

# The Trojan War

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## Achilles

- Greek hero of the Trojan War and the Iliad by Homer.
- Son of a mortal (Peleus; a king of Thessaly) and a god (Thetis, a Nereid; a sea nymph)
- Thetis tried to make Achilles immortal by dipping him into a river in the Underworld. However, he didn't get completely wet, his heel was vulnerable. )
- Peleus took Achilles away and gave him to Cheiron (a centaur).

## Why Did the Greeks Attack Troy?

- Leda (a Mycenaean Queen) attracted the attention of Zeus, who disguised himself as a swan... Helen was born from an egg. She was the most beautiful woman in the world, she married Menelaus the King of Sparta. Her sister, Clytemnestra married Agamemnon King of Mycenae.
- Before that Peleus and Thetis got married. This was supposed to be the last time the Gods and mortals mingled together. Eris, the goddess of discord, was not invited. She threw a golden apple among the wedding guests which had "to the fairest" written on it.
- Who was the fairest? Who got to choose? Paris, the Prince of Troy and the handsomest man in the world got to choose from the three candidates:
  - 1) Aphrodite (the goddess of sexual attraction), promised he would get the love of the most beautiful woman
  - 2) Hera (Queen of the gods) ruler of the world
  - 3) Athena (Goddess of war) victor
- Paris chose Aphrodite, however, the problem was Helene was already married. Aphrodite made Helen love Paris and they ran away to Troy. Menelaus called the other kings who were allied to him and they went to war, led by Agamemnon. Agamemnon and the Greeks vs. Priam (King of Troy)
- The Greeks assembled at Aulis (near Athens) to sail across the Aegean. There is no wind to blow their ships to Troy. The only way they will get a wind is if they sacrifice Agamemnon's daughter. They get wind and sail off to Troy.
- The God's take sides in the war. Hera and Athena side with the Greeks, Aphrodite with the Trojans.
- Achilles kills Hector, son of Priam, and ties his body behind his chariot and drags his body around the walls of Troy. Apollo is very protective of Achilles. Paris manages to shoot Achilles in the ankle.
- For 9 years the Greeks raid the control side and ruin the economy.
- Odysseus manages to trick the Trojans by building the wooden horse with Greek warriors hidden inside of it. The Trojans think the Greeks intended it as a gift for the gods. The Greeks "leave" and hide their ships behind an island. The Trojans bring the horse in and open the gates for the other Greeks and kill/enslave all the Trojans. Then they burn Troy and go home.
- The Greeks like to claim these mythical heroes as their ancestors. They actually believed the Trojan War was real.
- Epic Cycle of the Trojan War: 8 poems, only 2 survive (2 and 7) and are attributed to Homer. We know the titles of the other poems and a bit of what they are about. They are lyrics to a song, the poems are sung.
- Who was Homer? Some scholars believe it was more than one author. No one can agree on his birth place, when he lived (around 500 years after the Trojan War was said to take place), and even if he was a man. There is a tradition that he was blind; the poems are really long and it is said that people who are blind have good memories. Oral tradition... Not written until Homer.
- The Iliad: #2 in the epic cycle. Another name for Troy is Ilion/Ilium. Only about a few months in the 10th year in the Trojan war. Centres on Achilles. Does not tell about the death of Achilles, the wooden horse, the fall of Troy, or the return home of the Greeks. These are part of the lost epics 3-6.
- The Odyssey: #7 in the epic cycle. Quest myth of Odysseus return to his home in Ithaca. It took him ten years to go home. While he has been gone for 20 years his affairs have been looked after by Penelope. Just before he left, his son Telemachos was born. Penelope remained faithful the entire time Odysseus was away even though many suitors wanted to marry Penelope. She knew he would be home eventually. She stalled the suitors, by saying she'd decide when she was done her weaving (each night she undid some of it). Odysseus didn't want to go to war, he pretended to be crazy, but the recruiters tested him by putting baby Telemachos in front of Odysseus plough and he couldn't plough his baby, so they knew he wasn't crazy.
- Travels of Odysseus reflect Bronze Age trade routes.
- Odysseus got blown off course into the Western Mediterranean and runs into monsters. He used his brain rather than brawn to overcome these monsters. He looses six of his men to Scylla (has the head of the woman, but her body is composed of dog heads) who lives in the Straits of Messina. She works with a whirlpool named Charybdis. Scylla would grab sailors as they were sucked into the whirlpool and eat them. The best known monster that Odysseus runs into is Polyphemos, a Cyclops. A cave dwelling shepherd who was the son of Poseidon. He was a cannibal and had only one eye. Odysseus and some of his men go to visit Polyphemos and bring some wine, to make him drunk so he can pass out and they can escape. They blind his eye by heating up a stake of olive wood with fire and drive it into his eye. He calls out to his fellow Cyclops and they ask who he needs help from, however, Odysseus says his name is nobody. So the other Cyclops think they don't need help.
- All Greeks knew the Odyssey and the Iliad. Homer's influence of the Greeks:
  - Values and ethics (men should be heroes, women should be faithful, etc.)
  - Literature
  - Education (Memorized and recited by school children in Ancient Greece)
  - Competitions (who can sing it the best)
  - Mycenaean elements (tell us about them... Bronze armour, boar helmets, figure eight shields, etc.)
- Frank Calvert identified Hisarlik as Troy (Ilion). Thought that the Trojan War was real. He couldn't get the funding. Heinrich Schliemann excavated Troy's citadel in 1870. He agreed with Calvert that Hisarlik was Troy. He took all the credit. He found a Bronze Age city that had been destroyed and rebuilt many times. Could distinguish 9 different layers of habitation. Was Schliemann's Troy Homer's Troy? Yes and No. Schliemann just excavated the citadel (so it seemed like no), but more excavations show that Troy was a lot bigger; just like Homer had described. The date it was destroyed, but not conquered (no change in pottery style) and was rebuilt and then burned again in 1180 (corresponds to the date that the Romans destroyed Troy). However, there is evidence that the Greeks destroyed Troy.
- What really caused the Trojan War? It wasn't Helene.
  - Competition in the textile trade? Suggested that Troy controlled the routes between the Aegean and Black sea.
  - Fishing rights. There was fish in the Aegean and Black sea. Good position for fishing tolls.
  - Gold
- Sea Peoples invasion accounts from Egypt. Movement of people cause disruption in the trade routes, leading to the destruction of the economy. But they do not explain the destruction of the palaces. Where they the cause or a result of? Are there other factors? Natural disasters? Civil war? Famine? Any or all of these factors could be the downfall of the Mycenaeans.
- The Warrior Vase. From around the time of the collapse of the Mycenaeans. They do not resemble Mycenaeans.

