence in the lower city that it had been destroyed by fire and war. His team discovered Aegean-style arrowheads embedded in the walls of houses, entire skeletons and bodies lying unburied, and piles of slingstones ready to be used by the defenders—all clear evidence of a city under attack by enemy forces. Unfortunately, at the present time, it is apparently too difficult to date these destruction layers in the lower city, and so it is currently unclear whether these destructions represent the demise of the city of Troy VI or the city of Troy VIIa. It is also not completely clear who caused the destruction of the lower city, for Aegean-style arrowheads could have been used by the Mycenaeans . . . or they could have been used by the Sea Peoples.

Korfmann's new findings may eventually lead to a solution regarding the question of the Trojan War, but his data are subject to interpretation and his own colleague at the University of Tübingen, Frank Kolb, accused Korfmann of exaggeration, misleading statements, and shoddy scholarship. This led to a mock trial held at the university, which ended in a fist-fight between Korfmann and Kolb—a modern mini Trojan War, as it were. In the end,

although much of the academic community, and Bronze Age specialists in particular, stood staunchly behind Korfmann, the debate remains unresolved.

Korfmann died suddenly in August 2005. With his death, Korfmann's banner has been taken up by his colleagues at Troy, Tübingen, Sheffield, and elsewhere. The Bronze Age excavations at Troy conducted by the University of Tübingen reportedly will be continuing, in the capable hands of Korfmann's assistant, Peter Jablonka, just as Wilhelm Dörpfeld took over from Heinrich Schliemann more than a century ago.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What could have happened to the royal archives of Troy?
2. What are the implications of the discovery of a large lower city of Troy?

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Lecture 13:
Possible Motivations and Dates for a Trojan War

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

Even if we are agreed that the Trojan War was a historical event, there still remain a number of additional questions. Which of the nine cities stacked one upon another was Priam's Troy? Is it Troy II, as Schliemann thought, or Troy VIh, as Dörpfeld thought, or Troy VIIa, as Blegen thought? Why did Korfmann, the most recent excavator, hedge his bets and talk about Troy VI/VIIa? Is it possible that the Trojan War was a process, rather than an event, and that Homer used literary license to telescope two centuries of intermittent warfare into a single ten-year epic struggle? In a list of possible reasons, where does love rank? Was the war really fought because of Helen? Would it not make more sense to argue for an economic or political motive—a Mycenaean grab for more territory? Was Helen just an excuse for a war that would have been fought anyway?

So, let's stand back and first consider the basic question of why the Trojan War was fought. There have been any number of suggestions, running the gamut from economic reasons to territorial expansion to love. One of the most interesting suggestions is that the Trojan War was fought over fishing rights. That would seem a strange reason to fight a war, were it not for the fact that this is still happening today.

More likely is the possibility that the Mycenaeans wanted Troy either for itself—because it commands the Hellespont and the route to the Black Sea and they could tax and trade with the ships who sailed by—or because they were interested in actually getting access to the Black Sea themselves. If they wanted to go to the Black Sea, they would have to go by Troy, and one might imagine that over time it would start to grate if they had to pay taxes and tribute to the Trojans every time they sailed by. What was in the Black Sea area that the Mycenaeans might have wanted? All kinds of things—if we look at later Archaic and Classical Greek history, we can see, for example, the Greeks going up to the Black Sea to get grain and perhaps things like precious metals as well, including gold, silver, and maybe copper as well. The problem is that we do not actually have much archaeological evidence that the Mycenaeans were in fact active in the Black Sea area.

There are other related possibilities as well, of course, including the idea that the Mycenaeans might have been interested in controlling the international trade in which Troy seems to have been involved. We know that the Mycenaeans were trading with Egypt, Cyprus, and the Near East, and as such, they would have been interested in Troy as an international emporium. That in itself would have been reason enough to go to war, in an effort to take control of such an important city, if indeed that is what Troy was.

Troy also lay on the periphery of the Mycenaean empire. It is, in fact, what one might call a "contested periphery"—that is, it is both on the periphery of the Mycenaean empire and on the periphery of the Hittite empire—and it is caught in between two of the great powers in the ancient Mediterranean world. Both sides thought that they should possess Troy and both sides were willing to go to war for control of the city. What the Trojans themselves wanted would have been irrelevant, or at least of little importance. Thus, we have the possibility that the Trojan War was actually fought between the Mycenaeans and the Hittites, with the Trojans being the hapless peoples caught in the middle (but whom Homer would have seen as being on the side of the Hittites, that is, against the Mycenaeans).

What about the question of when the Trojan War took place? We have already talked at length by this point about whether the war could have taken place in the time of Troy VI or in the time of Troy VII, or whether, in fact, it took place during both. We have also discussed the possibility that Homer might have been describing a process rather than an event. Looking in particular at the Hittite records that mention Ahhiyawa—their name for the Mycenaeans—one might suggest that the Mycenaeans were on the western coast of Anatolia, in and around the region of Troy, already by the fifteenth century BCE, and that they took part in a number of escapades, including the so-called Assuwa rebellion ca. 1420 BCE. This pitted the Trojans against the Hittites. Ironically, during this Assuwa rebellion, the Mycenaeans and the Trojans seem to have been allies, fighting together against the Hittites, but this is the one instance in which we get all three parties mentioned in nearly contemporaneous written texts—the Mycenaeans, the Trojans, and the Hittites. Unfortunately, this is two hundred years before the later Greeks thought that the Trojan War had taken place.

What if the later Greeks were wrong? What if the Trojan War had been fought in the fifteenth century BCE rather than the thirteenth century BCE? Or what if there were a series of Trojan Wars, which took place over the course of two hundred years or more, beginning with the Assuwa Rebellion about 1420 BCE and ending with a conflict starring Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, and Paris about 1250 BCE? Does the *Epic Cycle* indicate the existence of such earlier Trojan Wars, especially in its discussion of the failed first expedition to Troy, which ended up sacking Teuthrania rather than Troy? Could Homer have invoked poetic license and telescoped a series of minor wars and skirmishes into a dramatic epic featuring star-crossed lovers, a jealous husband, and warriors eager for glory? All of the above are certainly possible, but it would be nice if archaeology could contribute something more to the mix and allow us to come to a more definitive answer.

At the moment, we've got three basic possibilities:

1. The Trojan War took place during Troy VIh.
2. The Trojan War took place during Troy VIIa.
3. The Trojan War was a process rather than an event and reflects a series of wars fought during the period from the fifteenth through the thirteenth centuries BCE.

Unfortunately, we cannot yet decide between these alternatives with any pretense at authority.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Does it make sense that the Trojan War was really fought over love for Helen?
2. Why would the Mycenaeans have wanted Troy?

Suggested Reading

Wood, Michael. *In Search of the Trojan War*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Other Books of Interest

Latacz, Joachim. *Troy and Homer: Towards a Solution of an Old Mystery*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

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Lecture 14:
Did the Trojan War Take Place?

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War.*

In the end, what do we know and what do we believe? Much nonsense has been written about Troy and the Trojan War in both the distant and the recent past. Assertions that Troy was located in England or Scandinavia, that the story was actually a garbled version of the legend of Atlantis, and other flights of fantasy have found their way into print.

At this point, it is time to ask once and for all where we stand today on the question of whether the Trojan War took place. Are there any historical "facts" to support Homer, or is his tale simply a good yarn?

In answer, we can now say with confidence that we know the site of ancient Troy. It is the site known as Hisarlik, located in northwestern Turkey. Recent archaeological excavations at the site have revealed a city far larger than previously thought to exist at that site. This modern archaeological evidence supports Homer's description that Troy was a large and wealthy city that could have resisted a prolonged siege by a Greek army. It is now also clear, from both Blegen's and Korfmann's excavations, that a conflict did take place at Troy, sometime between 1250 and 1175 BCE. Arrowheads and bodies have been discovered in the streets of the citadel and the lower city that are clear evidence of fierce fighting in the city.

Although many questions remain that have ignited scholarly controversies and even most-unscholarly fist-fights, conservatively one can conclude that there is a kernel of truth in Homer's story. A Trojan War did take place. Of the nine cities that lie one on top of another at the site of Troy, it is most likely the sixth city that belonged to Priam and which the Mycenaean Greeks besieged, although one cannot completely rule out the seventh city as being Priam's Troy.

At this time, I believe that Troy is most likely to be found at the site of Hisarlik, that some sort of a "Trojan War" did take place, and that it was the sixth city that was destroyed during this conflict, in approximately 1250 BCE. This was a wealthy city, with fine and sturdy stone walls that could have easily withstood a siege for years, but which may have eventually been laid waste by Mother Nature, in the form of a devastating earthquake. The city subsequently built on its ruins—the seventh city lying immediately above—was destroyed in turn some seventy-five years later by the marauding Sea Peoples, who not only brought an end to Bronze Age Troy but also to virtually all of the Late Bronze Age civilizations around the Mediterranean. This destruction ushered in the Dark Ages of the Aegean world that lasted fully three centuries until the Greek Renaissance and Homer in the eighth century BCE.

As for the Trojan Horse, it was probably either Homer's metaphor for an earthquake, or a battering ram, or some other machine of war. And finally, Helen's abduction makes a nice story, but there were far more compelling economic and political motives for conflict some 3,000 years ago; the war itself was probably fought for the usual reasons of greed, glory, and territorial expansion, with Helen serving as a convenient excuse, if she even existed.

So, where do we go from here? This is a question that is very difficult to answer at the moment. Manfred Korfmann, the most recent director of the excavations at Troy, is now deceased, but we are told that the excavations will continue at Troy, particularly in the lower city, which is still essentially untouched by archaeologists. Hopefully, future excavations in this area will yield additional discoveries that will help to fill in the gaps within our knowledge. An archive of written documents would be especially welcome, though perhaps that is almost too much to wish for. At the very least, we can hope that such additional discoveries will shed new light on age-old questions and allow us to determine once and for all when the Trojan War took place and whether Helen was really the reason why the war was fought.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What do we know with relative certainty about Troy and the Trojan War?
2. Which of the nine Troys is most likely Priam's Troy?

Suggested Reading

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Other Books of Interest

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Suggested Readings for This Course:

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This book is available online through www.modernscholar.com or by calling Recorded Books at 1-800-636-3399.

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