

Outline 6: The Trojan War and the End of the Palaces

Monday, January 25, 2017

Reading: C/F 52-57

Η η (eta) is for Helen, hekaton (100)

HH = 200

HHHDD = 330

Mythical cause of a mythical war

- Trojan war began with the wedding of Peleus (King) and Thetis (sea goddess)

Wedding of Peleus (King) & Thetis (sea goddess)

- Zeus had a passion for Thetis and he kept chasing her but she can change her shape and he couldn't get her
- Zeus heard she would give birth to a boy w greater power than his and he gave up on her and married her off to Peleus
- Eris (goddess of discourse) threw an apple at the wedding as a gift "to the fairest"
- Judgement of Paris: Paris (Prince of Troy) was the most handsome guy, so he was the judge of who was the most beautiful
- finalists: Hera (goddess of marriage, Zeus's wife and sister), Athena (goddess of war), Aphrodite (goddess of love, the sexual aspect of love)
- The 3 goddesses resorted to bribery to win, Hera promised he would be a King of the whole world, Athena promised a victory of war, Aphrodite promised love from the most beautiful woman in the world
- Aphrodite wins, so she has to give him the love of the most beautiful woman (Hellen)
- Aphrodite made Hellen fall in love w Paris even though she was already married and when Menelaus was away, the two of them ran away and Menelaus decided to start a war

Helen

- daughter of Leda (Queen of Sparta?) and the swan (Zeus turned into a swan and trapped Leda, Leda laid an egg and out popped Hellen and everyone wanted to marry her)
- Hellen married Menelaus (brother of Agamemnon)

Trojan War

- Greeks + Hellenes led by Menelaus and Agamemnon vs Priam, King of Troy and his allies
- Greeks meet at Aulis to sail to Troy
- there needs to be a sacrifice to bring wind to sail to ship to Troy
- Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter so they can get to Troy
- when Agamemnon returns from the war, his wife kills him

Achilles, son of Peleus & Thetis

- Achilles is the hero of the Trojan war
- Thetis was him to be immortal so she dunks baby Achilles in the river of Hades (river of underworld) but his heel doesn't get wet bc that's where she was holding him
- when Peleus sees, he thinks she's trying to drown him so he ships Achilles off to a camp to be raised by Chiron the centaur

Epic Cycle of the Trojan War

- told in 8 poems, but we don't have them all
- #1: *Cypria* (name for Cyprus): *Judgement of Paris*

Homer (author)

- #2: *Iliad* (Ilion/Ilium = Troy), Troy was called Ilion by the Ancient Greeks
- #7: *Odyssey* (Odysseus)
- Homeric question: who was Homer, where did he live, when did he write?
- some scholars say Homer was not even real, some scholars say Homer was a woman, some scholars Homer was 2 or 3 different people and they just put their stories together, no agreement on where he lived or when he wrote but we know it was much later after the Trojan war, traditionally he is thought to be blind because in the *Odyssey* there is a description of a blind singer describing the Trojan war and blind people have better memories than non-blind people
- Homer's influence: values and ethic (all Greeks knew about his stories, almost like the Ancient Greek bible bc they didn't have an actual religious text, better to die young and a hero than to live long), education (every schoolboy had to be able to recite long passages from Homer until recently), competitions (who could be the best singer of the poems that were actually songs), ancient and modern literature (Virgil shamelessly copied from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, our own Margaret Atwood was inspired by his stories and wrote about it in *Penelope's* point of view)

***Iliad*: the Wrath of Achilles**

- 53 years of the 10th year of Trojan war
- Achilles is angry bc he thinks he deserves more of the spoils that is being divided among the Greek leaders and he doesn't get it, so he behaves like a spoiled brat and sulks, and bc he's the best of the Greeks, they start falling behind but he doesn't care and he doesn't help so his best friend goes in his place
- the Trojans see him and they think he is Achilles and they kill him and take his armour
- Achilles gets new armour from his mother and is able to kill Hector, Priam's son
- the poem ends with Priam crying and going to claim his son for burial
- these are mythical stories but people believed they were real
- DOES NOT COVER: the death of Achilles, the wooden horse (it is mentioned in passing), defeat of Troy

Odyssey: quest of Odysseus

- Odysseus devises the Trojan horse, Greek warriors hidden in a 'gift' and jump out at night at attack Troy (C/F p. 53)
- males are slaughtered, women are enslaved
- a heroes (Odysseus) quest for his home (Ithaka)
- he sails home but on his way, he goes off course bc of a storm
- takes him 10 years to get home bc he gets kept captive by a witch for 7 years his adventures reflect the Mediterranean trade routes
- in the straits of Messina he experiences whirlpools (Charypdis) and in the sea is a monster called Scylla
- defeats Polyphemos the Cyclops (C/F p. 54), giant one-eyed cave dwelling uncivilized cannibal (son of Poseidon), Odysseus pokes out Polyphemos' eye by putting a hot stake through it and Poseidon gets very angry
- fight with Polyphemos is possibly a metaphor for the eruption of Mt. Etna (sizzling eye of Polyphemos)
- Greeks vs monsters, Greeks win, as seen in many Greek stories
- bc Polyphemos is blinded, Odysseus and his men hide under sheep to escape
- Odysseus returns to Ithaka on April 16 1178 BCE (based on astrological references in the story that were thought to have been learned much later in history) and he finally sees Penelope and his now 20 year old son Telemachus
- 10 years before, he pretends to be crazy so he didn't have to leave his family for the Trojan war, the recruiters know he's sneaky and trick him and he goes to Trojan war
- when Odysseus returns, Penelope has suitors and he kills them all
- there are no remnants of a Mycenaean palace on Ithaka

The Search for the Trojan War

- Frank Calvert: found Hisarlik and thought it was Troy and he wanted to excavate but the British museum refused
- Schliemann: in 1870, went to Turkey to find Troy (before he excavated Mycenae) took over from Calvert and thought it was Troy, found a city that had been destroyed and rebuilt many many times, 9 levels of habitation
- was Schliemann's Troy Homer's Troy? there are still excavations occurring and they show that a lot of it fits Homer's description
- around 1250 BCE, the city was destroyed but not concurred, known bc there was no change in pottery but no Greek artifacts have been found in Troy, so did they ever actually concur them or was it just a story

Mycenaean Elements in Homer

- sites of palaces
- architecture: megaron (typical aspects of Mycenaean palaces)
- armour

- inhumation, practice of burying in the ground
- known only through oral tradition (passed down by word of mouth)

Non-Mycenaean Elements in Homer

- use of iron, not used at that time
- cremation, not practiced in the late bronze age
- basically the stories were a blend of oral stories from LBA + later customs (since Homer wrote the stories much later after the war occurred)

What really caused the Trojan War?

- competition in the textile trade? artifacts found at Troy suggest that they had a thriving wool industry, as did the Greeks
- control of the Hellespont (sea of Helle)? narrow waterway often used for trading and fishing routes, called Hellespont bc Helle and her brother had a wicked uncle who wanted to kill them so they escaped by riding a magical ram and as they were flying over the Hellespont, Helle fell into the water and died
- if there was a Trojan war, it was fought for economic reasons

Troy & downfall of Mycenaeans

- downfall of Troy is connected to downfall of Mycenaeans
- Sea Peoples: invaded Egypt but were repulsed from it, have spiky head dresses and handcuffs, Egyptians called them sea people, also called Herakleidai/Dorian (C/F p. 56)
- possibly earthquakes? since the palaces were destroyed
- climate change?
- famine?
- civil war?
- combination of all of them?
- Warrior Vase: shows a bunch of warriors that don't wear helmets that look like the boar horn helmets and they also didn't have figure 8 shields, so it is possible these warriors shown on the vase invaded and destroyed Mycenae (we do not know if they are Mycenaeans or other invaders) (C/F p. 45)

Images: Trojan horse (C/F p. 53), Polyphemos, the Cyclops (C/F p. 54), Sea Peoples (C/F p. 56), Warrior Vase (C/F p. 45)

Words to Remember

People: Polyphemos, Helen, Achilles, Thetis, Peleus, Chiron, Leda, Eris, Aphrodite, Hera, Athena, Agamemnon, Priam, Hector, Odysseus, Homer, Polyphemos, Calvert, Schliemann, Sea Peoples

Places: Troy (Ilion/Ilium/Hisarlik), Ithaka, Hellespont

Terms: *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, epic cycle, Trojan War

Map: Troy (Ilion/Ilium/Hisarlik), Ithaka, Hellespont

Think About It!

1. What was the mythical cause of the Trojan War?
2. What were likely the actual causes of the Trojan War?
3. Name the 2 epic poems attributed to Homer.
4. Explain the myth behind the modern term 'Achilles heel'?
5. Odysseus was noted for his cleverness. What is one example?
6. Give an example of a modern 'Trojan horse'.
7. When did Odysseus return? See <http://www.livescience.com/7513-date-determined-eclipse-homer-odyssey.html>

Fun Stuff

How true is the story of Helen and the Trojan War?

Bettany Hughes explores the evidence which includes visits to Mycenae, Sparta, Troy, **reproduction battle chariots in use** and recreation of a burial in a tholos tomb.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X4T3Itt8mgs> (1 hr 44 min)

For a fun review:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiQ4j-D5o4o>