

Of Homer's Troy, And The Careerist Scholars' Wrath

by Andrea Andromidas

Once again there is war over Troy—the old war, over the question: Does Homer's *Iliad* have an historical foundation, or is the epic only a product of the bard's fantasy? The spur to this new warfare, conducted with well-sharpened spears, was the first stage of an excellent exhibition opened in March 2001 in Bonn, Germany on the theme, "Troy: Dream and Reality," in which the latest research results are put before the public.

Since the tour moved from Stuttgart to Braunschweig and now to Bonn, a million visitors have seen the exhibition. Both its stay and its daily hours have been extended to accommodate the extraordinary public response. The exhibition's scientific coordinator is archeologist Prof. Manfred Korfmann of the University of Tübingen, who has led the most recent excavations at Hisarlik, Turkey. Hisarlik was found by Heinrich Schliemann, in the 1870s, to be the site of Homer's Troy.

But the basis for the warfare lies much deeper. Overlooking a few brief cease-fires, this controversy has continued now for 200 years in Germany, and despite the variety of the arguments brought forward, its real subject is always the heart of the great poet Homer.

No one would doubt that Homer, with his poetry, laid the groundwork for a renaissance. When, however, it comes to throwing light on the historical connections of Homer's epic world, and above all their effect upon the real world, then weapons are seized, with a shriek.

The Scholars' Opposition to Homer

When, during the German Classic period, interest in Homer grew, the scientist of antiquity Friedrich August Wolf published a work against him. In Wolf's *Prolegomena to Homer*, appearing in 1795, he put forward the assertion that the *Iliad*, and the *Odyssey* as well, probably could not have been the creation of a single mind; but rather that we could

only be dealing here with the notions of a succession of different poets. The great poet Friedrich Schiller pronounced Wolf's view to be barbaric. Nevertheless, the skepticism which this work spread among specialists, led finally even to the point where the very existence of Homer was called into question, and the events described in the epic were designated as poetic inventions.

When in 1871 Heinrich Schliemann, entirely unknown in the circles of scholars of antiquity, searched through the landscape of the Troad, literally with his Homer in his hand, and later unearthed the ruins of the city, the old enthusiasm for Troy was again immediately awakened—and, as was to be expected, also the shrieking. The stay-at-home German scholars threw against Schliemann the most violent opposition, which finally climaxed in the campaign of the retired army Captain Bötticher. In books, essays, and pamphlets, he charged Schliemann with falsifying the results of his excavations and making completely exaggerated interpretations; and charged that in reality the excavation presented not a Homeric city, but simply a ceremonial tomb.

Even after the recognition of Schliemann's work, and the later discovery of the impressive walls of the late-Bronze Age Troy VI and Troy VII which Homer described, the burning question of the actual identity of Troy could not be fully answered. Although it is firmly established that writing was very much in use in Troy at that time, the extensive excavations up to this day have been able to supply no written or other proof which would unequivocally show, that today's Hisarlik is really Troy. This bothersome uncertainty has urged on the skeptics to the predictable degree, that a much-noticed 1964 archeological study, by Rolf Hachmann, appeared to have definitively set aside every claim to a contribution to the historical explanation of the question of Troy. Therein he says:

"If neither the epic itself nor other sources yield any deci-

sive point showing that Troy must be identical with one of the settlements on the hill of Hisarlik, then there is absolutely no possibility of proof, for archeology in particular does not allow indicative [or circumstantial] proof. Yet further: if the historicity of the city of Troy and the Trojan War is not able to be confirmed either from the epic itself or on the basis of some other demonstration, then it is false to search after the historical reality of the city and the war, for such a proof is particularly impossible from an archeological finding.”

The Iliad’s Credibility

The fact that archeology cannot produce a circumferential wall made out of wood, nor a fortified grave, and certainly not a large city, is said to establish that Homer’s images are entirely unreal. This teaching held, at least in Germany, up to the most recent past, and so, the arguments of the opposition professors Kolb and Hertel in the current controversy over the Troy exhibition, are not essentially different from those of retired Captain Bötticher. In their essentials, all these arguments aim at taking away from Troy the grandeur which the poet, without any question, gives it in the *Iliad*: namely, a well-walled and large city, overlooked by an Acropolis, with resplendent houses and broad streets.

And if Homer’s picture of Troy is entirely unreal, then all the more should all the rest of the *Iliad* be considered to have no credibility.

While the greatest part of the scholarly world has certainly rested since then in the sleep of Rolf Hachmann’s learned opinion, in the last 15 years there have nonetheless come to light some research results, which not only confirmed Schliemann’s basic account, but also pointed, in a fascinating way, toward the path to a clarification of the historical events. Results which arose from the mutual intellectual stimulation of distinct fields of specialization, have now been placed before an inspired public in the exhibition “Troy—Dream and Reality.” Since the author and two of her colleagues had, besides, the great opportunity of viewing the excavations in Troy and the landscape of the Troad, this article will report on them as well.

Alongside many other special fields of study, the following three are essential:

- Archeology; in particular the campaign of excavations in Troy since 1988, led by Professor Korfmann.
- Research into the empire of the Hittites.
- Research on Homer.

Troy, naturally, is no customary excavation site, for everyone who, with great expectation, has ever come here, had a head full of images of mythology and Homeric poetry. When one finally stands before the ruins, one at first is struck by the sobering fact, that before one lies a not-at-all-large hill, but a very complicated one, with more than ten layers of habitation built on top of one another—seven distinct Troys from 3000 B.C. to 1000 B.C., and then the Hellenic and Roman settlements. Very slowly, one begins to locate and distinguish between the remnants of the different walls: Troy I, II, III, and

TROYA

Troy - Dream and Reality
15 November 2001 - 1 April 2002 (extra 1)

- **Special hours, admission, arrival**
Extended opening hours for the "Troy" show starting on Saturday, Dec. 1, the Exhibition Hall, in order to face up! streams of visitors, extends its opening exhibition "Troy - Dream and Reality" The new opening hours are:
Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Up to 2. February 2002:
Tuesday through Wednesday 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Thursday through Saturday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
on Sunday all our exhibitions, included be opened as usual from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- **Informations in French (PDF-file)**
- **Informations in Dutch (PDF-file)**
- **THE CATALOGUE**
- **Links**
- **EXHIBITION PLAN**

In the 8th century B.C. the poet Homer's 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' grand epic, marked beginning of Western literature. Ever it has characterized more than just a city Asia Minor. As a legend it has captured imagination for over centuries and could referred to by artists, poets and writers. In 1990, Troy was included in UNESCO's 1 Cultural Heritage Sites.

For the first time an exhibition has been

An exhibition in Germany based on the last 15 years’ new archeological discoveries at the site of Homer’s Troy, has met an astonishing response: 700,000 visitors in two months; the exhibition extended two more months and open 12 hours every day; and scholarly arguments re-ignited over the re-confirmed historical truth of Homer’s Iliad.

IV, and then the Troy VI and Troy VII sung by Homer.

The second time around, one already locates more clearly the northeast bastion, and the south tower of Troy VI, which perhaps is the one which Homer called the “skäa gate” in his songs. The last meeting between Hector and Andromache comes to mind, and suddenly one also becomes aware of the constantly blowing wind. When one assimilates to this the landscape of the Troad, looks over the Dardanelles and down from the steep cliffs upon the inlet bay of the old harbor, and to the hill of graves of Hellenic times—only then is one really in Troy.

Old Lady Troy Begins To Speak

When Manfred Korfmann began to dig in Troy in 1988, it had nothing to do with the old battles over Homer. He had already excavated at the Bosphorus Strait for several years, then for seven years had led a project very near Troy, which unearthed a burial ground at the old harbor of Troy (Besiktepe); and then, as an expert on Bronze Age Anatolia, he took the new excavations in hand.

When his team came to Troy, their priority was the solution of an archeological paradox which had arisen directly as a consequence of the older excavations at Troy; and especially the fresh determination of a dating system which had fallen

Greece and Anatolia in the 13th Century B.C.



This German-language map shows the approximate era of the Trojan War. The maritime city of Troy (“Troia”) and its surrounding area (Hittite “Wilusa,” Homer’s “Ilios”) commanded the important, and difficult, sea-trade passage from the Aegean Sea into the Black Sea to the north.

Heinrich Schliemann’s 19th-Century discovery of Troy here, first proved that Homer’s Iliad established the location of Troy exactly, and the cities from which it was attacked—shocking scholars who had dismissed Homer’s epic as “just poetry.” Since 1988, new excavations have again shocked the scholars by proving that Homer also precisely described the city’s large size, splendor, and fortifications. Some of the Mycenaean Greek cities which sailed against Troy had long disappeared when Homer lived, 5-600 years later; but Homer’s epic named and located them.

Other recent discoveries about the Hittite Empire (shaded northern area along the Black Sea coast), and its relations with the Mitanna kingdom (eastern side of the map) have shown that Troy was militarily allied with the Hittite Empire in that period. The Hittites had militarily subjugated Greek settlements in southwestern Anatolia, such as Ephesos and Miletos. These events are discussed in the second half of the present article.

out of joint (see chronology box). Beyond that there was the question, already posed by Schliemann and Dörpfeld but never since answered, whether there might be still another settlement below and around the strong-walled hill fortress of Troy VI.

Thus from the tasks laid out, it was certainly not expected that great discoveries were in the air; and the important question of chronology, though pursued through years of difficult work, is not directly of great interest to a broader public.

However, it was otherwise with the question of a lower city. The new method of *geo-prospecting* contributed decisively, particularly in broad fields such as those in the vicinity of the citadel hill which are partly in agricultural use, to finding out relatively quickly where it was most worth digging. The ground is gone over, square meter by square meter, with a magnetometer, which registers deviations from the natural ground caused by human building activity, down to a depth of about three meters. From this arises a sketch comparable to an X-ray picture, which yields to the specialist the first

important foothold.

This being done, it sprang immediately to the eye, that the excavators were dealing with an unexpectedly wide-area and systematically built Hellenistic-Roman period settlement; but it was yet more astonishing, that wherever soundings were made, they also hit upon an underlying layer of Troy VI below the Hellenistic-Roman settlement.

The work of 1992 finally achieved a picture, which appeared to show the course of a lower-city wall 400 meters south of the citadel wall. But by the ensuing excavation, something entirely different came to light: no wall, but rather a trench or moat of up to 4 meters width. Through several cuts and further geomagnetic measurements, this moat could be traced out to a length of 600 meters, so that an entirely new estimate of the city’s size had to be arrived at.

One could now proceed to the conclusion, that to the 23,000 square meters of Acropolis and fortified palace hill, a further 180,000 square meters had to be added for the surrounding city below; which corresponded to a resident popu-

lation of about 6-7,000 human beings, and placed Troy in the first rank of residential and trading cities of Anatolia.

Yet, in 1984, Frank Kolb, in his standard work *The City In Antiquity*, had written the following on Troy: “Troy VI and VIIa, whose chronological coincidence with the Troy of Homer can be questioned, were wretched little settlements, and could absolutely not raise the claim of deserving to be named cities.”

Such descriptions, and similar ones speaking about Troy as a “pirates’ nest,” must now be thrown overboard.

This ditch, of such notable extent, was hewn directly in the rock, about 4 meters wide, 1 meter deep on the side toward the plain and 2.2 meters deep on the city side; so that without doubt, an essential part of a fortification had come to light. This trench had the function, above all, of repulsing approaching war chariots. In the 12th book of the *Iliad* it is described as follows:

“So in the tumult Hector ran through it with great agility, and exhorted his horse to spring over the trench. But the steed would not dare this flying leap, and whinnied out loud, standing on the outermost edge; then it recoiled back from the wide moat—not narrow enough to spring over, nor easily passed through; for a steeply rising bank surrounded it on every side, and it was also implanted with sharp stakes above this, which Achaias’ son had emplaced, thick-rowed and strong, to repel the enemy. Hardly could a steed, harnessed to a wheeled wagon, go over it; footsoldiers only, if they were capable, zealously attempted it.

“But Polydamas, coming near to the defiant Hector, said: ‘Hector, and you, the mighty of Troy and your allies, it is folly to drive your swift horses through the moat.’ ”

The Maritime Troy

It was found, that in some few places the moat was not hewn out; but rather, in those places the rock remained, to a width of some 10 meters. There, it was thought, the city gates must have been found, for there, wagons could easily pass the moat and get through the gate of the city. In fact, a bit later the excavators were able to dig up, at one of these locations, a much smaller trench parallel to the moat and on the city side of it; the small trench was in turn broken precisely where the city gates would have been. Thus this small trench served as the foundation of a palisade wall, in the middle of which the city gate was found; and the large post-locks for the gates were actually found there.

The location of the trench and gates were now established; but a city wall would, in any case, also have to belong to such a defended position. It was not to be expected that the wall would be found immediately, for twice in the first millennium B.C., a new lower city was built, and one can well imagine that the stones of the old city wall would have been completely taken and used for that. Besides, the ground over the stones is often no thicker than 50 centimeters to one meter, so that from the beginning, it could be excluded that layers were built one on top of another.

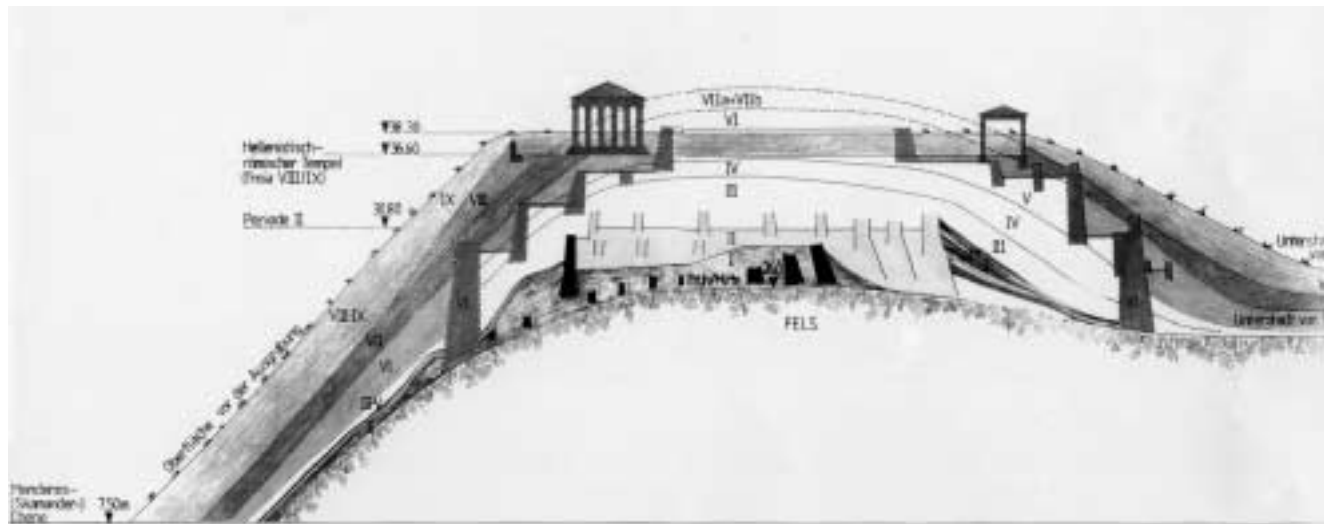


A clay signet or “wheel seal” of the Bronze Age, found at Troy in 1995; its owner occupied the high position of a scribe. The language was not, as expected, the “Linear B” of the Mycenaean Greeks, but rather Hittite.

Eventually, a piece of the old Troy VI city wall was found in an entirely different place; namely, directly at the citadel. It had been fitted in there, exactly abutting the wall of the northeast bastion; which made clear, that the lower city wall of Troy VI had, in fact, not been built as a later addition, but rather was there from the beginning. If one adds to this, that considerable stone foundations of larger houses, built next to one another in the lower city, were also exposed, then one gets an entirely different picture altogether, than that of a wretched and impoverished settlement. Moreover, at other places a foundation was found struck into the rock (similar to the palisade wall in the ditch area), which shows that the maritime Troy settlement (from about 2400 B.C.) already had

FIGURE 2

Many Settlements Lie in the Hill of Troy



A cross-section by the excavators of the different strata of settlement on the hill of Troy, where the citadel was first discovered by Schliemann. The earliest remains, “Troy I” of perhaps 3000 B.C., sit on the bedrock (“Fels”). Schliemann excavated the first important cultural period, Troy II; the so-called “maritime” Troy III-V of 2600-2400 B.C.; and Troy VI-VII, with huge walls and much wider extension, the high culture about which Homer sang, which ended about 1200 B.C., probably with general war and destruction in the region. Above these strata are the remains of Hellenistic and Roman settlements with temples.

a lower city surrounded by a wooden wall.

In the lower city was found everything that could be expected in a prosperous city of this period. Broad streets, fireplaces, ovens, and *Pythoi*, as the large earthen storage vessels were called. Moreover, some areas where craftsmen performed their trade—i.e., blacksmiths, potters, and textile workers. The discovery of more than ten pounds of shells of *Lapillus* snails (purple in color) collected in one general area, is extremely noteworthy, as it points to the existence of a dye industry. Ceramics, which were made on pottery wheels, acquired exteriors with many variations through the use of new firing techniques and decorative modes which in some cases imitated Mycenaean patterns.

Beyond this, horse training and breeding, as well as the construction of war-chariots, played a tremendous role. Treasure finds, such as those in Troy II, have not been made as of yet; however, the few uncovered valuables—such as jewelry made out of gold, silver, and bronze; pearls from carnelian and rock-crystal; or ivory combs—point to highly developed craftsmanship. The archeologists have also found that besides the large number of horses, there were also many herds of sheep and other livestock, including cows, goats, and pigs.

An extraordinary find, is the subterranean water supply system, which was situated to the west of the city, outside of the lower city wall, and discovered during the digs of 1997 and 1998. Homer mentions such a well outside the city walls. The existence of wells and other water reservoirs is common knowledge; however, now the archeologists have dug systematically into these cavities and come across some exciting

finds. From one 13-meter-long hub, three branches diverge outward, the longest of which was 100 meters long. Four shafts, which apparently served as wells, came out to the surface. Originally a little underground reservoir arose here, which was equipped with an overflow drain which connected it to the water in the outer reservoir. Even today, about 500 to 1,400 liters flow into the reservoir daily.

What time period are these subterranean reservoirs from? The assumption that this extraordinary system was created in the late Hellenistic or Roman era has been proven to be wrong. In a study conducted by the Heidelberg Radiometry Research Institute of the Academy of Science, a test of the iron of the site established a date somewhere in the third millennium before Christ. In the section below on Hittite research, the further importance of the subterranean waterways will be explained.

A Residential and Commercial City

Taken together, all the pieces of the “Trojan puzzle” point to a city of continual growth and one which, by its appearances and customs, was of the pattern of other Anatolian cities. Through its extraordinary geographical location alone, the probability of the existence of a noteworthy commercial city is high, given the knowledge that even in Roman times, the transport of goods by water was 60 times less expensive than that over land. Additionally, the exceptional water and wind currents at the mouth of the Dardanelles would have helped substantially.

The Dardanelles owe their special patterns of sea-currents



The way the layered cities of Troy, built on top of one another, look to the excavators today: Here, strata from Troy II, III, and IV are indicated.

to the strong northeast wind which blows straight through from May to October. Since the Black Sea disposes of a great inflow of fresh water from the rivers discharging into it, a freshwater flow with a depth of 17 meters rises in the Sea of Marmara in the direction of the Aegean. Underneath this flows strongly salt water in the opposite direction to the Black Sea. For the sailing ships of that time, which still had no keel, and therefore could not make any kind of headway against the wind, the entry and passage through the Dardanelles into the Black Sea would have been a difficult task. The current ran with the wind, and so one was often compelled to wait for weeks in the nearby harbor of Troy, until at last, under more favorable conditions, the journey could again be ventured.

Who will doubt that this harbor, already on these grounds alone, took on a special significance, and that Troy understood how to make use of this?

Just as the various treasure finds from the Troy II period, which extends from 2600 to 2400 B.C., so also the early use of potter's wheels and the early bronze productions, point to far-reaching trade relations which had already been fostered by the time of this maritime culture. The potter's wheel was known to have been invented in Mesopotamia; and the production of bronze requires tin, which had to be imported from Central Asia or Bohemia. Amber came from the Baltic Sea, scarce iron from the eastern and southern reaches of the Black Sea, textiles and carnelian from the Caucasus, and even lapis lazuli from Afghanistan. Later, when the land-bridge from Mesopotamia to the Black Sea was blocked (around 1700 B.C.), and Black Sea trade was carried out on this sea lane, the city of Troy was able to develop rapidly and eventually develop a high culture, which lasted for 450 years.

A Sign of Writing Emerges

In 1995 the first writing finally surfaced in Troy: a round, bi-convex bronze seal, furnished on both sides with Bronze Age characters. It is only 2.5 centimeters wide and 1 centimeter thick, bored through in the middle; a so-called Anatolian wheel seal, both sides of which could be used in practice. The inscription on one side says that its owner occupied the high calling of a scribe; and the other side was used by his wife. The characters were, contrary to some expectations, unequivocally not Linear B, but rather Hittite—a script which has only been deciphered in the most recent years. While Hittite cuneiform writing has been read since 1917, Hittite hieroglyphic (or Luwian) writing was only fully deciphered in 1997.

The seal found in Troy shows cuneiform writing in the outer ring and hieroglyphic signs in the inner. We will soon see that this astonishing find speaks in favor of a very long-lasting connection of Troy to the Hittite Empire.

The Hittites

In 1905, archeologist Hugo Winkler, commissioned and sent to Bogazköy, Turkey by the German Oriental Society, began archeological excavations there. Very soon he chanced upon an extensive clay tablet archive, which not only revealed to him that he was in the midst of the one-time capital city of the Hittite Empire, namely, Hattushash (Hatusa), but that he also held right in his hands a letter written in Akkadian from the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II to the Hittite King Hattusili III.

This writing reported on the just concluded peace treaty of 1269 B.C. between Egypt and the Hittite Empire, with

FIGURE 3

How Troy May Have Looked in Third Millennium B.C.



This computer reconstruction of the layout of Troy II was done by the University of Tübingen team excavating at the site since 1988. The pattern was already seen here, of an upper city (the “fortress hill,” or citadel) and a lower city, which at the later time of the Iliad, had some 7,000 inhabitants and its own surrounding wall and moat.

which scholars were already familiar from the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the walls of the Temple of Karnak.

In the course of the excavations, a good number of additional such clay tablets were uncovered, which still were completely unreadable, because they were written in the, in 1905, as-yet undeciphered language of the Hittites. Although this Indoeuropean language would be deciphered in subsequent years, nonetheless until the present day only a very few experts exist who are able to read it; thus, the tablets unearthed in 1912 still have not been fully evaluated. In spite of this, and from additional archeological digs, we now have an abundance of treaty documents, diplomatic correspondence, and historiographical texts from the earliest antiquity of the Hittite Empire—about which we previously knew next to nothing, but which has become possible to reconstruct before our eyes. Thanks to these and a number of other Egyptian sources, we now are familiar with the political geography of western Asia Minor, and even now know that Troy really is Troy.

Besides the political geography, the Hittite source materials likewise also give us a first glimpse into the political and military negotiations of the 13th Century B.C. Of course, at the present time it were purely speculative to hope to settle the issues concerning the Trojan War that has come down to us through Homer. Nonetheless, the presently available source materials already do lend themselves to entirely reasonable hopes that this will be possible at some future point. For this reason we can agree somewhat more completely about the events of the 13th Century B.C. in Asia Minor.



The famous palace ramp of Troy II, as it looks today. At the upper end, Schliemann found what he called “Priam’s Treasure.” Later it was established that the walls and treasure date from Troy II, in the third millennium B.C.

On the Trail of the Trojan War

Since the 14th-13th Centuries B.C., the northwestern-most part of Asia Minor was called in the Hittite (a.k.a., the Luwian) language, “Wilusa”; or better, the Land of Wilusa. Prior to this it was called Assuwa, with a subdivision known under the name of Taruwisa or Truwisa. In Greek it was Troia (Troy) or Wilios; from which, in later Greek, since the “w” was no longer pronounced, it devolved to the designations used by Homer: Troia (Troy) and Ilios (Ilius).

The Land of Wilusa maintained strong diplomatic relations to the Grand King of the Hittite Empire. South of the Land of Wilusa lay Arzawa, which, by the 14th Century B.C., had advanced to such an important status that from an Egyptian viewpoint, it found its place in the ranks of the contemporary great powers: Egypt, Babylon, Mitanni (Mittani), and Hattuashash (Hattusa).

The southern part of the Aegean coast of Asia Minor, along with the city of Millewanda (Miletus) belonged to the zone of influence of the land of Ahhijawa (Achaea) with its seat upon the Greek mainland, whose power center, according to the newest discoveries, was located in Thebes.

As the Hittite King Mursili II (1318-1290 B.C.) perceived himself increasingly threatened by the expansion drive of Arzawa, he undertook a large-scale military campaign, which first led to the destruction of Millawanda (Miletus), then to the conquest of Abasa (Ephesus), and finally to the division of the Land of Arzawa into Mira, Seha, and Hallaba. The king of Ahhijawa took flight to islands (off the mainland).

Of course, it was fixed within the intentions of the Hittite central power in Hattushash, to secure its power within the conquered regions through the kings it had installed there. Power struggles within the old Arzawan families, as well as further unfolding of the drive for territorial expansion of

Ahhijawa, caused concerns for the future of military ventures all the way up to the Northern (Black Sea) coastal regions of Asia Minor. In correspondence, the Arzawan Prince Pijamarandu was described as particularly aggressive, probably also on account of the fact that he was assured of the support of Ahhijawa. Since finally he also threatened the northern Land of Wilusa, the Hittites had to come to the aid of the ruler there, Alaksandu.

These military interventions of the Hittites, to the advantage of Alaksandu in Wilusa (circa 1290 to 1272 B.C.), ultimately led to its annexation into the Hittite Empire.

From the unearthed clay tablets, extensive sections of the treaty by which King Alaksandu submitted his country to the status of vassalage to the Grand King Muwattalli II of Hatushash, can be examined. Within the detailed formulations of this treaty, indeed, were demanded immediate infor-

mation in connection with insurrections in preparation; the supplying of troops and war-chariots in case of a threat; and the surrender of fugitives, though no internal political interference or economic tribute payment are laid down. At the end of this treaty, for whose affirmation all the gods of the Land of Wilusa were invoked, there are named: besides the thunder-god of the army and Appaliuna, also the god of the subterranean waterway of the Land of Wilusa.

This remarkable mention of a particular representative god resident in the "subterranean waterway of the Land of Wilusa," refers to precisely the type of "waterway" discovered in 1998, and discussed by itself. Taken by itself, it would have already been extraordinary. That this underground waterway, only unearthed in recent years, should have already been known to exist there more than three millennia ago, is certainly of the highest interest.

The Problem of Chronology

Chronology signifies, quite generally, the ordering of historical subjects and occurrences according to time. Since prehistoric archaeology can only be traced back to written documentation in a very few cases, the modern methods of dating unearthed artifacts, based upon modern scientific discoveries such as radiocarbon dating, are very important. But these methods were only developed over the past 50 years. Before that, different methods had to be used.

Heinrich Schliemann (1822-91) developed a method, still valid up to the present day, with which it could be determined, how to order particular settlements chronologically, on the basis of the quality of clay and the decorative techniques employed. He used this method in his excavations at Troy, and it has been employed during all the digs there since that time.

The fact that the city of Troy had, for centuries, been built with clay bricks, led to what was, for archaeologists, an ideal mound, whose strata could be "read" as though leafing through a book. Unlike with stone or wooden structures, men did not use the construction material again and again, but simply smoothed down the remainder of the dilapidated sun-dried brick houses from one settlement, and built the new structures on top.

Based upon those centuries of stratified ruins, a chronological system was developed by Schliemann and his contemporary researchers, which became a reference system for all Europe. Since the Bronze Age was an age of dynamic trade and exchange, all possible objects dug up at all possible sites throughout Europe were dated with the

help of this chronological system.

In our age, of course, it was shown that these comparative methods led to such uncertainties that sometimes differences of up to 1,000 years crop up, which presented prehistoric archaeology with great problems.

The Thirteen Cities at Troy

Manfred Korfmann's objective, in addition to solving the issue of a lower city, was to come to grips with that problem. The development of new natural-scientific dating procedures for historical material, opened up entirely new possibilities. We name here the carbon-14 method; the measurement of thermoluminescence; the tree-ring method or dendrochronology; there are many more. With the help of old and new methods, the strata of Troy became completely determined, such that today we have a fundamentally improved reference system.

Thirteen distinct levels (ages) of settlement have now been identified at Troy, from Troy I—the oldest, and deepest remains. Troy VI-VII comprise the city of Troy of the Trojan War about which Homer sang. The following chronology applies:

Troy I: 3000 to 2600 B.C.

Troy II: 2600 to 2400 B.C. The Maritime Culture of Troy.

Troy III-V: 2400 to 1700 B.C. The Anatolian Culture of Troy.

Troy VI-VII: 1700-1200 B.C. The High Period of Trojan Culture.

Troy VIII: 700-85 B.C. Homer's time, to the Hellenistic Settlements.

The remaining top strata are from Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman settlements.

—*Andrea Andromidas*

FIGURE 4

The South Gate of Homer's Troy



A computer reconstruction of Troy VI, showing the south gate, which is called the Skäa Gate in Homer's song. From the tower of this gate, one had a view across the open plains of the Skamander River, the plains on which Homer told of the ten years' battles taking place.



How the excavation of the same Skäa Gate looks today. The main road leading up to the palace can be seen, and on the left, the foundation of the south tower.

The Latest From the Research on Homer

In the second book (canto) of the *Iliad* we immediately encounter the so-called ship catalog which enumerates all 29 of the ship contingents that participated as units in the Trojan military campaign. The enumeration always proceeds according to the same pattern: First of all, the region is designated, and then the various locales which dispatched the combat units, with their champions, are enumerated. Then follows the name of the commander. Thereafter the number of ships is named and their respective troop strengths.

Altogether there were 1,086 ships with something like 100,000 men taking part. From the number of ship contingents alone, one can deduce something like a map of that period. Now, what is really remarkable indeed, is that nearly one-quarter of the places named in Homer's catalog could not—for the Greeks of the Eighth Century B.C., and thus of the time of Homer—be pin-pointed geographically, because there were no longer any settlements evident at those places. For this, there are two different possible explanations: Either Homer had invented these places, or, the designated names stemmed from an earlier epoch. What makes this actually even more fascinating, was that not a single individual locality on the coast of Asia Minor is named in the ship catalog, even though this region had long been colonized and settled by the Greeks of Homer's day and age.

Besides the sometimes strong tendency to consign such difficulties simply to the whims of poetic improvisation, nevertheless there are also always some, even among the experts, who argue that the ship catalog derives from the period of the Mycenaean high culture from the 15th Century B.C.

One fundamental consideration leading in this direction was the following: Who really was able to actually carry out such an enormous enterprise: to launch a flanking offensive of 1,086 ships from 29 regions? Who was in the position to unify the population of nearly the entirety of Greece for a common military objective? For the time after the collapse of the Mycenaean palace cultures, the age of the so-called "dark centuries" between 1200 and 800 B.C., not a single such great enterprise is conceivable. But even afterwards, at the time of Homer, one can certainly demonstrate individual colonization voyages, but not invasion expeditions.

In contrast to this, the time of Mycenaean high culture in the 15th Century B.C. was entirely different. At that time, Ahhijawa (Achaea) was itself an acknowledged great power throughout the Mediterranean, and was very much in the position to carry out such a major undertaking itself. Finally they had already conquered the influential Crete, whose fleet they had thereafter excluded from the southern Mediterranean.

An expeditionary invasion force of this magnitude was thus only conceivable for this period.

A further indication in favor of the transmission from distant past ages, is given by the ship catalog itself, which conforms in its manner of enumeration entirely to that of the Mycenaean registry practices. All heretofore-discovered Linear B tablets exhibit this bureaucratic official language, which is also presented to us in all the detailed records which give information about crop yields, livestock herd sizes, lists of persons in genealogies, lists of deaths, etc. On this account it is conceivable that the lists of all the troop deployments of all the Greek warship contingents belonged to the very beginning of the Trojan War history; were recorded innumerable times in the most varied poetic cantos; and in this way passed down into the *Iliad* as well.

Thus, a lot of things already spoke in favor of the idea that



In the foreground is what remains of the huge citadel wall of Troy VI; behind it, the rising wall of what is called the palace house. It was a two-story house with a very large foundation of stone topped with several meters of sun-dried brick.



*The "Schliemann ditch." Having found the location of Troy with the *Iliad* in his hand, Schliemann was convinced that he would have to dig down to the bedrock to find Homer's Troy. What he found instead, was the more-than-1,000-years earlier Troy II. Later, he regretted having damaged and destroyed strata in between.*

Homer's catalog of ships stems from the Mycenaean epoch. Then, in November 1995, a wonderful discovery was made, which corroborated this hypothesis. During construction work carried out in the center of the city of present-day Thebes, the third-largest Linear B tablets discovery yet found in Greece, was discovered: 250 tablets, which originated from a palace archive of Cadmus. Among the many tabulated place names in the Thebes of that time, it was found that three places named in the ship catalog of the *Iliad*, were now also named in a list of troop enrollments of the Boeotians; and were among those that had been completely unidentified up until then: Eleon, Peteon, and Hyle.

From these tablets the location of Eutresis also was found, about which precise information was already known from archeological digs: namely, that it existed between 1300 and 1200 B.C., after which it had been completely destroyed and was not to be resettled until 600 B.C.

This discovery beautifully confirmed that these place names in the *Iliad* were in no way merely invented, but rather belonged to Mycenaean times and to the domains of Theban noblemen, which even more evidences Thebes to have been the center of power at that time.

Hexameter

Of course the question is now posed: How could the Trojan War's history, if it did actually originate in Mycenaean times, have been transmitted across so many centuries, and especially through the "dark centuries," all the way down to the time of Homer? For a long time this was thought to be inconceivable. More recent investigations in the science of philology, about which we cannot meaningfully digress at this point, show, however, that this were possible through the use of the hexameter poetic verse as a special method of tradition-transmission of the Greeks.

The *Iliad* is comprised of 15,693 hexameters, and not a single verse deviates or breaks out of this rigorously composed poetic meter. This rigor goes so far with Homer that from time to time, in order to preserve the meter, he alters the idiom. A long time ago it had been discovered, that to the basic artistic craftsmanship of the ancient bard belonged a whole series of "standing epithets" (stock expressions or bywords) which he used, and which had been passed down over generations. Expressions like: "the rosy-fingered dawn," "long-suffering god-like Odysseus," "stout-hearted runner Achilles," must have been utilized within the living recitation, with the aid of learned rules of combination, such that the corresponding poetic metrical conditions were fulfilled.

The philological research of the last 20 years has now discovered, that many of these exact standing epithets actually stem from the 16th Century B.C. It is particularly striking, that verses of this type, that have been passed down to us in their Homeric dialect, sound wrong; and that even through rhythmical changes these anomalies still cannot be eliminated. At first, it was assumed that from time to time an error may have crept into Homer. Later, however, after the study of the Linear B texts was sufficiently advanced, the same word-sounds were translated into the Greek of the 16th Century B.C.; and, lo and behold, the verse sounded perfect!

This example also shows that the transmission-tradition among the Greeks reaches back to the Mycenaean period.

From this new knowledge which we have acquired from archeological digs, from research into the Hittite Empire, and from Homeric research, we must draw the conclusion that Homer has again emerged, to challenge us.