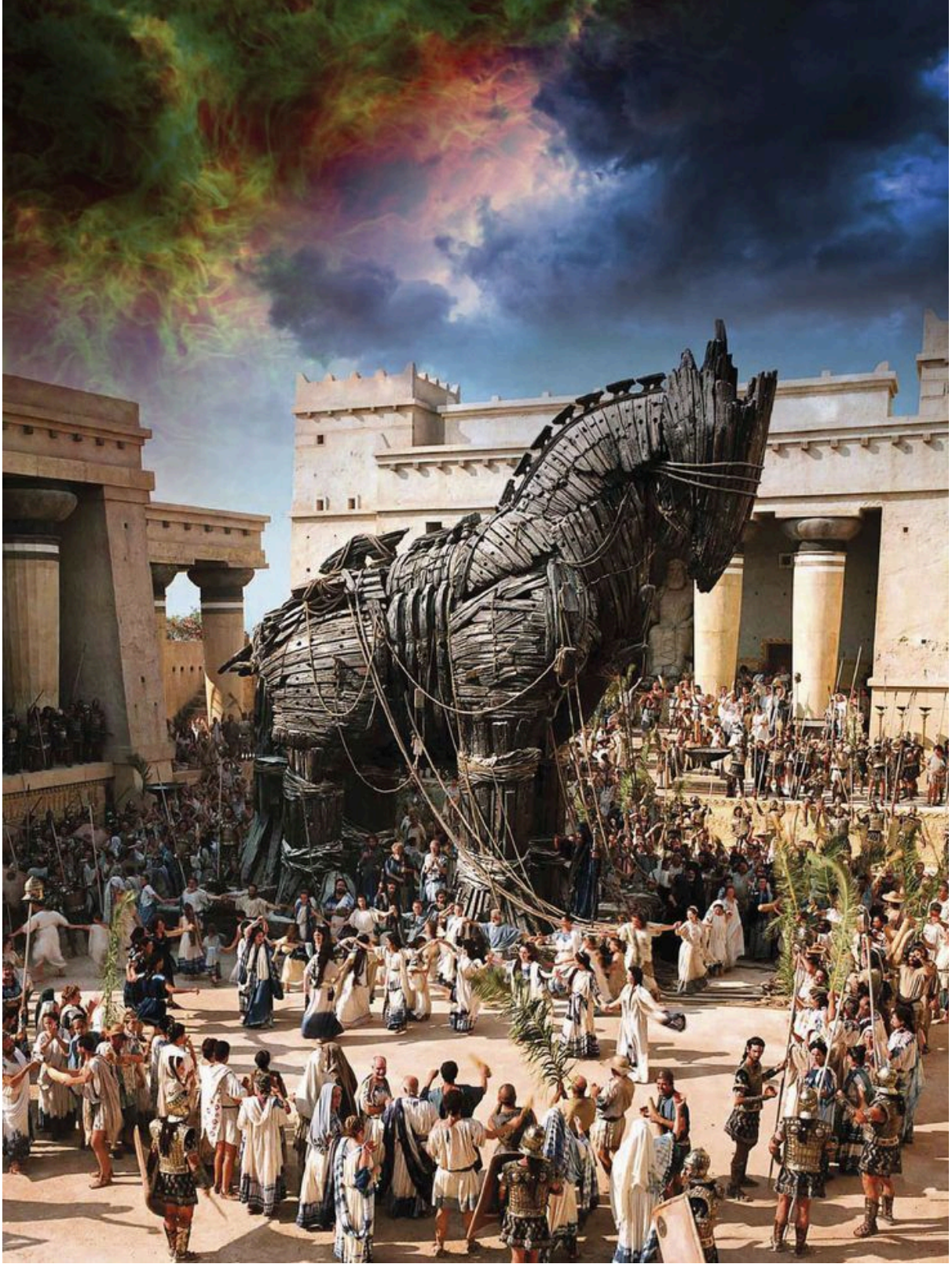


YONDERMUN'26

JCC: THE TROJAN WAR



Prepared by: Ada Bařıftçı, Eslem Yanık

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction to the Committee

The Trojan War is one of the most famous conflicts in ancient history and mythology. Traditionally, it is described as a prolonged war between the city of Troy and a coalition of Greek kingdoms following the departure of Helen, the wife of Menelaus, with Paris, prince of Troy.

However, a historical examination of the Trojan War requires a distinction between the literary tradition preserved by Homer and the political reality of the Late Bronze Age.

This committee takes place within the period of approximately 1250–1150 BCE, a crucial period in the history of the eastern Mediterranean. During these centuries, major political powers such as the Hittite Empire and the Mycenaean kingdoms interacted through diplomacy, trade, and warfare.

The city traditionally identified as Troy was located at Hisarlık in northwestern Anatolia, near the Dardanelles. Its geographical position placed it at the intersection of the Aegean, Anatolian, and Black Sea worlds.

At the same time, Hittite records refer to a western Anatolian political entity known as Wilusa, which many scholars have associated with Troy. Hittite texts also mention Ahhiyawa, commonly associated with the Mycenaean Greek world.

These connections have led historians to investigate whether the later Trojan War tradition preserves memories of actual Late Bronze Age conflicts.

Nevertheless, there is no surviving contemporary document that provides a complete account of a war identical to Homer's narrative. Therefore, delegates should approach the committee through two interconnected perspectives: The historical Late Bronze Age world and the later literary tradition of the Trojan War.

2. Historical Scope of the Committee

The chronological framework of this committee is:

c. 1250–1150 BCE

This period is particularly significant because it encompasses the final centuries of the Late Bronze Age and the period of major political transformation that eventually contributed to the collapse of several eastern Mediterranean palace societies.

The committee should therefore not assume that the political world of 1250 BCE remained unchanged until 1150 BCE.

Instead, delegates should recognize that the period contains significant developments in:

Hittite power, Mycenaean political organization, western Anatolian politics, maritime trade, military technology, diplomatic relations, regional instability.

The committee's historical setting should consequently be treated as a dynamic political environment, rather than a static recreation of Homer's world.

3. Mythology, Literature and History

The Trojan War is particularly difficult to study because three different forms of evidence are frequently combined.

Historical Evidence

This includes: archaeological remains, contemporary inscriptions, diplomatic treaties, administrative records, destruction layers, material culture.

Literary Evidence

This includes: Homer's *Iliad*, Homer's *Odyssey*, later Greek epic traditions, Greek tragedies, Roman adaptations.

Mythological Tradition

This includes stories concerning: the gods, the Judgment of Paris, divine intervention, Achilles' semi-divine origins, the Trojan Horse.

These categories should not be treated as equivalent.

Homer's poems are essential for understanding how Greeks remembered and imagined the Trojan War, but they were composed centuries after the Late Bronze Age period in which the historical events may have occurred.

For this reason, the committee should primarily use Late Bronze Age evidence when discussing historical events, while using Homeric material to understand the traditional narrative.

4. Understanding the Bronze Age

To understand the Trojan War and the political circumstances surrounding it, it is first necessary to understand the world in which the conflict is believed to have taken place. The societies of the Late Bronze Age were fundamentally different from the modern

states that delegates may be familiar with today. There were no nation-states with clearly defined borders, centralized governments extending over entire populations, or permanent diplomatic institutions comparable to modern international organizations. Instead, the political landscape of the eastern Mediterranean was composed of kingdoms, palace-centered societies, smaller regional states, and communities whose political influence could change rapidly depending on military strength, alliances, trade, and the authority of individual rulers.

The period between approximately 1250 and 1150 BCE was a particularly important stage in this system. Across Anatolia, the Aegean, the Levant and the eastern Mediterranean, powerful kingdoms interacted with one another through trade, warfare and diplomacy. Although these societies were geographically separated, they were far from isolated. Ships transported goods across the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean, merchants moved between different political centers, and rulers exchanged diplomatic messages, gifts and agreements. The political world of the Late Bronze Age was therefore interconnected in ways that make it possible to speak of a wider international system, even though the concept of an "international community" did not exist in the modern sense.

Political authority was generally concentrated around the ruler and the royal palace. A king was not simply a military commander. He was responsible for maintaining the political order of his kingdom, managing relations with neighboring rulers, organizing military campaigns, and ensuring that the palace received the resources necessary to function. The palace itself served as an administrative and economic center. Agricultural products, metals, textiles, and other goods could be collected, stored, and redistributed through these institutions. As a result, the strength of a kingdom depended not only on the size of its army but also on its ability to control resources and maintain an organized administrative system.

This system also meant that political relationships were often personal. Modern states maintain relationships regardless of who occupies the office of president or prime minister, whereas Bronze Age diplomacy was much more closely connected to individual rulers and royal families. A treaty between two kingdoms was, in many cases, an agreement between two kings and their successors. The death, replacement, or weakening of a ruler could therefore alter the political balance of an entire region.

The absence of modern borders also meant that sovereignty was more complicated than it is today. A smaller kingdom could maintain its own ruler and internal administration while simultaneously recognizing the authority of a more powerful empire. Such relationships could involve tribute, military assistance, or political loyalty. A ruler might therefore be independent in some matters while remaining politically dependent on a larger power in others. This system of overlapping political relationships becomes particularly important when examining the position of Troy and the western Anatolian kingdom known in Hittite records as Wilusa.

The economy of the Late Bronze Age was equally interconnected. Bronze, the defining material of the period, required copper and tin, resources that were not equally available in every region. This encouraged long-distance trade and created economic relationships between communities separated by hundreds of kilometers. Metals, timber, textiles, ceramics, agricultural products and luxury objects circulated throughout the eastern Mediterranean. A kingdom's geographical position could therefore have an importance that extended far beyond the territory it directly controlled.

This is particularly relevant when considering Troy. Located in northwestern Anatolia near the Dardanelles, Troy occupied a geographical position between the Aegean world and the interior of Anatolia. The city was also situated near maritime routes connecting the Aegean with the Sea of Marmara and, beyond it, the Black Sea. Although it would be an oversimplification to argue that the Trojan War was fought solely over control of these routes, Troy's location undoubtedly made the region strategically significant.

Warfare in this period was also different from modern warfare. Armies were generally organized around the authority of rulers and depended heavily on the ability of palaces and kingdoms to provide weapons, food, and transportation. Infantry, archers, and chariot forces played important roles, while fortified settlements could provide significant defensive advantages. Capturing a heavily fortified city was not a simple process. A prolonged siege could place enormous pressure on both the attacking army and the population inside the city.

The importance of warfare, however, did not mean that the Late Bronze Age was defined entirely by military confrontation. Diplomacy was an essential part of political life. Kings communicated through messengers and written correspondence, exchanged gifts and negotiated treaties. Powerful rulers could attempt to avoid direct confrontation by establishing alliances or placing smaller kingdoms under their protection.

The Hittite Empire provides some of the clearest evidence for this diplomatic system. Hittite rulers maintained relationships with numerous kingdoms through formal treaties, many of which survive in written form. These documents demonstrate that Bronze Age rulers were capable of negotiating detailed political agreements concerning loyalty, military assistance, and territorial obligations.

At the same time, the political world of the Late Bronze Age was not stable. Alliances could change, kingdoms could rebel, and powerful empires could lose control over distant territories. Western Anatolia in particular appears to have been an area of considerable political competition. The Hittites attempted to maintain influence over the region, while local rulers sought to preserve or expand their autonomy. Meanwhile, Aegean powers associated by many scholars with the Mycenaean world were also active in the region.

This creates the broader context in which the Trojan War tradition should be understood. Rather than imagining Troy as a completely isolated city suddenly attacked by a united Greek army because of a dispute over Helen, it is more historically useful to imagine a complex political environment in which several kingdoms possessed competing interests. A conflict involving one kingdom could potentially draw in its allies, rivals, and treaty partners. What began as a dispute between two rulers could therefore become a wider regional confrontation.

II. The Late Bronze Age Mediterranean

5. The Eastern Mediterranean World

By approximately 1250 BCE, the eastern Mediterranean had developed into a remarkably interconnected political and economic environment. The major civilizations of the period did not exist independently from one another; instead, they participated in a system of exchange that connected Anatolia, the Aegean, the Levant, Cyprus, and Egypt.

The movement of goods across this region was essential to the survival and prosperity of many kingdoms. Copper from Cyprus, timber from Anatolia and the Levant, luxury goods from different regions, and agricultural products could all move through maritime and overland networks. Royal courts depended on these exchanges not only for luxury but also for materials necessary for administration and warfare.

Diplomatic correspondence also reveals how rulers perceived one another. Powerful kings sometimes addressed each other as equals, exchanging gifts and maintaining long-distance diplomatic relationships. Other rulers were treated as subordinate or dependent kings. This distinction mattered greatly because political status affected obligations, prestige, and access to resources.

The Aegean world occupied an important position within this network. Mycenaean palatial centers maintained connections with Anatolia and the wider Mediterranean, while western Anatolian kingdoms interacted with both the Hittites and Aegean powers. Troy therefore existed within a region where political boundaries did not prevent movement.

The Mediterranean should consequently not be imagined as a barrier separating civilizations. During the Late Bronze Age, it was also a highway. Ships connected distant communities, carrying not only commodities but also people, technologies, artistic styles, and political information.

This interconnectedness also meant that instability could spread. A military conflict, disruption of trade, or collapse of one political center could affect neighboring regions. By the twelfth century BCE, several major palace societies would experience profound

disruption, making the period one of the most transformative stages in ancient Mediterranean history.

6. The Political Structure of the Bronze Age

The political structure of the Late Bronze Age was centered primarily around kings and palaces. Unlike modern states, which depend on permanent bureaucracies and institutions that continue independently of individual leaders, Bronze Age political systems were much more closely connected to royal authority.

The palace was both a political and economic institution. It organized the collection of agricultural products, controlled the redistribution of resources, and maintained relationships with other political centers. The king stood at the center of this system and was expected to protect his territory, maintain order, and represent his kingdom abroad.

Political authority was not always absolute, however. A ruler could be constrained by powerful nobles, rival royal families, religious institutions, or neighboring kingdoms. In addition, the military resources available to a ruler determined how effectively he could enforce his authority.

The concept of sovereignty was therefore flexible. A small kingdom could have its own king while being tied through treaty to a larger empire. Such arrangements are particularly important in western Anatolia, where several local kingdoms existed within the broader sphere of Hittite political influence.

This structure is essential for understanding the Trojan question. If Wilusa was indeed located at Troy, its ruler may have possessed considerable local authority while simultaneously being bound by agreements with the Hittite king. An attack against Wilusa could consequently have implications extending beyond the city itself.

7. The Importance of Trade and Resources

Trade was one of the foundations of Late Bronze Age political power. The production of bronze required copper and tin, while royal courts demanded precious metals, textiles, timber and other valuable materials. Since these resources were distributed unevenly across the ancient world, kingdoms depended upon long-distance exchange.

The strategic importance of a city could therefore be influenced by its position within these networks.

Troy's location near the Dardanelles is particularly significant. The city was positioned close to the route connecting the Aegean with the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea.

This did not necessarily mean that Troy controlled all trade through the region, but its location gave it access to an important geographical corridor.

Economic interests may therefore have contributed to political competition surrounding western Anatolia. Nevertheless, historians must be cautious. There is currently no evidence demonstrating that a desire to control the Dardanelles was the single cause of a Trojan War.

Instead, trade should be understood as one component of a much larger political system.

8. Warfare in the Late Bronze Age

Warfare during the Late Bronze Age depended upon the resources available to royal administrations. Armies were not permanent national forces in the modern sense. Kings had to mobilize soldiers, provide weapons, and organize supplies.

Chariots played an important role among powerful states, particularly in open warfare. Infantry and archers remained essential, while fortified cities could provide substantial defensive advantages.

Sieges were especially demanding. An attacking force needed to maintain food supplies and protect its own army while attempting to overcome defensive walls. A well-protected city could therefore resist an enemy for a considerable period.

The traditional image of the Greeks surrounding Troy for ten years may reflect later epic development, but the basic idea of a prolonged struggle around a fortified settlement is compatible with the military realities of the period.

Nevertheless, Homer's descriptions should not be treated as direct military reports from 1250 BCE. The poems were transmitted and developed centuries later, meaning that they contain elements from different periods.

9. Diplomacy and International Relations

Diplomacy was one of the defining characteristics of Late Bronze Age politics. Rulers maintained relationships through envoys, letters, gifts, treaties, and marriage arrangements.

The Hittites left some of the clearest evidence for this diplomatic system. Their archives contain treaties with subordinate rulers as well as correspondence concerning political disputes.

Treaties could determine military obligations, succession rights, and political loyalty. A ruler who violated a treaty could potentially face military consequences.

This system provides an important framework for the Trojan War committee. If Troy was connected to the Hittite diplomatic system, a conflict involving Troy could potentially activate broader obligations.

The question of whether a larger power would intervene in a regional conflict is therefore not a modern concept imposed on the ancient world. It was already a fundamental problem of Bronze Age diplomacy.

III. ANATOLIA AND THE HITTITE EMPIRE

10. The Hittite Empire

The Hittite Empire was one of the dominant powers of the Late Bronze Age. Its political center was located in central Anatolia, with its capital at Hattusa. During the thirteenth century BCE, Hittite rulers controlled extensive territories and maintained political relationships with numerous neighboring kingdoms.

The empire's influence extended into northern Syria and western Anatolia, although its ability to control distant territories varied over time.

Hittite kings relied on both military campaigns and diplomacy. Rather than attempting to directly govern every territory, they often established relationships with local rulers through treaties.

This system allowed the Hittite state to project power without maintaining permanent occupation everywhere.

The Hittites are especially important to the Trojan War question because their archives contain information about western Anatolian kingdoms that existed during approximately the same period in which a historical Trojan conflict could have occurred.

11. Hattusa and the Hittite Political System

The political center of the Hittite Empire was the city of Hattusa, located near modern Boğazkale in central Anatolia. Hattusa was not simply a royal residence but the administrative, religious, military, and diplomatic heart of the empire. From this city, Hittite kings supervised territories extending across large parts of Anatolia and, at different periods, into northern Syria and the Levant. The scale of the empire meant that the king could not govern every region through direct administration. Instead, Hittite rule depended on a combination of direct control, vassal states, treaties, military pressure, and diplomatic relationships.

The Hittite king occupied a particularly powerful position within this system. He was the supreme military authority and the central figure in foreign relations, while also having major religious responsibilities. However, the Hittite political system should not be imagined as an entirely centralized state in the modern sense. Local rulers retained significant authority, particularly in distant territories. Their relationship with Hattusa could vary from relatively independent cooperation to strict dependence. Treaties were therefore extremely important because they defined the obligations between the Hittite king and subordinate rulers.

Hittite treaties provide some of the most valuable evidence for understanding the political world of the Late Bronze Age. These documents could establish military obligations, territorial arrangements, succession rules, and promises of loyalty. A vassal ruler might be required to provide troops to the Hittite king, refuse assistance to his enemies, and recognize the authority of the Hittite monarch. In return, the Hittite king could promise protection and recognition of the local ruler. Such arrangements demonstrate that diplomacy and warfare were closely connected.

Hattusa also provides important evidence of the sophistication of Hittite administration. Archives discovered at the site contain diplomatic correspondence, treaties, legal texts, religious documents, and administrative records. These documents allow historians to reconstruct relationships between the Hittite Empire and neighboring powers. For the Trojan War question, this material is particularly important because some of the western Anatolian kingdoms mentioned in Hittite records may correspond to regions involved in the conflicts later remembered through Trojan traditions.

The importance of Hattusa to this committee therefore goes beyond the history of the Hittite Empire itself. It represents one of the major sources through which delegates can reconstruct the international political environment of the period. If a delegate wishes to understand how a western Anatolian kingdom such as Wilusa might have interacted with larger powers, Hittite diplomatic records provide a crucial starting point.

12. Western Anatolia

Western Anatolia was one of the most politically complex regions of the Late Bronze Age. Unlike central Anatolia, which was dominated by the Hittite state, western Anatolia consisted of numerous kingdoms and smaller political entities. These states were not necessarily permanently hostile to one another. Their relationships could change depending on trade, dynastic interests, military pressure, and relationships with larger powers such as the Hittites or the Aegean kingdoms.

This region was particularly important because of its geographical position. Western Anatolia lies between the Aegean Sea and the Anatolian interior, making it a natural meeting point between different political and economic spheres. Coastal settlements could maintain maritime connections with the Aegean world while also interacting with

inland Anatolian powers. As a result, western Anatolian rulers had to navigate relationships with several different political systems at once.

The Hittite records mention a number of western Anatolian territories, including Arzawa and Wilusa. Other names appear in the diplomatic and military records, although their precise locations and identities remain subjects of scholarly debate. These uncertainties are important for delegates because the ancient political map cannot be reconstructed with the same precision as a modern map. A kingdom mentioned in one text may not always correspond neatly to a modern region, and ancient borders could change considerably over time.

Western Anatolia also experienced military campaigns. Hittite kings periodically attempted to establish or re-establish their influence in the region, while local rulers sometimes resisted Hittite authority. At other times, western Anatolian states participated in diplomatic arrangements with Hattusa. This pattern suggests that the region was neither permanently controlled by the Hittites nor completely independent of them.

For the Trojan War debate, western Anatolia is particularly significant because Troy was located within this wider political environment. If the settlement at Troy is associated with Wilusa, as many scholars have proposed, then Troy would have existed within a region characterized by competing powers, diplomatic negotiations, and shifting alliances. This does not prove that the Trojan War occurred exactly as described by Homer, but it demonstrates that the political circumstances necessary for conflict between an Anatolian city and Aegean powers were historically plausible.

13. The Kingdom of Wilusa

Wilusa is one of the most important names in the Hittite records for understanding the possible historical background of Troy. The kingdom appears in several Hittite texts concerning western Anatolia, and many scholars associate Wilusa with the city of Troy. This identification is not universally accepted as absolute fact, but linguistic, geographical, and historical arguments have made the connection influential in modern scholarship.

One of the strongest pieces of evidence comes from Hittite diplomatic correspondence and treaties. Wilusa appears to have been a political entity recognized by the Hittite state, suggesting that it possessed a ruler and enough political importance to participate in international relations. The existence of such a kingdom is therefore historically documented even if its exact geographical boundaries remain uncertain.

A particularly important figure is Alaksandu, the ruler of Wilusa. A treaty between Alaksandu and the Hittite king Muwatalli II establishes a formal relationship between the two rulers. The treaty describes obligations of loyalty and mutual protection, illustrating how Hittite diplomacy operated with western Anatolian states. The name

Alaksandu has attracted considerable scholarly attention because of its possible linguistic relationship to the name Alexandros, which is associated with Paris in later Greek tradition. However, the similarity of names is not sufficient evidence to identify Alaksandu with Homeric Paris.

The treaty itself is more important historically than the name comparison. It demonstrates that Wilusa was involved in the diplomatic network of the Hittite world. It also suggests that the political situation of western Anatolia could involve powerful external actors attempting to secure alliances and prevent rival influence.

If Wilusa was indeed Troy, then the archaeological settlement at Hisarlık would have been part of this international political environment. Troy would not have been an isolated city waiting to become the setting of a legendary war. It would have been one political center within a much larger network connecting Anatolia, the Aegean, and the eastern Mediterranean.

At the same time, delegates should avoid treating the Wilusa-Troy identification as completely settled. The evidence is substantial enough to make the connection historically important, but it remains an interpretation rather than an archaeological inscription stating that “Wilusa was Troy.” A historically responsible discussion should therefore distinguish between what the Hittite sources explicitly say and what modern scholars infer from them.

14. Arzawa and Other Anatolian Powers

Arzawa was another major political entity in western Anatolia. During the Late Bronze Age, it appears as an important regional power and became involved in conflicts with the Hittite Empire. Arzawa was not necessarily a single political unit throughout its history; its internal structure and territorial extent changed over time. Nevertheless, Hittite records demonstrate that the region was sufficiently powerful to become a major concern for Hittite rulers.

The relationship between Hatti and Arzawa illustrates the difficulties faced by the Hittite Empire in controlling western Anatolia. Campaigns may have been necessary to force local rulers into submission, while diplomatic agreements later helped establish more stable relationships. Hittite rulers therefore used both military and diplomatic strategies rather than relying exclusively on conquest.

Other western Anatolian entities also played roles in this environment. Some appear only briefly in the textual record, making their identities difficult to establish. This fragmented political landscape is important when considering the origins of conflict around Troy. Instead of imagining a simple division between “the Hittites” and “the Greeks,” delegates should think of the region as a network of multiple kingdoms with overlapping interests.

The existence of several political powers also created opportunities for smaller kingdoms to use diplomacy strategically. A local ruler could seek Hittite protection against a neighboring state or try to strengthen ties with Aegean powers. Similarly, larger empires could support local rulers who served their strategic interests.

The political fragmentation of western Anatolia therefore provides a possible explanation for why the region repeatedly appears in Hittite diplomatic and military records. It was a frontier zone where the interests of Anatolian and Aegean powers intersected.

15. Hittite Relations with Wilusa

Hittite relations with Wilusa appear to have been primarily diplomatic, although military tensions formed part of the broader history of western Anatolia. The relationship is particularly important because it demonstrates that Wilusa was not politically isolated. Its rulers participated in a larger international system in which powerful neighboring states attempted to establish alliances and secure their interests.

The Alaksandu Treaty is central to this relationship. The agreement between Alaksandu of Wilusa and Muwatalli II established obligations between the two rulers. Such treaties often included promises of loyalty and assistance, as well as provisions concerning enemies of the Hittite king. The treaty therefore provides evidence that the ruler of Wilusa had a recognized political position and that Hattusa considered the relationship important enough to formalize.

This relationship also demonstrates how diplomacy functioned in the Late Bronze Age. Treaties were not simply symbolic documents. They could determine whether a local ruler supported or resisted a major empire. They could also influence military campaigns, succession disputes, and regional alliances.

The Hittite interest in Wilusa may have been partly connected to the strategic position of western Anatolia. Maintaining friendly relations with states in the region could help Hattusa limit the influence of rival powers, including those associated with the Aegean. This becomes particularly significant when considering references to Ahhiyawa.

However, the evidence does not establish that Hittite-Wilusa relations directly caused a Trojan War. Instead, it provides a historical framework within which conflict involving Troy becomes conceivable. The documents show that western Anatolia was politically active and that Wilusa participated in international diplomacy.

16. Ahhiyawa and the Aegean Powers

Ahhiyawa is another major concept in the historical discussion of the Trojan War. Hittite texts refer to a powerful group or kingdom called Ahhiyawa, and many scholars associate this name with the Mycenaean Greek world. The exact political identity of

Ahhiyawa remains debated, however. It is possible that the term referred to a major Aegean kingdom, a coalition, or a broader political sphere rather than a single unified state identical to later Greece.

The Hittite sources describe Ahhiyawa as a significant external power. In some texts, relations between Hatti and Ahhiyawa involve diplomacy and political disputes concerning western Anatolia. This indicates that Aegean powers were not isolated from Anatolian affairs. They were capable of influencing political developments across the Aegean Sea.

The possible connection between Ahhiyawa and the Mycenaean world is particularly important because Mycenaean palatial centers existed throughout Greece during this period. These centers maintained maritime connections across the Aegean and could participate in long-distance trade and political relationships.

One of the most famous Hittite documents involving Ahhiyawa is the so-called Tawagalawa Letter, associated with the reign of Hattusili III. The letter discusses disputes involving western Anatolia and a person named Piyamaradu, who appears to have been involved in political activities against Hittite interests. Although the document does not describe the Trojan War, it demonstrates that Aegean-linked political actors were involved in western Anatolian affairs.

The Ahhiyawa evidence therefore strengthens the historical picture of an interconnected Aegean-Anatolian political system. It does not prove that Mycenaean Greeks launched the Homeric expedition against Troy, but it shows that political and military interactions between the Aegean and western Anatolia were historically possible.

IV. THE MYCENAEAN WORLD

17. Mycenaean Greece

The Mycenaean world refers to the civilization that dominated much of mainland Greece during the Late Bronze Age. It flourished approximately from the seventeenth to the twelfth centuries BCE, with its greatest political importance occurring during the later part of the second millennium BCE. Mycenaean society was organized around powerful palace centers and maintained extensive connections with the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean.

Unlike later Classical Greece, Mycenaean Greece was not a unified country. Instead, it consisted of multiple political centers, each controlling surrounding territories. Important centers included Mycenae, Pylos, Thebes, and Tiryns. These centers had their own rulers, administrative systems, economic resources, and military capabilities.

Archaeology provides evidence of substantial wealth and organizational complexity. Mycenaean palaces contained storage facilities, workshops, administrative areas, and religious spaces. The discovery of Linear B tablets has also revealed detailed information about taxation, labor, agricultural production, and military organization.

Mycenaean communities participated in long-distance trade. Pottery and other objects associated with the Mycenaean world have been discovered across the eastern Mediterranean. These findings demonstrate that the Aegean was closely connected to Anatolia, Cyprus, the Levant, and Egypt.

This interconnectedness is important for the Trojan War question. A Mycenaean expedition across the Aegean was technologically and logistically possible. However, possibility is not proof. Archaeology does not currently provide a document identifying a specific unified Greek army that sailed to Troy for a ten-year siege.

The Mycenaean world should therefore be understood as a collection of interconnected palace states rather than as the “Greek nation” described by later tradition.

18. Mycenaean Political Centers

Several Mycenaean political centers are particularly relevant when considering the military world described by later Greek tradition. Mycenae was one of the most prominent centers and became closely associated with Agamemnon in later mythology. Pylos, represented in Linear B records, provides especially valuable evidence for the administrative structure of a Mycenaean palace. Thebes and Tiryns were also significant centers with substantial architectural and archaeological remains.

These palaces functioned as political and economic institutions. They organized agricultural production, controlled stored resources, supervised craft production, and maintained administrative records. Their economies were not based on modern monetary systems but on complex systems of taxation, redistribution, and palace-controlled resources.

The existence of multiple palace centers helps explain why the later tradition describes numerous kings participating in the Trojan expedition. The literary image of a coalition of rulers may preserve a distant memory of the political fragmentation of Mycenaean Greece, although the specific characters and relationships cannot be independently verified.

The political centers also competed with one another. There was no single authority capable of permanently controlling all Mycenaean territories. Cooperation could occur when interests aligned, particularly in trade or military campaigns, but political unity should not be assumed.

19. Mycenaean Kingship

Mycenaean political systems were headed by powerful rulers associated with the palaces. Linear B tablets use the title “wanax” for a figure who appears to have occupied the highest level of authority within the palace hierarchy. Other officials also held important positions, indicating that Mycenaean society was highly organized.

The king's authority appears to have extended over economic administration, military organization, and religious activity. The palace collected agricultural goods and other resources and redistributed them to workers, officials, soldiers, and specialized craftsmen. This system allowed the palace to maintain a large administrative and military structure.

However, the exact nature of Mycenaean kingship remains difficult to reconstruct. Linear B tablets are primarily administrative records rather than narrative descriptions of political institutions. They tell historians what resources were recorded but rarely explain the political ideology behind them.

This distinction matters when comparing Mycenaean kingship with the kings described in Homer. Homeric kings such as Agamemnon, Menelaus, Achilles, and Odysseus belong to a much later literary tradition. Some features may preserve distant memories of Bronze Age political structures, but the poems cannot simply be read as direct descriptions of Mycenaean government.

20. Mycenaean Military Organization

The Mycenaean states possessed significant military capabilities. Archaeological evidence includes weapons, armor, defensive architecture, and representations of warriors. Chariots also appear in Linear B records and were an important component of elite warfare during the Late Bronze Age.

Military organization was closely connected to palace administration. Linear B tablets record personnel and resources associated with military activity, suggesting that the palaces were capable of organizing large numbers of people and distributing equipment and supplies.

However, the exact size of Mycenaean armies remains uncertain. The Homeric tradition describes enormous forces, but these numbers should not be treated as historical statistics. A large overseas campaign would have required ships, food, weapons, horses, and personnel, making logistics one of the central limitations on Bronze Age warfare.

Mycenaean military power should therefore be understood as substantial but constrained by the technology and administrative systems of the period. Warfare depended on maintaining supply lines and securing access to resources.

21. The Aegean and Western Anatolia

The Aegean Sea was not a barrier separating Greece from Anatolia. During the Late Bronze Age, it functioned as a major route of communication. Ships carried people, goods, ideas, and possibly military forces between islands, mainland Greece, and the Anatolian coast.

Archaeological discoveries demonstrate strong connections between Mycenaean Greece and western Anatolia. Mycenaean pottery has been found in Anatolian contexts, while Anatolian materials have also circulated through the Aegean. These exchanges demonstrate sustained interaction rather than complete isolation.

Political relations were more complicated than commercial exchange alone. Hittite records indicate that Aegean-linked powers could become involved in disputes in western Anatolia. This suggests that the Aegean-Anatolian relationship included diplomacy and competition as well as trade.

Troy occupied a particularly interesting position within this network because of its location near the entrance to the Dardanelles. Its inhabitants could interact with both Anatolian and Aegean spheres, making the city a natural point of contact between different political and economic systems.

V. TROY

22. The Geography of Troy

Troy was located at Hisarlık in northwestern Anatolia, in modern Türkiye. Its position was strategically significant because it stood near the Dardanelles, the narrow waterway connecting the Aegean Sea with the Sea of Marmara and, beyond it, the Black Sea.

The surrounding geography included fertile agricultural land and access to maritime routes. A settlement in this region could benefit from both agricultural production and interaction with passing trade networks. At the same time, its location exposed it to political competition.

Troy's geography should not be reduced to the claim that it “controlled all trade between the Aegean and Black Sea.” Ancient trade was more complex than a single city controlling a single route. Nevertheless, Troy's location gave it strategic advantages and made it relevant to wider regional networks.

Its position also helps explain why the settlement developed into a fortified urban center during the Bronze Age.

23. Hisarlık and the Archaeological Site

The archaeological site of Troy is located at Hisarlık. Excavations began in the nineteenth century under Heinrich Schliemann and were later continued by numerous archaeological teams. The site contains multiple settlement layers built on top of one another, reflecting thousands of years of occupation.

This layered structure is essential to understanding the Trojan War question. “Troy” was not a single city that existed unchanged throughout history. Different settlements were built, destroyed, abandoned, and reconstructed at the same location.

Archaeologists traditionally label the major layers Troy I through Troy IX. For the Late Bronze Age, Troy VI and Troy VII are particularly important. Their architecture, defensive walls, pottery, and destruction evidence have all been examined in attempts to identify which settlement, if any, might correspond to the historical background of the Trojan War.

The archaeological record cannot by itself confirm the Homeric narrative. It can establish that a major fortified settlement existed at Hisarlık and that destruction and rebuilding occurred there. Interpreting the causes of those destructions requires comparison with other archaeological and textual evidence.

24. Troy VI and Troy VII

Troy VI is generally associated with the later Middle and Late Bronze Age and is characterized by substantial defensive walls and monumental architecture. The settlement appears to have been prosperous and well organized. Its fortifications indicate that defense was an important consideration.

Troy VI was destroyed, although the precise cause remains debated. Earthquake damage has been proposed as an explanation for parts of the destruction, while other interpretations have considered warfare or multiple factors. The evidence does not provide a simple answer.

Troy VII was constructed after the destruction of Troy VI and continued the settlement tradition at Hisarlık. Archaeologists have identified several phases within Troy VII, with Troy VIIa often receiving particular attention in discussions of the Trojan War. Evidence from the settlement has been interpreted in different ways, including signs of increased storage and defensive preparation.

However, archaeological evidence should not be forced to fit Homeric tradition. A destruction layer does not automatically represent a Greek siege, and a city showing signs of conflict does not automatically represent the Homeric Troy.

The most historically responsible interpretation is that Troy experienced periods of destruction and reconstruction during the relevant centuries, while the precise causes and their relationship to later Trojan War traditions remain uncertain.

25. Troy's Strategic Importance

Troy's importance was strongly connected to geography. The city was positioned near major maritime routes and within reach of both the Aegean and Anatolian worlds. Its location made it valuable as a settlement, trading center, and political stronghold.

A fortified city in such a position could benefit from trade while also protecting its own interests. Its rulers would have needed to maintain relationships with neighboring powers and manage interactions with merchants, travelers, and potentially hostile armies.

The strategic value of Troy should therefore be understood in regional rather than purely economic terms. It was part of a larger network involving western Anatolia, the Aegean islands, mainland Greece, and the eastern Mediterranean.

This strategic context makes Troy relevant to the historical Trojan War hypothesis. A conflict involving the city would have had consequences beyond the immediate population because it could affect access to routes, alliances, and regional influence.

26. Troy and the Dardanelles

The Dardanelles, known in antiquity as the Hellespont in later Greek tradition, form one of the most important geographical features of the region. The strait connects the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara and ultimately to the Black Sea.

Control of maritime movement through the area could have strategic value. However, ancient navigation was influenced by winds, currents, coastal geography, and seasonal conditions. Ships did not simply move through the region according to modern concepts of fixed shipping lanes.

Troy's proximity to the Dardanelles therefore gave it strategic significance without necessarily meaning that Troy exercised absolute control over every ship passing through the region. The settlement's position made it a participant in regional networks rather than necessarily a gatekeeper with complete authority.

For delegates, this distinction is important because historical arguments should avoid exaggerating Troy's economic power without archaeological or textual evidence.

27. Troy's Political Position

If Troy is associated with Wilusa, then the city may have been part of the western Anatolian political system described in Hittite sources. This would place it within a complex network of local kingdoms, Hittite diplomacy, and Aegean influence.

Troy's political position may have required balancing relationships with larger powers. A small or medium-sized kingdom could survive by recognizing a powerful neighbor, forming alliances, or maintaining neutrality. Such strategies were common in the broader Late Bronze Age.

This also helps explain why Troy could become the subject of later stories about a major international conflict. A city positioned between powerful political spheres could become involved in disputes even without possessing the military strength of an empire.

Nevertheless, there is no surviving document that explicitly states that Troy was attacked by a Mycenaean coalition. The political context makes such interaction possible, but the exact historical event remains uncertain.

VI. ORIGINS OF THE TROJAN CONFLICT

28. Political Tensions in Western Anatolia

Western Anatolia experienced repeated political tensions during the Late Bronze Age. Hittite rulers sought to maintain influence over the region, while local kingdoms attempted to preserve their independence. At the same time, Aegean-linked powers were capable of becoming involved in western Anatolian affairs.

These tensions could result from territorial disputes, succession conflicts, diplomatic disagreements, or competition between local rulers. Because political borders were not fixed in the modern sense, control over territories could change relatively quickly.

The Hittite records provide evidence of military campaigns and diplomatic negotiations involving western Anatolia. These records demonstrate that the region was politically active and sometimes unstable.

Such instability provides a realistic historical setting for conflict around Troy. However, it does not identify a single event as “the Trojan War.” Instead, it suggests that the Homeric tradition may have emerged from a broader memory of repeated conflicts.

29. Ahhiyawa and Wilusa

The relationship between Ahhiyawa and Wilusa is one of the most intriguing elements of the historical debate. Hittite texts demonstrate that Ahhiyawa was involved in western Anatolian politics and that Wilusa was an important political entity within the region.

If Ahhiyawa represents a Mycenaean or Aegean power and Wilusa corresponds to Troy, then the documents establish a historical framework in which Aegean and Trojan-associated political interests could intersect.

The evidence does not, however, describe a ten-year siege led by Agamemnon. Instead, it presents a world of diplomacy, political disputes, local rulers, and competing spheres of influence.

This distinction is fundamental. The Hittite documents are valuable precisely because they are contemporary evidence, but they do not tell the same story as Homer. Historians therefore use them to reconstruct the political environment rather than to directly “prove” the epic narrative.

30. Trade, Territory and Strategic Competition

Economic interests were closely connected to political power in the Bronze Age. Trade routes allowed rulers to obtain metals, luxury goods, agricultural products, textiles, and other resources. Access to important regions could therefore strengthen a kingdom's political position.

Western Anatolia was especially valuable because it connected the Aegean with the Anatolian interior. Troy's geographical position placed it within this network. Competition over territory and access to routes could therefore contribute to political tensions.

However, economic explanations should not be simplified into a single claim that the Trojan War was “fought for trade.” Ancient conflicts usually involved multiple overlapping factors. Political authority, personal rivalries between rulers, territorial disputes, alliances, and economic interests could all contribute to instability.

A useful historical approach is therefore to treat trade as one possible factor within a broader system of strategic competition.

31. Diplomatic Disputes

Diplomatic disputes were an important feature of Late Bronze Age international relations. Kings exchanged letters, envoys, gifts, and treaties, but diplomatic relationships could also deteriorate when rulers failed to fulfill obligations.

The Hittite diplomatic archive provides examples of disagreements involving western Anatolian rulers and Aegean-linked powers. These disputes demonstrate that political conflict did not always begin with open warfare. Negotiations, demands, threats, and accusations could precede military action.

This is relevant to a MUN simulation because delegates should consider diplomacy as an active tool rather than simply a temporary pause between wars. Ancient rulers could use treaties, marriage alliances, hostage arrangements, promises of protection, and economic relationships to prevent or manage conflict.

A potential Trojan conflict should therefore be examined not only through the question “Who attacked Troy?” but also through the preceding diplomatic environment. What obligations existed? Which rulers had alliances? Which powers might have benefited from intervention? These questions create a more historically realistic understanding of the crisis.

32. Possible Causes of Conflict

There is no single confirmed explanation for the historical origins of the Trojan War. Several possibilities have been proposed by historians, and each should be treated according to the evidence available.

One possibility is territorial competition. Troy or Wilusa may have occupied a strategically valuable region, and conflicts over territory could have involved neighboring powers. Another possibility is competition over political influence in western Anatolia, particularly between Hittite and Aegean interests.

Economic factors may also have contributed. Access to maritime routes and regional resources could make certain territories strategically important. However, economic motives alone are difficult to establish from the surviving evidence.

Diplomatic disputes are another possibility. The Hittite documents demonstrate that political disagreements involving western Anatolian rulers and Aegean-linked powers occurred during the Late Bronze Age. These conflicts show that tensions could emerge through alliances and rivalries rather than simple territorial conquest.

Finally, the Trojan War tradition itself may represent the combination of multiple historical memories. Rather than preserving one single war exactly as it occurred, later Greek storytelling may have combined memories of different conflicts into one famous narrative.

33. The Historical Question of the Trojan War

The historical question surrounding the Trojan War remains unresolved. Archaeology confirms that a substantial settlement existed at Hisarlık during the Late Bronze Age. Hittite records mention Wilusa, which many scholars associate with Troy, and they also refer to Ahhiyawa, which is widely connected with the Aegean or Mycenaean world.

These pieces of evidence demonstrate that the basic political setting described by later Trojan traditions is historically plausible. Western Anatolia experienced conflicts, Aegean powers were involved in the region, and Troy was an important settlement.

What remains uncertain is whether these facts correspond to one specific war remembered in later Greek epic. No surviving Late Bronze Age document describes Agamemnon leading a Greek coalition against Troy. No archaeological discovery has

confirmed the Trojan Horse. The exact identity of Homeric characters such as Achilles, Hector, Helen, and Paris as historical individuals also cannot be established from contemporary evidence.

The most cautious conclusion is that the Trojan War tradition may preserve memories of one or more conflicts involving Troy and the Aegean world during the Late Bronze Age. The Homeric poems, however, were composed centuries later and transformed these possible historical memories into an elaborate literary tradition.

VII. THE TROJAN WAR TRADITION

34. The Judgment of Paris

The Judgment of Paris is one of the foundational stories of the later Trojan War tradition. According to Greek mythology, Paris, a prince of Troy, was asked to determine which of three goddesses—Hera, Athena, or Aphrodite—was the most beautiful. Each goddess offered him a reward in exchange for his decision. Paris ultimately chose Aphrodite, who promised him the love of the most beautiful woman in the world.

This woman was Helen, the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta. The story therefore provides a mythological explanation for the beginning of the conflict: Paris's decision creates a chain of events that eventually leads to Helen's departure for Troy and the Greek expedition.

From a historical perspective, however, the Judgment of Paris is mythology rather than contemporary evidence. There is no archaeological or Hittite document confirming that such an event occurred.

The story is nevertheless important for understanding how later Greeks explained the war. Myth transformed a complicated political conflict into a narrative involving divine intervention, personal choices, honor, desire, and revenge.

35. Helen and Menelaus

Helen and Menelaus occupy central positions in the later Trojan War tradition. Helen is presented as the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta, while Paris is the Trojan prince associated with her departure to Troy. Different ancient traditions vary in how they describe Helen's role and whether she was abducted, persuaded, or willingly left with Paris.

Menelaus's response becomes one of the major motivations for the Greek expedition. His personal grievance becomes connected to a broader concept of honor and alliance.

Other Greek rulers are drawn into the conflict through previous promises and political obligations.

The story should not be treated as evidence that a real Helen or Menelaus caused a historical war. Instead, these characters provide the literary structure through which the later tradition explains the conflict.

Interestingly, the emphasis on marriage alliances, dynastic relationships, and personal honor reflects themes that were important in ancient societies. Even if the specific story is legendary, it demonstrates how political conflicts could be narrated through personal relationships.

36. The Greek Coalition

Later Greek tradition describes the expedition against Troy as a large coalition of rulers from different parts of the Greek world. The forces include famous figures such as Agamemnon, Menelaus, Achilles, Odysseus, Ajax, and Nestor.

This coalition reflects the decentralized political character of the Greek heroic world. Rather than being commanded by a single unified state, different kings are portrayed as bringing their own forces. Agamemnon is presented as the overall leader because of his position as king of Mycenae and his political influence.

There may be a distant historical parallel between this literary coalition and the existence of multiple Mycenaean palace centers. However, there is no direct evidence confirming that these particular rulers gathered together for a single expedition.

The coalition narrative nevertheless provides an important framework for MUN delegates because it highlights the difficulty of coordinating multiple political actors. Different rulers could have different goals, loyalties, and levels of commitment to the campaign.

37. Agamemnon and the Achaean Forces

Agamemnon is presented in later Greek tradition as the leader of the Greek forces. He is traditionally described as the king of Mycenae and the brother of Menelaus. His leadership represents both military authority and political coordination among the Greek rulers.

The relationship between Agamemnon and Achilles is particularly important in the *Iliad*. Their disagreement demonstrates the tension that can exist within a coalition. Although Agamemnon has overall authority, Achilles possesses exceptional military prestige and expects recognition of his own status.

The *Iliad* does not present a perfectly unified Greek army. Instead, it emphasizes disagreements, rivalries, personal honor, and conflicting priorities. This provides a more complex picture of coalition warfare than a simple united army marching toward a common objective.

Historically, the names and events cannot be independently verified as Bronze Age facts. Agamemnon is best understood as a central figure of the later epic tradition, potentially reflecting distant memories of Mycenaean political structures.

38. The Siege of Troy

The traditional story describes the Greeks as besieging Troy for ten years. The city is portrayed as exceptionally difficult to capture because of its walls and defensive strength.

From a historical perspective, a prolonged siege would have been extremely difficult during the Bronze Age. Maintaining a large force overseas required ships, food, water, weapons, and secure supply lines. Seasonal conditions and disease would also have affected military operations.

The *Iliad* itself does not narrate the entire ten-year siege. Instead, it focuses on a short period during the final stages of the conflict, particularly the anger of Achilles and the confrontation between Achilles and Hector.

This distinction is often overlooked. The full ten-year war belongs to the broader Trojan War tradition, while the *Iliad* focuses on a much narrower episode.

If a historical conflict occurred at Troy, it may not have resembled the literary siege exactly. Ancient warfare could involve repeated attacks, raids, political pressure, and temporary campaigns rather than a continuous blockade lasting ten years.

39. Achilles and Hector

Achilles and Hector are the two central warriors of the *Iliad*. Achilles is the greatest warrior among the Greek forces, while Hector is the leading defender of Troy and the son of King Priam.

Their conflict represents more than a military confrontation. The poem uses their characters to explore themes such as honor, mortality, responsibility, loyalty, and the consequences of war.

Achilles' anger begins with his dispute with Agamemnon. After withdrawing from battle, he eventually returns following the death of his companion Patroclus. Hector kills Patroclus, and Achilles then confronts Hector outside the walls of Troy.

Their final encounter is one of the most famous episodes in ancient literature. Yet, from a historical perspective, there is no contemporary evidence confirming that either warrior existed as described.

The importance of Achilles and Hector therefore lies primarily in literary tradition. Their stories demonstrate how later Greek culture transformed the memory of warfare into a narrative about individual heroism and tragedy.

40. The Fall of Troy

The fall of Troy is one of the most important events in the wider Trojan War tradition. According to later mythology, the Greeks eventually succeed in capturing the city after years of unsuccessful attempts.

Different ancient sources provide different versions of the city's destruction. The *Iliad* itself does not narrate the complete fall of Troy. Later epic traditions and other ancient authors provide additional stories concerning the final destruction of the city.

Archaeology confirms that settlements at Hisarlık experienced destruction during the Late Bronze Age, but archaeology cannot establish that these destructions correspond specifically to the Homeric fall of Troy. Different causes have been proposed, including warfare and natural disaster, depending on the archaeological layer under discussion.

The distinction between archaeological destruction and literary destruction is therefore essential. A destroyed settlement provides evidence of an event, but not necessarily the identity of the attackers or the circumstances described by later poets.

41. The Trojan Horse Tradition

The Trojan Horse is perhaps the most recognizable element of the Trojan War tradition. According to later mythology, the Greeks constructed a large wooden horse, concealed soldiers inside it, and presented it to the Trojans as a supposed gift. The Greeks then appeared to withdraw, allowing the horse to be brought inside the city. At night, the soldiers emerged and opened the gates, allowing the Greek forces to enter.

The story is deeply important to later representations of the Trojan War, but it must be distinguished from the archaeological record. No archaeological discovery has established that a wooden horse was used to capture Troy. Furthermore, the *Iliad* does not actually narrate the Trojan Horse episode as the mechanism of Troy's fall. The story belongs primarily to the wider epic tradition surrounding the war.

Ancient sources provide different versions of the episode, and later authors expanded its symbolism. The horse has consequently become a representation of deception, strategy, and the dangers of accepting apparently harmless gifts.

For this committee, the Trojan Horse should therefore be treated as a literary and mythological tradition rather than as a verified historical event. Delegates may use the story when discussing the cultural legacy of the Trojan War, but should avoid presenting it as archaeological evidence.

The broader historical significance of the Trojan Horse tradition lies in what it reveals about the way societies remember warfare. A complicated military conflict can become transformed into a memorable story centered on one dramatic act of strategy. Whether or not anything resembling the horse actually occurred, the story demonstrates how later generations reshaped possible memories of Bronze Age conflict into mythology.

The Trojan War tradition should ultimately be understood as the intersection of three different forms of evidence: archaeology, contemporary Late Bronze Age documents, and much later Greek literature. Archaeology demonstrates the existence and destruction of settlements at Troy; Hittite texts reveal a politically active western Anatolia involving entities such as Wilusa and Ahhiyawa; and Greek epic tradition transforms this broader historical world into the stories of Helen, Paris, Achilles, Hector, Agamemnon, and the Trojan Horse. None of these forms of evidence should simply be substituted for the others. Understanding their differences is essential for delegates attempting to discuss the Trojan War historically and critically.

VIII. SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

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