

6-21-2011

Fall of Troy VII: New Archaeological Interpretations and Considerations

Matthew Maher

The University of Western Ontario

Follow this and additional works at: <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/totem>



Part of the [Archaeological Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Maher, Matthew (2003) "Fall of Troy VII: New Archaeological Interpretations and Considerations," *Totem: The University of Western Ontario Journal of Anthropology*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 8.

Available at: <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/totem/vol11/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Totem: The University of Western Ontario Journal of Anthropology by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact kmarshal@uwo.ca.

Fall of Troy VII: New Archaeological Interpretations and Considerations

Keywords

Troy VII, fall, post-processualism, the Iliad

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

Fall of Troy VII: New Archaeological Interpretations and Considerations

Matthew Maher

Swept into their city like a herd of frightened deer, the Trojans dried the sweat off their bodies, and drank and quenched their thirst as they leant against the massive battlements, while the Achaeans advanced on the wall with their shields at the slope. But Fate for her own evil purposes kept Hector where he was, outside the town in front of the Scaean Gate (Homer, *Iliad* 22.1-6).

This passage is from Homer's *Iliad*, an epic poem believed to have been composed during the middle of the eighth century B.C. that accounts the last few weeks of the Greeks' ten-year siege on the city of Troy. This poem continued through the centuries of classical tradition to fire the hearts of the Greek people, and also initiated an interest in Troy that for the last two millennia, "has occupied the minds of many, archaeologically and scientifically as well as emotionally" (Korfmann 1984a:1; Marrou 1956).

The primary objective of this paper is founded on such interest and is specifically concerned with the historical reality of an actual twelfth century B.C. battle between the mainland Greeks and the city of Troy located off the coast of Asia Minor, as maintained by the poet Homer. Although some authors are so bold as to state that the Trojan War, "as archaeological investigations have proved, was not simply a myth or a tradition but an actual historical fact" (Mavromataki 1997:231), most of the literature suggests that the archaeological

evidence regarding the question of a Trojan War is by no means conclusive (Sperling 1984:29).

After a summary of the Homeric version of the Trojan War, I will give a brief explanation concerning the Homeric topography of the Trojan plain; in other words, I will explain why archaeologists have come to accept modern day Hisarlik as the site of ancient Troy. Subsequently, having established the necessary background information, the primary section of this paper will be devoted to presenting the evidence believed to be indicative of an actual Trojan War. To this end, using post-processual methodology, I hope to critically evaluate such evidence as being either supportive, contrary, or at present, inconclusive as to the validity of a historical Trojan War.

It should also be noted, that if I am to carry out such an attempt under the precepts of post-processual archaeology, the issue of bias should be addressed. As "post-processual archaeologists have pointed out, there are no neutral methods: *how* one carries out an archaeological study is intimately related to *why* one does so, both theoretically and institutionally" (Robb 2000:476). Of course, this paper is no exception to the rule, but realizing one's bias and accepting all possible lines of information, whether it is supportive of one's hypothesis or not, is perhaps the first step towards objectivity. Therefore, in this paper an attempt at objective interpretation will be made by accepting *all* the evidence presented; although certainly, not all the evidence will be accepted with equal enthusiasm.

Homer's Iliad

As mentioned above, the *Iliad* only encompasses the last few weeks of the Trojan War; however, owing to flashbacks by the narrator, the origins of the ten-year struggle are revealed. In accordance with an earlier pact, all the Greek kings and princes took part in the

campaign led by the Mycenaean King, Agamemnon, in an attempt to repossess the fair Helen who had been kidnapped by Paris, prince of Troy. The *Iliad* is characterized by a stubborn quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, resulting in the latter's abstention from the battle. At the brink of the Greeks' total destruction at the hands of the Trojans, Achilles joined the fight and, as alluded to in the opening passage, eventually turned back the Trojan assault. The *Iliad* concludes with the death of the Trojan champion Hector, and consequently, all hopes of Troy's salvation perish.

Although this is the point in the Trojan War where Homer's *Iliad* concludes, it is by no means the end of the tale. Preserved in various forms of art and Homer's *Odyssey*, tradition has it that after the prophesied death of Achilles, the ever-resourceful Odysseus contrived the infamous plan of the Trojan horse. Seeing that the Greeks had left their beach, the Trojans believed the war had finally ended and deeming the horse to be a peace offering they wheeled it inside their city. When the Trojans were asleep the Greeks emerged from the belly of the horse and unlocked the gates for their comrades who had returned unobserved during the night. The Greeks sacked the city of Troy and razed it to the ground - they left no man alive, and every woman was enslaved (Graves 1962; Mavromataki 1997). This was the fate of Troy at the un pitying hands of the Greeks, and this is the destruction that is sought by archaeologists.

Topography of the Troad

Ancient historians have long been interested in the location of Homer's Troy. Herodotus, Xenophon, Arrian, and Plutarch all wrote detailed accounts on the topography of the Troad - the region in northwestern Asia Minor that surrounds the ancient city of Troy. By far the most comprehensive account comes from Strabo, a Greek geographer and historian who wrote around the time of Augustus [for a detailed description see Strabo 1913:338-90]. All of these ancient scholars attempted to reconcile Homer's topographic descriptions with actual sites in the Troad, but were specifically concerned with locating a site that matched the poet's description of Troy: a feat that would finally be accomplished almost 2,000 years later.

Most nineteenth and twentieth century literature on the subject leads us to believe that Heinrich Schliemann was the one who discovered that ancient Troy lay beneath a

mound at Hisarlik. In fact, in the preface of Schliemann's *Troja* (1884), Professor Sayce goes so far as to say that the location of Troy had, "been solved by the skill, the energy, and the perseverance, of Dr. Schliemann" (1884:vii). To give Schliemann his due, it was a result of his energy, personal finance, and indeed his perseverance that drew such attention and interest to Troy (Allen 1999; Startin 1993). However, the error in this statement lies in crediting Schliemann's 'skill' in the discovery of Troy. The reality is that Frank Calvert, an expert on the topography of the Troad and the owner of a large part of the site, had made trial excavations at Hisarlik, believing it to be Homer's Troy, seven years before Schliemann had any knowledge of the site (Allen 1995; Luce 1998).

With Calvert's expertise and Schliemann's capital, excavations at Hisarlik began in 1870 with the objective of finding Homer's Troy (Allen 1996). To address the earlier question, what did such excavations reveal that has led archaeologists to accept "beyond all reasonable doubt" (Luce 1998:81), that Hisarlik is the site of Troy? The answer to this question is two-fold.

The first aspect is concerned directly with Homer's accurate description of the Trojan plain. Luce (1984, 1998) maintains that it is not unlikely that Homer, who was presumed to have lived during the middle of the eighth century B.C., actually visited the site. The foundation for this argument rests on the accuracy of the setting and the absence of any arbitrarily invented landmarks in Homer's prose. The problem adherent in this hypothesis is that although Homer accurately describes the Trojan plain, his actual description of the city of Troy is imprecise. To account for such inaccuracy, Luce insists that the mid-eighth century B.C. Troy that Homer visited was at that time a Greek colony. Allen (1999) and Finley (1974) echo such sentiments, and while reminding us that Homer is a poet and not a historian, they maintain that twelfth century B.C. Troy, as it is presented in the *Iliad*, had been covered by several settlements during the elapsed 400 years. In other words, "Homer could not have seen buried Troy, but he could, and did, see the plain of Troy, and he described it with remarkable accuracy" (Finley 1974:9).

The second aspect removes any uncertainty pertaining to the location of Troy. Even if one is not willing to equate Hisarlik with Troy, in all of western Anatolia there is no other prehistoric site that compares to it. Korfmann stresses this point in mentioning that Hisarlik

“boasts a continuous stratigraphical sequence of 41 architectural levels, constituting an impressive deposit of more than twenty meters” and that “the fortifications are truly massive among prehistoric defenses” (1984a:1). If this were not enough, excavations have revealed that Hisarlik comprised a vast wealth, was relatively large in size, and had a long duration of settlements (Luce 1998). Although determined skeptics often cling to the possibility that an alternative site will be discovered, all the archaeological and literary evidence points to Hisarlik as the Bronze Age capital of the Troad (Luce 1998:81).

Evidence of a Trojan War

Excavations at Hisarlik during the last 120 years by Calvert, Schliemann, Dörpfeld, as well as teams led Blegan and Korfmann from the University of Cincinnati, have yielded nine chronological strata for the ancient city of Troy (Allen 1999). Cultural remains on the bedrock level have been called Troy I, and this stratum ranges from approximately 2920-2450 B.C. The latest stratum of settlement has been named Troy IX, and covers a period from approximately 85 B.C. onwards (Luce 1998). The stratum that has been identified as encompassing Homeric Troy, and consequently, the one of most interest to this paper, is Troy VII, which extends from approximately 1250 to 1020 B.C. (Luce 1998; Blegan 1963; Korfmann 1984b; Page 1972).

There have been many calculations made from the literature to ascertain when Homer's version of the Trojan War occurred. Tracing the line of Spartan kings, the Greek historian Herodotus dates the event to 1250 B.C., while the ancient Greek Eratosthenes, more specifically places the date at 1183 B.C. (Allen 1999). Although these and other calculations are, “all rather insecure to say the least” (Korfmann 1984b:28), most of the calculations produce a date that fits into the chronological stratum of Troy VII.

After reviewing the literature on the subject, I found three main categories of evidence pertaining to Troy VII's ruin, which some believe to be indicative of a historical Trojan War, and I will therefore structure this subsequent sections accordingly. The first section will be concerned with Mycenaean pottery found in Troy; the second, with evidence of fire and destruction; and finally, the last section examines the possible link between the Greeks and Hittite texts.

Mycenaean Pottery and Trade

Pottery from the seventh stratum at Hisarlik does suggest that there was significant contact with the Mycenaeans to the west during the late Bronze Age. In fact, commercial contact between Greece and the Troad can be confirmed from as far back as 1400 B.C. by Mycenaean pottery found in Troy VI (Luce 1998). It is interesting to note that on mainland Greece no evidence exists of Trojan exports in return. Luce (1998) believes there could have been exports in the form of textiles but they would not have been preserved in the archaeological record.

After examining the Greek pottery found at Troy, Blegan (1963:159) maintains that there was a noticeable decline in Mycenaean pottery frequency at the end of Troy VI through Troy VII. Furthermore, by using the established and accepted sequence of Mycenaean ceramic styles, Blegan argues that the overthrow of Troy VII must have occurred between 1270 and 1250 B.C. Conveniently, this range of dates coincides with the peak of Mycenaean supremacy on mainland Greece, which Pedley (1993) places between 1450 and 1200 B.C. Therefore, according to Blegan, the pottery evidence establishes that there was contact between Troy and Mycenae, and that the fall of Troy VII fits within the timeframe of Mycenae's dominance of the Greek mainland.

Fire and Destruction

It is believed that the end of Troy VI was a result of a devastating earthquake that hit the area around 1300 B.C., but it appears that “repairs were made, and the life of the place continued without a major culture break into the phase named Troy VII” (Luce 1998:99). The beginning of this phase is characterized by a new and strange architectural appearance; large storage jars were now being sunk into the floors of many houses and were fitted with stone lids so that residents could walk over top of them. However, this stratum was short lived and it appears that Troy VII, “met its end in a great conflagration” (Luce 1998:101).

The destruction of Troy VII is characteristically marked by a burnt stratum, which Blegan (1963) and Korfmann (1984b) believe to be indicative of a war, if not *the* war. Because the appearance of the destruction of the great walls of Troy VII differed so much from the earthquake that had damaged the walls of Troy VI, Blegan boldly states that, “the destruction was undoubtedly the work of human agency, and it was accompanied by violence and fire”

(1963:161). According to carbon-14 dating, this catastrophe occurred circa 1180 B.C. - a date that is very close to the one given by Eratosthenes of 1183 B.C.

Moreover, this stratum contained certain human and cultural remains that apparently point to military action. In the streets and near one of the main walls, archaeologists excavated an arrowhead of mainland Greek type, abandoned piles of sling stones, the skeleton of a man, fragments of a human skull, and the hastily buried skeleton of a girl (Blegan 1963; Luce 1998; Korfmann 1984b). Concerning the male skeleton uncovered, Blegan (1963:161) insists that, "it seemed not to lie in the normal manner of a proper burial; it looked as if the man had been struck down there and, left as he fell, been covered by debris from above. The skull had been crushed."

Hittite Texts

Excavations at the Hittite capital Boğazköy in 1906-1907 brought to light ten thousand clay tablets that aided in the reconstruction of Hittite laws, religion, literature, and history (Page 1972:1). Because of Troy's location on the edge of the ancient Hittite empire, and the apparent similarities between Hittite words and their possible Greek counterparts, these tablets caught the attention of Troy scholars. For example, one such similarity is the Hittite word *Wilusa* (*Wilios*) referring to a city somewhere in the proximity of the Troad, which is comparable to the ancient name for Troy, *Ilios* (Güterbock 1984).

Almost all the locations of the cities and nations mentioned in these tablets have been identified by literary and archaeological study, except for one: the city/nation of *Ahhiyawa*. Since these texts identify a detailed political association between the land of *Ahhiyawa* and the Hittites, the question of whether the name *Ahhiyawa* refers to the land of the Greeks certainly has a bearing on the historical background of a Trojan War (Güterbock 1984:33).

Page (1972) adamantly and persuasively argues that the land of the *Ahhiyawa* is none other than Greece, specifically the island of Rhodes. Assuming that this is true, it becomes clear that the discourse in the tablets regarding the location, politics, trade, and religion of the land of *Ahhiyawa* (Rhodes) is incredibly accurate. To further strengthen his case, Page reveals that the

main city on Rhodes was called *Akhaiwa*. To show it is not just a coincidence and to cement his argument he states that, "the only other considerable Achaean settlement on the west coast of Asia Minor at this time was *Milatos*, and the only settlement on that coast assigned by the Hittite documents to the realm of the Achaeans was *Milawatas*" (Page 1972:18).

Finally, if one continues to assume that the land referred to by the Hittites as *Ahhiyawa* was indeed a Greek colony on Rhodes, then a historical Trojan War becomes more plausible. First of all, the dates of the tablets would indicate that the Greeks and the Hittites, "were in contact for a hundred and fifty years (more or less) preceding the sack of Troy VII" (Page 1972:19). This date, as mentioned above, is confirmed by Mycenaean pottery found in Troy IV dating to around 1400 B.C. In addition, the island of Rhodes was a wealthy trading colony that dominated the sea-lanes around Asia Minor. Therefore, if you consider Rhodes' wealth and naval supremacy, combined with its close proximity to Troy, then Page's assertion that the rich and powerful land of *Ahhiyawa* was indeed a Greek colony becomes conceivable.

Synopsis

The evidence revealed above, was drawn almost exclusively from the work of Blegan, Korfmann, and Allen, archaeologists who have all actually excavated at Troy. It may initially seem problematic that I have not alluded to any of the infamous work done by Heinrich Schliemann, but this becomes logical when considering that during his years of excavating at Troy, he never did any substantial work on Bronze Age strata, and in fact, had mistakenly identified Troy II as Homer's Troy (Allen 1999). To summarize the evidence so far, we can make a few assertions based on the work of Blegan and Korfmann:

1. There was contact between Troy and Mycenae as revealed by pottery found in Troy VII. Furthermore, there was a decline in Mycenaean pottery frequencies from Troy VI to Troy VII. Finally, by using an established and accepted sequence of Mycenaean ceramic styles, Blegan dates the fall of Troy VII to approximately 1250 B.C., which coincides with the peak of Mycenaean power.
2. A burnt stratum of ash and debris dated to approximately 1180 B.C.

characterizes Troy VII. Blegan maintains that the damage to the walls of Troy VII denotes human agency and not a natural disaster. Finally, the presence of certain human remains (skeletal material, hastened burial, etc.) and cultural remains (mainland Greek style arrowhead, abandoned piles of sling stones) certainly makes a military action plausible.

3. Following Page, if the Hittite word *Ahhiyawa* was their word for the Greeks (Rhodesians), then this might be evidence that Hittite and Greek contact goes as far back as 1400 B.C. - a date verified by Mycenaean pottery found in Troy VI. Furthermore, based on this same assumption, the location, strength, relative naval superiority, and wealth of the Greek colony on Rhodes makes it a reasonable agent for the destruction of Troy VII.

Interpretations and Considerations

Standing on the shoulders of giants like Blegan and Korfmann, I will attempt to critically analyze and interpret the evidence summarized above as being, in my opinion, supportive, contrary, or at present, inconclusive concerning the validity of a historical Trojan War. For convenience I will keep the three categories as the base of the structure for this section.

Mycenaean Pottery and Trade

I agree with Blegan that the Mycenaean pottery found in the strata of Troy VI and VII conclusively represents trade between the two cities and that this trade had its origins at least as far back as 1400 B.C. Furthermore, regarding the decrease in Mycenaean pottery frequency from Troy VI through Troy VII, I agree that this represents "a falling-off in the quantity of imported vessels as compared with locally produced imitations" (Blegan 1963:159). The real question is why was there a decrease in imported Mycenaean pottery. Two possible explanations come to mind.

First, since it has been shown that an earthquake destroyed Troy VI, I believe that the decrease in imported property at this time may reflect a shortage of capital. It is not unlikely

that the inhabitants of Troy VI would spend all available resources on the necessities related to rebuilding the city, and simply could not afford the luxury of Mycenaean imports. Or alternatively, Troy VI may have been left so impoverished by the destruction that they were no longer attracting such traders. The result is the same regardless of which explanation is favoured.

Second, we cannot rule out the possibility that the decrease in Mycenaean imports may reflect increased hostilities between the two cities. One could take this evidence to imply the possibility of a trade embargo that could have arisen from Mycenaean pressure for control of the Hellaspont region. Indeed, Troy occupied a very valuable location in terms of trade. Again, it is not unlikely that a trading power such as Mycenae would be interested in controlling the Hellaspont and consequently, all of the trade from around the Black Sea and inland Anatolia.

Turning our attention to the date of 1250 B.C. given by Blegan as the date of the fall of Troy VII, a problem becomes apparent; he states:

There are *some* minor disagreements in detail – inevitable, since the evidence itself is at best somewhat tenuous and conflicting – most field archaeologists accept these dates *in general, sometimes* rounding them out for *convenience and simplicity*" (1963:160) [emphasis mine].

To say that this statement is imprecise and unclear is obvious, but what is less obvious is that his date of 1250 B.C. is misleading. Luce (1998) mentions that in view of recent expert analysis of the accepted sequence of Mycenaean ceramic styles, the fall of Troy VII could be as late as 1140 B.C. The problem that immediately becomes apparent with this new date is that it places the fall of Troy VII out of the range of Mycenaean dominance in Greece. Korfmann (1984a:26) states that, "it is practically beyond the realm of imagination that the Mycenaean would still have been able to rally to such a full-scale undertaking at this time when their own cities were clearly in decline."

In my opinion, the pottery evidence clearly reflects that there was contact between Mycenae and Troy, but the decline in Mycenaean pottery frequency could have simply been the result of Troy VI's depleted capital in an attempt

to rebuild their city after an earthquake hit the area in approximately 1300 B.C. Finally, in light of new dates provided by Luce (1998), it appears unlikely that the fall of Troy VII was the result of Mycenaean agency.

Fire and Destruction

Based on carbon-14 dating of the ash stratum, I agree with Allen's date of approximately 1180 B.C. for the destruction of Troy VII. Furthermore, the fact that this date generally coincides with the pottery evidence (1140 B.C.), and the date given by Eratosthenes (1183 B.C.), makes it a plausible inference. The abundance of ash in this stratum clearly shows that Troy VII underwent a significant catastrophe, but it still does not answer the question of how. Was it the result of a military event as Blegan and Korfmann argue, or was it the result of an earthquake, similar to the one that leveled Troy VI? Truly, neither option can be conclusively disregarded.

Since the destruction of Troy VI was deemed to be the result of an earthquake, and given that natural scientists have confirmed the high probability of earthquakes in this region, I do not believe it to be improbable that Troy VII could have met a fate similar to its predecessor. Moreover, Troy's proximity to the coast exposes the plain to fierce ocean winds and even Homer speaks often about the onslaught of the wild west winds (Maclaren 1863). In light of such environmental conditions, I believe a fire caused by an earthquake could spread rapidly throughout the city and account for such widespread destruction.

And what of Blegan's "human agency" (1963:161) behind the destruction of the walls? Besides simply referring to the probability of human agency, Blegan mentions no evidence that would conclusively show that these walls were brought down by "invading hostile forces" (1963:162). At present, let's consider the male skeleton uncovered in an abnormal position that Blegan maintains, "had been struck down there and, left as he fell, been covered by debris from above. The skull had been crushed" (1963:161). In light of this statement, again, I am drawn to the plausibility of an earthquake. Considering that after the destruction of Troy VII it was rebuilt and occupied (Troy VIII), it is unlikely that a man killed in battle would be left to rot in the streets. On the other hand, if he was crushed from a crumbling building resulting from an earthquake, his body might never have been recovered for a proper burial.

The last hole in the siege hypothesis is Blegan's (1963) interpretation of the large storage jars (*pithoi*) that were sunk into the floors of many houses in Troy VII. He maintains that the presence of these *pithoi* denotes a concern for supplies because there was possibly an impending emergency of some kind. Again, I find this hypothesis improbable. This kind of preparation by the inhabitants of Troy VII would indicate that they had an advance warning of an impending attack and furthermore, that such a warning had provided a significant amount of time to prepare. In my opinion this architectural oddity is better explained as a measure to conserve living space in a city that already characterized by, "the crowding together of numerous small houses everywhere" (Blegan 1963:161). Or alternatively, this architectural feature may simply have been seen as a superior method of storage; that is, for keeping water and food cool, while freeing up valuable household space.

Finally, regarding the arrowhead of mainland Greek type and the abandoned piles of sling stones found, it can be said with certainty that these elements are clearly military in nature. But what cannot be said conclusively is that they played a role in the destruction or defense of the city. Surely, if a city were under attack, it is unlikely that a defending slinger would abandon his ammunition. On the other hand, one cannot rule out the possibility that they were used to protect Troy VII. It is just as reasonable to believe that they were not abandoned by choice but by necessity.

Let us consider the Greek type arrowhead found on the streets of Troy. Certainly, it must be proof of a siege? In my opinion, it is not. As a result of the pottery evidence mentioned above, it is clear that the Greeks and the Trojans had an extensive trade network. Besides pottery, Luce (1998) mentions that the Trojan imports of Mycenaean products included weaponry, and therefore, the arrowhead could have been a Trojan weapon. Furthermore, since the sacking of Troy VII would require a large force of men, certainly more than one enemy arrowhead should be present.

Notwithstanding my criticism of Blegan's interpretations, I am hesitant to completely dismiss his hypothesis that, "fighting and killing must have accompanied the destruction of Troy VII" (1963:161). He accurately determined that an earthquake ruined Troy VI, so it appears that he identify the differences between earthquake and military damage. Therefore, it is my opinion that Troy

VII was destroyed around 1180 B.C., but the cause of such destruction is at present, inconclusive.

Hittite Texts

The hypothesis regarding the mention of Troy and the Greeks in Hittite texts certainly warrants caution on the part of the archaeologist. In fact, it is important to note that most authors writing on the subject of a Trojan War seem to all but ignore the Hittite texts. This may be because any reconciliation between ancient Greeks and the Hittite word *Ahiyawa*, "is still a matter of faith," according to the Hittite linguist Hans Güterbrock (1984:33).

Although Page (1972) puts forth a very convincing case that the Greek colony on Rhodes was the Hittite land of *Ahiyawa*, it is still based on an assumption and nothing more. In his attempt to persuade the reader, he makes note of several striking coincidences. These, I must admit, drew my attention and even caught my imagination. Again, in spite of such plausible coincidences, until further evidence can be uncovered that is not based on speculation or assumption, then they will remain just that, coincidences.

These texts are, nonetheless, intriguing and full of possibility, but are useless to Trojan scholars until an accurate reconciliation can be made between the text and actual geographical landmarks. Therefore, in my opinion, the Hittite texts do not attest to the validity of a historical Trojan War.

Conclusion

"The heroes of the Iliad and the Odyssey have become to us men of flesh and blood; we can watch both them, and older heroes still, in almost every act of their daily life" (Schliemann 1884:vii). These are the words from the preface of Schliemann's *Troja*, written in 1884. For a man who had misidentified the stratum of Homeric Troy at Hisarlik, this statement is presumptuous to say the least. Similarly, almost 130 years later, I believe that it would be just as presumptuous to claim that there was an actual historical Trojan War.

In my opinion, the *conclusive* evidence produced by Blegan and Korfmann can be summarized as such: 1) there was contact between Troy and Mycenae from at least 1400 B.C. up to and including the fall of Troy VII; and 2) Troy VII was destroyed around 1180

B.C. by either an earthquake or human agency in the form of a military operation. These are the *only* two points that I am comfortable claiming as irrefutable.

Luce states that, "the strength of one's belief in the historicity of the Trojan War depends on one's estimate of the overall reliability of ancient Greek tradition and its particular embodiment in the poetry of Homer" (1998:3). I would disagree. The strength of my belief in the historicity of the Trojan War depends on archaeological fact. And at present, such facts (or lack thereof) lead me to conclude that the evidence pertaining to the historicity of a Trojan War is at present, inconclusive. My position is based on the fact that, just as archaeology cannot prove the arguments put forth by Blegan and Korfmann that there was a Trojan War, archaeology cannot disprove them either.

Allen states, as echoed in much of the literature:

to lift the veil of prehistory once and for all, the excavators will need to find the palace archive or some other written proof of the identity of the ancient town and its inhabitants, for without texts, the association of archeological finds with specific historical events is notoriously difficult (1999:258).

Indeed, I believe the only conclusive evidence pertaining to the historicity of a Trojan War that will ever surface will be in the form of documents that give detailed and precise descriptions concerning the participants. Until such documents are excavated, we must, like Homer's Achaeans who waited ten years to sack windy Ilium, be patient.

Further Research

One idea of interest is concerned with the fall of the Mycenaean Empire during the late thirteenth century B.C. This date is suspiciously close to the one attributed to the fall of Troy VII. I believe that this is more than a coincidence. Two topics for further research immediately come to mind: first, could the destruction of both cities, within a relatively short period, denote that the same enemy attacked them both? Second, if there was a historical Trojan War and the Greek coalition was led by Mycenae, could the economic and demographic losses from fighting a

war so far from home have stretched Mycenaean resources and capital too thin and thus catalyzed the decline of the empire and the beginning of Greece's Dark Age? I believe these questions have the potential to solve many unanswered questions that plague contemporary scholars.

Another line of interest that would be worth investigating would be the location of the Greek camp, as maintained by Homer. Surely, attempting to siege a city so far from home would require a large contingent of men and thus, necessitate a camp of significant size and resources. Korfmann (1984b) and Luce (1984) briefly touch on this idea, but there is little literature on the subject. Searching Bronze Age strata at likely harbours around Troy would be a step in the right direction and has the possibility of producing very interesting results.

Bibliography

- Allen, S. H. 1995. Finding the Walls of Troy: Frank Calvert, Excavator. *American Journal of Archaeology* 99:379-407.
- . 1996. Principally For Vases, etc: the Formation and Dispersal of the Calvert Collection. *Anatolian Studies* 46:145-166.
- . 1999. Finding the Walls of Troy: Frank Calvert and Heinrich Schliemann at Hisarlik. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Blegan, C. 1963. *Troy and the Trojans*. NY: Frederick A. Praeger Publisher.
- Finley, M. 1974. Schliemann's Troy – One Hundred Years After. Mortimer Wheeler Archaeological Lecture. London: Oxford University Press.
- Graves, R. 1962. 1962. *The Siege and Fall of Troy*. London: Cassell and Co. Ltd.
- Güterbock, H. 1984. Troy in Hittite Texts? *In* Troy and the Trojan War: A Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College October 1984. M. Mellink, eds. Pp. 33-44. Bryn Mawr: The Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology Bryn Mawr College.
- Homer. 1950. *The Iliad*. E.V. Rieu, trans. London: Penguin Group.
- Korfmann, M. 1984a. Troy: Topography and Navigation. *In* Troy and the Trojan War: A Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College October 1984. M. Mellink, eds. Pp. 1-16. Bryn Mawr: The Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology Bryn Mawr College.
- . 1984b. Besik Tepe: New Evidence For the Period of the Trojan Sixth and Seventh Settlements. *In* Troy and the Trojan War: A Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College October 1984. M. Mellink, eds. Pp. 17-28. Bryn Mawr: The Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology Bryn Mawr College.
- Luce, J. V. 1984. The Homeric Topography of the Trojan Plain Reconsidered. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*. 3:31-42.
- . 1998. *Celebrating Homer's Landscapes: Troy and Ithica Revisited*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Maclaren, C. 1863. *Plain of Troy Described*. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black.
- Marrou, H. 1956. *Education in Antiquity*. NY: Mentor Books.
- Mavromataki, M. 1997. *Greek Mythology and Religion*. Athens: Hailalis Editions.
- Page, D. 1972. *History and the Homeric Iliad*. London: University of California Press.
- Pedley, J. 1993. *Greek Art and Archaeology*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Robb, J. 1999. Analyzing Human Skeletal Data. *In* Human Osteology: In Archaeology and Forensic Science. Margaret Cox and Simon Mays, eds. Pp. 475-490. London: Greenwich Medical Media Ltd.
- Schliemann, H. 1884. *Troja: Results of the Latest Researches and Discovered on the site of Homer's Troy, 1882*. NY: Benjamin Bloom, Inc.

- Sperling, J. 1984. Reminiscences of Troy. *In* Troy and the Trojan War: A Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College October 1984. M. Mellink, eds. Pp. 29-31. Bryn Mawr: The Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology Bryn Mawr College.
- Startin, Bill. 1993. Preservation and the Academically Viable Sample. *Antiquity*. 67:421-426.
- Strabo. 1913. *The Geography of Strabo: Volume II*. H. Hamilton, trans. London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd.