

Archaeology and the World of Homer: Introduction to a Past and Present Discipline

This essay, specially commissioned for this collection, functions as a broadly-based introduction to the question of how to relate Homer to an archaeological context or, as Sturt Manning suggests, contexts, and, as such, takes in and explicitly comments on other essays in this collection (Cook, Finley, Sherratt). He writes as a practising archaeologist with strong interests in the problems of late Bronze Age chronology (see Manning in bibliography) and as he demonstrates, questions of dating, both for Homer and for the events he purports to describe, are crucial to the argument.

In outlining the history of attempts to relate Homer and archaeology from the ancient world to the present day, Manning implies that positive advance comes not just from careful building on previous positions (contrast Finley) but also from resolving the apparent impasse by seeing the need periodically to reformulate the key questions asked, and in particular 'to extricate the argument from the problematics of specifics...'

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ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE WORLD OF HOMER: INTRODUCTION TO A PAST AND PRESENT DISCIPLINE

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Introduction¹

It is over a century since the sensational discovery by Heinrich Schliemann of ancient remains at locations mentioned in the works of Homer, which provided proof of the existence of pre-Classical civilization in the Aegean. Legend had become archaeology. Since then, analysis of archaeological finds has become a highly sophisticated science, and their interpretation the subject of elaborate theories.² Archaeologists can now describe the last meal of a man dead for 2000 years, or model the economic exploitation, in prehistoric times, of volcanic glass (obsidian) on an Aegean island.³ We might expect that they could tell us all we need to know about the world of Homer and Troy. But numerous 'Homer problems' remain: the date and authorship of the poems, the date(s) at which the author set the events in the story, whether the Trojan war actually happened as described (its 'historicity'), whether the site dug by Schliemann can be proved to have been the real Troy, and so on. The basic reason why these 'Homer problems' remain is this: whereas archaeologists can tell us a great deal about a site or artefact, and linguists and historians can analyse a written text, there is often great difficulty in relating the two unless they happen to occur together (e.g. an inscription on a ruin). These two fields of evidence, and so of enquiry, are in many cases mutually exclusive. In the absence of an archive of translatable

¹ I wish to thank Leonie Brown, Lorna Hardwick, Chris Emlyn-Jones, Bernard Knapp, Anthony Snodgrass and Oliver Taplin for commenting on an earlier draft of this paper. I had submitted this paper before the announcement of J. Vanschoonwinkel's comprehensive *L'Égée et la Méditerranée Orientale à la fin du II^e Millénaire*, 1991, or the appearance of E. Zangger's speculative *The Flood from Heaven: deciphering the Atlantis legend* (1992). The first volume of *Studia Troica* had also not yet appeared. Of relevance in the *Studia Troica* volume referred to are: an account by M. Korffman of work at the site to 1989, pp. 1–34; a discussion on work at Troy before

Schliemann by D.F. Easton, pp. 111–29; and two reviews of the issues relating to Troy VI and VIIa, the Myceneans and the 'Trojan War' by S. Hiller and J. Sperling, pp. 145–58.

² The theoretical frameworks and the modern, scientific techniques used in archaeology are described in Renfrew and Bahn, 1991.

³ For the unfortunate man thrown 2000 years ago into a bog at Lindow Moss in Cheshire, see Stead *et al.*, 1986; for a plausible economic model of the exploitation of obsidian on Melos, see Torrence, 1986.

texts from 'Troy', a burial mound with a contemporary inscription commemorating Patroklos, or arrow-heads stamped 'made in Mycenae', what can we expect to find in an excavation that would substantiate a personalized epic like the *Iliad*?

There is no answer, of course. At best, confronted with a 'Homer problem', and the body of archaeological evidence, each scholar must integrate what he can of the evidence into a plausible whole – just as scholars have been trying to do for nearly 2500 years. The fifth-century BCE historians Herodotos and Thukydides battled just as much with the 'evidence' of Homer as we do (Herodotos 1.3–4, 2.115–120; Thukydides 1.9–12). The correct approach and interpretation is no more apparent now than it was then; indeed, recent scholarship has increasingly stressed the insoluble nature of questions directed at what is now seen as socio-political pastiche. The remainder of this essay is an archaeological introduction to the 'Homer problems' which may assist modern readers in their own scholarly odyssey.

When to look?

Questions about Homer and history, whether there was a Trojan war, and so on, only arise because of the literary texts, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Thus, if we are to try to relate archaeology to Homer, or vice versa, the basic limits of time and place for any search must derive in some way from those texts.

The date at which the poems and their stories were initially written sets the latest date of interest. However, (typical of the field) even this seemingly simple question is hotly debated.⁴ The first problem is that the extant texts of Homer are not the original version but the result of editing among variant versions in the third–second centuries BCE.⁵ Some scholars have also argued that the definitive texts include linguistic features as late as the fourth century BCE.⁶ Even in antiquity, certain passages (*Iliad* 10; *Odyssey* 23.297 to end of Book 24) were said by the scholiasts to be late interpolations.⁷ None the less, since Classical authors knew and referred to Homer, we do know that his works existed earlier than the fifth century BCE.⁸ The question is, how much earlier? Even in ancient times, as this second century CE author's comment reveals, the question was a controversial one: 'Though I have investigated very carefully the dates of Hesiod and Homer, I do not like to state my results, knowing as I do the carping disposition of some people, especially of the professors of poetry at the present day' (Pausanias, 9.30.3, trans. J.G. Frazer).

The earliest extant references to Homer by name⁹ establish the most recent possible date of composition as c. 500 BCE. However, there are extant manuscripts with evidence of Attic dialect (over the foundation of earlier Aeolic and

⁴ For three discussions, see Morris, 1986, pp. 91–115; Powell, 1991; and Jensen, 1980.

⁵ See Heubeck *et al.*, 1988, pp. 41–7.

⁶ For arguments on fourth-century features, see, e.g., Chadwick, 1990, p. 174.

⁷ See Heubeck *et al.*, 1988, p. 36 and n. 11

⁸ Homer was central to the later ancient civilization and thought, see e.g. Lamberton and Keaney, 1992.

⁹ These references are in Xenophanes, fragments 10, 11 and in Herakleitos, fragments 42, 56 (Diels-Kranz edition, 1951).

Ionic), and later tradition speaks of a Peisistratid recension. From this we can infer that the definitive recension of Homer's works occurred at Athens in the mid-sixth century BCE.¹⁰ But what about a date for the original? A few lines in preserved fragments of a few seventh-century BCE poets (like, for example, Alkman, Archilochus, Alcaeus and Sappho) strongly suggest reference to Homer.¹¹ In addition, there are representations in artwork c. 700–650 BCE which show scenes from either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*.¹² The Late Geometric cup found at Pithekoussai, Italy, dated to the late eighth century BCE, carries the inscription 'I am Nestor's goblet, a joy to drink from. Whoever drinks this cup, straightway that man the desire of beautiful-crowned Aphrodite will seize'. This is often held to refer to, and parody, Nestor as found in Homer.¹³ (Homeric themes continue throughout ancient art. For an interesting collection, see Buitron *et al.*, 1992. However, it is important to note, as Snodgrass (1979) has argued, that definite mythical scenes – and certainly 'Homeric' scenes – are absent in vase painting before the seventh century BCE.)

The texts themselves also have datable features, but these are not unambiguous. For example, a possible reference to writing (*Il.* 6.168–70), or mention of the Phoenicians (*Il.* 23.744; *Od.* 15.415–6), or apparent proto-hoplite fighting (*Il.* 13.130–4, 17.355), have been construed by some scholars as indicating a date as late as the eighth century BCE. But, as other scholars have demonstrated, the interpretation of such features is far from conclusive.¹⁴ Each of the above three examples can equally well be explained in terms of the Late Bronze Age,¹⁵ or simply as hopelessly unplaceable.¹⁶ Similarly, allusions to the greatness of Egyptian Thebes (*Il.* 9.381–4; *Od.* 4.126–7), and, in the *Od.*, to Egypt in general, do not decisively establish a date for the texts.¹⁷

As well as features present, there are features *absent* in the Homer texts which might set a *terminus ante quem*, a date before which events must be placed. For example, many scholars have pointed to the general absence of writing, to communities having kings and not the later forms of government attested in the Archaic period, and to the lack of any clear signs of the Archaic and Classical *polis*

¹⁰ For a range of arguments, see e.g. Kirk, 1962, pp. 306–12; Jensen, 1980, pp. 96–158; Morris, 1986, p. 91; Heubeck *et al.*, 1988, pp. 36–9; Chadwick, 1990, p. 175.

¹¹ See Janko, 1982, p. 84 and n. 33; Powell, 1991, p. 247–8; Page, 1964; Burnett, 1983; Rissman, 1983.

¹² See e.g. Powell, 1991, pp. 210–1, and Erwin, 1963.

¹³ See Hansen, 1976; Powell, 1991, pp. 163–7, 208–9; but cf. Snodgrass, 1979, p. 124.

¹⁴ E.g. Powell, 1991, pp. 192–206.

¹⁵ See Bernal, 1987a, 1987b, 1990; Burkert, 1983; Bass *et al.*, 1989, pp. 10–11, Fig. 19; Morris, 1989.

¹⁶ On, for example, the inconclusiveness of the description of military organization, see Van Wees, 1986.

¹⁷ Burkert, 1976 (also Heubeck, 1982, pp. 442–3) argues that the allusions to Egypt and Egyptian Thebes are among the latest elements in Homer.

Burkert believes these show that the poet was aware of the revival of Thebes under the later 25th Dynasty (from late in the eighth century BCE), and the general Greek interest in, and penetration of, Egypt from this time (note also the reference to an Egyptian Thalassocracy in the [?] later fifth-century BCE 'List of Thalassocracies' – on which see Myres, 1906). This is certainly plausible, but the references could also refer to Late Bronze Age memories of 18th Dynasty Egyptian Thebes, and Egypt in general (Bernal 1991, p. 475). It is notable that Thebes was the capital of Amenophis III (c. 1390–1352 BCE), the one pharaoh well known to Mycenaean Greece on the basis of the number of finds of inscriptions bearing his name found in Late Bronze Age contexts in the Aegean (particularly Mycenae: see Cline, 1987, 1990). Hankey (1981; also Cline, 1987, 1990; Bernal, 1991, pp. 433–4, 474–9) employs this evidence, and the list of Aegean place names at Kôm el-Hetan, to suggest that Amenophis in fact sent an embassy to the Aegean.

and its institutions.¹⁸ These and other factors seem to preclude a date *after* the eighth century BCE, but, as Morris (1986, pp. 94–115) rightly demonstrates, they do not prevent a date as low as *during* the eighth century BCE. Thus, from these approaches, we might assume a date for Homer by, or around, c. 700 BCE.

When exactly? Herodotos states (2.53) that Homer (and the poet Hesiod) lived about four hundred years before his own time. This yields a mid-ninth century BCE date. However, the earliest evidence so far available for the use of the Greek alphabet does not date before the middle of the eighth century BCE.¹⁹ By definition the introduction of writing dates the first written version of Homer, indeed, according to the current trend in scholarship, it seems that the *Iliad* could not have been composed at all without writing.²⁰ Besides, Herodotos' very round number of 400 years sounds suspiciously like a rhetorical figure.²¹ Therefore, the general consensus from the available evidence, and from study of the linguistic history apparent in the texts we ascribe to Homer, is that they were written down or, at least, composed at some time in the eighth century BCE (*contra*, e.g., Jensen, 1980).²² For the purposes of this essay we may conclude that the Trojan war was not born of seventh- or sixth-century BCE events.⁷

The big question then is: at what date before c. 750 BCE are the events described by Homer set, or, alternatively, from what date(s) do the elements of the tradition given textual form c. 700 BCE come? This question has two distinct parts. The first has to do with when the author intended the events to be set; the second with whether various details or anachronisms in the poems may offer evidence for another date for the basic stories developed into the texts. There is no clear statement in the poems themselves with respect to the first issue, and we can merely observe, in general terms, that the author, like many other ancient Greek poets/playwrights, sets his story in a past heroic age.

When was this heroic age? The poet Hesiod places it fourth in a chronology beginning with mythical races of gold, then silver, then bronze men, and before the time of iron with which he himself is contemporary (*Works and Days* 109–201). The most scholarly of ancient historians, Thukydides, mentions Homer and the Trojan War, but pointedly fails to offer a direct date, although he places other events as 60 and 80 years after the fall of Troy (1.12). The explicit chronology of Thukydides' history does not begin until c. 700 BCE, when

¹⁸ But on this last point, cf. Scully, 1990, who argues that careful analysis of the texts in fact reveals that early forms of the *polis* had come 'into existence during, if not before, the time of Homer' (p. 90).

¹⁹ See, e.g. Jeffery, 1961; Johnston, 1983; Powell, 1991, pp. 123–86. Others argue that this date is offered merely due to a lack of evidence, and that the alphabet in fact reached the Aegean much earlier, pointing to early comparisons from the eastern Mediterranean, legend, linguistic considerations, and passages such as Herodotos 5.58, which describes supposedly 'heroic' age examples of writing (Stieglitz, 1980, p. 611; Bernal, 1987a, 1990).

²⁰ This is the view of Heubeck *et al.* 1988, p. 12 and n. 41; also Powell, 1991; for another view, see Sherratt, 1990, p. 821; Jensen, 1980.

Conventionally the works of Homer have been seen as the product of an original oral tradition.

²¹ Another example of the very same *topos* is that the bones of Theseus were returned to Athens about 400 years after he left (Plutarch, *Kimon* 8).

²² The meagre evidence will not as yet allow a secure choice between the first or second halves of the eighth century BCE. Powell, 1991, favours 800–750 BCE, Janko, 1982, p. 231, Table 48, favours 755–713 BCE. Another issue with respect to the dating of Homer is the body of 'Homeric' poetry known as the Epic Cycle. This is usually placed in the seventh century BCE but, in some cases, cannot be far removed from the date of composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. On the Epic Cycle and its relation to Homer, see e.g. Griffin, 1977.

Ameinokles built four ships for Samos (1.13). None the less, we might work out a date for the Trojan war from Book 5 of Thukydides. He reports that the Melians (in 416 BCE) said that their city had been in existence for 700 years (5.112.2). Since Thukydides had earlier noted that Melos was a colony of Sparta (5.84.2), the implication is that the Dorian invasion and foundation of Sparta were also at least 700 years earlier.²³ Then, as Thukydides placed the Dorian invasion 80 years after the Trojan war (1.12), we might conclude that the tradition reported in Thukydides placed the Trojan war no later than 1196 BCE.

The other major fifth-century BCE historian, Herodotos, is likewise less than specific: he merely states that a period of not more than 800 years is a shorter time than the period between his own time and the Trojan war (2.145) – hence *c.* 1250 BCE. Alternatively, calculations may be made from the genealogies, as Herodotos records them, of the two Spartan kings (Leotykrides and Leonides) at the time of Xerxes' invasion of Greece. These two were respectively fifteen and sixteen generations after Aristodemus (Herodotos, 7.204, 8.131), who led the return of the Herakleidae (Dorians) to the Peloponnese (6.52). But the length of each generation in Herodotos' scheme is not certain. For example, Aristodemus' success was 100 years after the defeat of his great-grandfather, Hyllus (6.52 and 9.26), which gives roughly three generations to a century. At Book 2.142 Herodotos explicitly confirms this approximation, although, elsewhere, he himself seems to offer figures compatible with *c.* 38–40 year generations (e.g. 1.14–25, 103–6 and 130; 1.163.2, 3.22.4–23.1). Thus the return of the Herakleidae might be placed some 533 to 640 years before Leonidas (killed in 480 BCE). From Thukydides (1.12; cf. Pausanias 4.3.3) we may estimate the fall of Troy as 80 years earlier. And so, allowing for the Leonidas generation, the fall of Troy might be dated somewhere around 1126 to 1240 BCE. The less than solid basis of such an estimate is only too clear. None the less, we may conclude that both Thukydides and Herodotos, whatever their doubts on particular 'poetic' facts in Homer (e.g. Thukydides, 1.9–10), regarded the Trojan war as an historical event.²⁴

In the centuries following, other ancient scholars offered a range of similar dates, from the mid-fourteenth century BCE until the later twelfth century BCE, usually from the same, or similar, evidence.²⁵ Finally, the Byzantine Suda places the fall of Troy as 410 years before the ninth Olympiad, which leads to a date of 1154 BCE, if one assumes we know the chronology of the Olympics back to 776 BCE.²⁶ In sum, whether or not there was a proper basis to the calculations, we may conclude that the Classical scholars *believed* that the Trojan war took place within the limits *c.* 1350–1100 BCE. Our search must therefore extend over the period *c.* 750–1350 BCE.

The second aspect of the date of the stories in Homer is whether various details in the texts suggest a date different from that which the author ostensibly

²³ One may compare similar statements offering 700 year spans for Sparta from around the time of the battle of Leuktra in 371 BCE in Isokrates (6 = Archidamus, 12) and Ephoros (Jacoby, 1926, no 70.223).

²⁴ For further discussion see, e.g. Huxley, 1957; Snodgrass, 1971, pp. 5–10; Neville, 1977.

²⁵ For details, see Forsdyke, 1956, pp. 28–43, 62–6, 68–71; Mylonas, 1959–60; James *et al.* 1991, p. 327.

²⁶ As, for example, Powell who assumes this (1991, p. 218). This chronology (as well as the assumption) is questioned in James *et al.* 1991, pp. 328–30.

intended. Some of the elements indicative of the Dark Age have already been mentioned. A number of others may be culled from the texts – such as, occasional references pointing to standard use of iron (e.g. *Iliad* 23.834–5); the presence of some divinities in Homer who are absent in Linear B texts; the generally Dark Age nature of domestic architecture where details are there in the texts or interpretable; the hint in the *Odyssey* (6.3–10) of the beliefs characteristic of ideal planned colonizations found in many colonial foundation stories.²⁷ Such details,²⁸ and the philological evidence from the forms of Greek language employed, betray the gap between the 'heroic age' and the author's, namely, c. 750–700 BCE.²⁹ We have already established this as a period for consideration.

The more important question is whether such details in the poems, or the language used, mean that we must extend our search for the basis of the real Homeric stories back before c. 1350 BCE. The first category of evidence consists of descriptions of Late Bronze Age elements, such as the great body shield, or tower shield (*Il.* 6.117, 7.219), helmets with horse-tail crest (*Il.* 3.336–7, 6.469–70, 6.494–5), the references to the use of long thrusting spears of approximately four metres length (*Il.* 6.318–9, 8.493–4, 19.387–8), the boar's-tusk helmet (*Il.* 10.261–5), silver-studded swords (e.g. *Il.* 3.334), and so on.³⁰ It is notable that nearly all these elements in fact fit best in the earlier Mycenaean period, before c. 1400 BCE.³¹

Examination of the minutiae of the language used at some points in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* has also prompted some scholars to suggest an early Mycenaean date.³² A common example given is that a few lines do not scan properly as hexameter verse in the form found in our extant text, for example *lipous androteta kai eben* (*Il.* 16.857, 22.363). This might merely be a case of Homer slipping up – after all, painstaking examination is sure to uncover some infelicities in the works of all great poets. But Homer's lines do scan if one syllable of the word *androteta* is replaced by what linguists inform us is an 'archaic' form, the lost syllabic *r*. This had already disappeared by the time of the Mycenaean Greek written in the Linear B tablets found at Knossos, Pylos and elsewhere, which belong to the later Late Bronze Age (c. 1400–1200 BCE). This sort of metrical oddity, together with a few other instances of 'archaic' words, phrases and constructions (notably those connected with a few of the great Greek heroes like Ajax and Odysseus, or the Cretan leaders Idomeneus and Meriones), has sustained the argument that some aspects of the stories, or traditions, finally written down c. 750 BCE, and subsequently assigned to Homer, were very much older, perhaps as old as the sixteenth–fifteenth centuries BCE.³³

²⁷ But these might equally be indicative of the process of *poëis* relocation, see Demand, 1990, pp. 28–9.

²⁸ For a longer list and commentary, see Gray, 1955; Finley, 1978; Burkert, 1985; Dickinson, 1986.

²⁹ Such later anachronisms are common not only in Homer, but other Greek poets ostensibly writing about the 'heroic age'. For examples see, among others, Easterling, 1985.

³⁰ For a full discussion, see Lorimer, 1950.

³¹ See e.g. Taylour, 1983, pp. 137–8, 140; Snodgrass, 1964; Vermeule, 1983, p. 142; Morgan, 1988, pp. 109–15; Sherratt, 1990. However, this view is disputed in Dickinson, 1986, p. 28.

³² See, with further references and detailed discussion, e.g. Page, 1959b, pp. 153–4; Horrocks, 1980; Ruijgh, 1985; Watkins, 1987; West, 1988.

³³ For further information and references, see Vermeule, 1986, pp. 85–6; Vermeule, 1987; Morris, 1989.

Caution is necessary, however, as there is often little solid ground underneath such clever linguistic theorizing.³⁴ Chadwick (1990) has correctly noted some of the problems, and, among other points, questions the arguments built on the supposed missing original syllabic *r*. He is sceptical of pre-Homeric Greek reconstructions in general, and pre-Linear B reconstructions in particular. None the less, the suggestions, from some objects described in the texts, and the internal evidence of the language, for a possible date as early as the beginning of the Mycenaean period, further extends the chronological period we must consider when we turn to the archaeological evidence: from c. 1600 BCE to c. 750 BCE. In comparative terms, that means a stretch of time from William the Conqueror to the present day.

Archaeological background

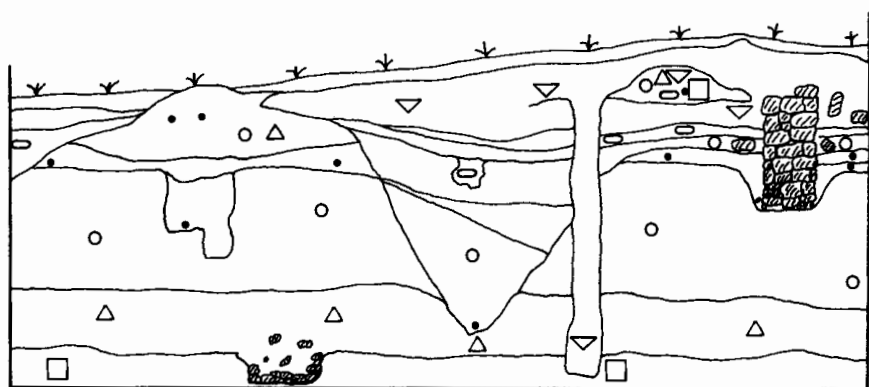
The period around and before c. 750 BCE in the Aegean is known primarily from archaeology. Excavations of settlements and tombs provide the evidence from which an interpretation of the 'history' of these times is made. This evidence consists of the architecture, art, and artefacts of the period, along with any physical remains of organic materials. In some cases, such as the finds of Linear B tablets from the Mycenaean palaces, or the Hittite tablets from Anatolia, excavation reveals written records which throw further, usually fragmentary, light on the period.

The determination of what dates when depends on stratigraphy. In an excavation, the most recent soil surfaces, or roads, or remains of walls and floors, are those nearest the surface (exceptions can occur, for instance where modern earth-moving equipment has bulldozed a site before excavation). Where they exist, traces of earlier periods of use will lie underneath, one on top of the other. Complications abound: later buildings may have cut their foundations into earlier levels, or an early building may have been continuously used whilst around it new buildings were built over the ruined foundations of its original contemporaries, and so on.³⁵ However, when an archaeological team have dug a trench down to bedrock, the sides of the trench will offer a view of time (called a section). The bottom is the beginning of occupation, and then progressive foundations, walls, floors, rubbish pits, and so on, take us through time to the present day ground surface (see Fig. 1, p. 124). The excavation will have been conducted in terms of these various phases (or levels) of occupation. The team dig down to a floor, or other such feature, collecting all the material above or on it, and below the previous feature. The material evidence collected will usually show changes which relate to the stratigraphic progression of time.³⁶ It is therefore possible to establish a relative chronology of a site in terms of the stratigraphy (e.g. levels 1 to *n*).

³⁴ Where some scholars find evidence of Mycenaean Greek (see references in note 32 above), others do not (e.g. Shipp, 1961; Heubeck *et al.* 1988, p. 10.)

³⁵ See Schiffer, 1987, on such topics, and for discussion of the many other complicating factors.

³⁶ On the relationship between dating and stratigraphy, see in general Renfrew and Bahn, 1991, pp. 91–100. For detailed discussion of stratigraphy and archaeological procedure, see Harris, 1989.



Artefacts of Phase 1 □ 2 △ 3 ○ 4 • 5 — 6 ▽

Figure 1 A schematic section from an archaeological excavation. The modern ground surface is at the top, and the bottom of the section corresponds to the bottom of the trench excavated. After an initial layer of mixed plough soil, this excavation has found artefacts from six phases in a number of stratigraphic layers or units. Stratigraphic units associated with each other, or with the same artefact types, are probably contemporary – although some artefacts will become displaced through later human or environmental processes (for instance the deep pit to the right of centre dug in Phase 6 through Phases 5–2 and into Phase 1 has artefacts of all phases jumbled in its spoil heap). Some other features of note are: the stone lined depression sunk during Phase 2 into Phase 1, a small irregular Phase 5 pit storing an artefact (e.g. a coin board), and the wall on the right with its foundation trench which was built in Phase 4.

Chronological and other relationships between sites are then possible as levels from different sites with the same types of artefacts may be assumed to be approximately contemporary. So-called horizons, or phases, common to various levels in a number of sites, may thus be established on the basis of typological comparisons of the finds. We might speak of the black pottery with red triangle decoration phase, or the round house with two doors phase, and so on. This procedure has become highly refined in the Aegean area after a century of intensive excavation and analysis.³⁷ Because of its ability to survive thousands of years, pottery is the typological key used against stratigraphy. Different phases of pottery form and decoration have been identified, and named, e.g. Late Geometric (Ia–b, IIa–b), Middle Geometric (I–II), Early Geometric (I–II), Protogeometric (Early, Middle and Late), sub-Mycenaean, Late Helladic (I–III), and so on.³⁸ Other artefact typologies, and architectural phases, are referred to by the associated ceramic designations. Thus one refers to a Protogeometric building, or Late Helladic II sword. Graves, or other single use deposits which do not offer a stratified sequence, can be accorded a relative date by the comparison of their artefacts with those from the stratified sites.

³⁷ For a historical account of excavation and the development of artefact typologies for this period, see e.g. McDonald and Thomas, 1990; for syntheses of the post-Bronze Age 'Homeric' period, see e.g. Snodgrass, 1971; Coldstream, 1977.

³⁸ See e.g. Coldstream, 1968; Furumark, 1972; Mountjoy, 1986.

Two methods can lead to absolute, or calendar, dates for such relative Aegean phases over the time-frame we are interested in: (a) scientific dating of relevant material (e.g. associated organics by radiocarbon dating, or wood by dendrochronology, or pottery sherds by thermoluminescence dating);³⁹ and (b) correlation of an artefact type or archaeological horizon with either one of the Near Eastern cultures which have a much longer historical chronology, such as Egypt,⁴⁰ or with the sketchy chronologies offered by Classical Greek sources, such as the Parian Marble, or the 'List of Thalassocracies'.⁴¹ Since the scientific methods only became available in the last forty years, it is through the less rigorous second method, and in particular the correlations with the Near East, that the basic framework of conventional archaeological scholarship in the Aegean came to be established. Moreover, even today, significant sets of scientific dates do not exist for much of our period of interest – this is due partly to the costs involved, partly to the difficulty, given conditions in the Aegean, of obtaining suitable samples for such techniques, and partly to the slow acceptance of scientific methods into much of Classical archaeology. Thus finds of Aegean pottery of known relative type in contexts in Egypt and the Near East for which historical dates are available (such as the tomb of an official of a pharaoh known to have ruled from x - y BCE), or finds of datable Egyptian objects (e.g. the seal of a known king) in the Aegean or elsewhere, have been interpreted to yield an approximate calendar chronology for the various relative phases.

Many sources of error are apparent. To begin with, only few such correlations exist so too much weight is inevitably placed on the odd, lucky find. In particular, compared to relatively plentiful evidence for synchronisms with the eastern Mediterranean from the seventeenth to thirteenth centuries BCE, the period between then and c. 700 BCE is very poorly represented. Very late Mycenaean, and so-called sub-Mycenaean, pottery may be related to the pottery brought into Palestine by the Philistines in the twelfth century BCE,⁴² but it has not proved possible to secure any absolute dates for the few other pre-eighth century BCE finds of Greek pottery overseas. Another problem to bear in mind when dealing with a few isolated sherds is the possibility that the odd (but special) sherd is no longer where originally deposited. This could result from later activity at a site, or simple geomorphological processes.⁴³ Thus, where there are just one or two imports at a site, it is not possible to control the evidence so as to be sure of their correct, original, placement. In short, the chronological assignment of any particular artefact is often controversial.

The exact stylistic assignment of any particular artefact may likewise be a subject for dispute. Moreover, there may be an unknown interval between the manufacture of an object in one culture, and the 'dated' deposition in another. Many of us may keep artefacts in our houses which were made in the time of our grandparents, for instance; these artefacts have yet to receive their 'dated'

³⁹ On such methods, see Aitken, 1990; for the period in question in the Aegean, see Manning and Wenginger, 1992.

⁴⁰ See Warren and Hankey, 1989, pp. 119–69; Coldstream, 1968, pp. 302–31.

⁴¹ See Jacoby, 1904; Myres, 1906.

⁴² This material is discussed in e.g. Dothan, 1982.

⁴³ Details of such processes and their consequences for interpreting finds are explained in Schiffer, 1987, pp. 199–262, 280–1.

deposition as rubbish or whatever, but may already be a hundred years old. Further, the prestige, or high-quality fine wares which form the basis of the stylistic chronologies are the very type of objects which might be kept longest as 'heirlooms'. Finally, given their reliance on interpretation of fragmentary or conflicting records, the historical chronologies of the Near East are themselves subject to various debates.⁴⁴ Some are datable because of astronomical references dated by retro-analysis from modern astronomy, others are dated merely by counting up all the years or reigns given to successive rulers in various lists. Some of these lists are contemporary, others achieved their final form considerably later, again leaving much room for doubt, and dispute.⁴⁵

However, despite all doubts and disputes, a widely accepted chronological framework for the period c. 1600–700 BCE is now in place through a combination of all the available evidence. A couple of disputes of interpretation and analysis remain. In particular, at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, some scholars propose dates a century earlier than usual;⁴⁶ and for the end of our period Francis and Vickers have argued for a lowering, and compression, of the conventional ceramic/artistic chronology for the seventh century BCE.⁴⁷ But, in general, historical-correlation dating, and scientific dating, support a consistent picture give or take a few decades.⁴⁸ This 'standard' chronology for the Aegean is set out in Fig. 2 (p. 127). From this, we see that the periods of interest for Homer range from Late Helladic I through to Late Geometric.

The history of the archaeological search for Homer and Troy

Ancient world

An interest in the 'heroic' age described by Homer, and an interest in the physical remains/locations which might be associated with the major heroes, is first evident from a little before c. 800 BCE, to judge from two examples. First, a shrine to Odysseus in the Polis cave on Ithaka seems to have had its cult status from at the latest, c. 800 BCE.⁴⁹ Second, it would appear that Academus, the legendary

⁴⁴ The strengths and weaknesses of these chronologies are discussed in James *et al.*, 1991; Åström, 1987–9; Henige, 1986.

⁴⁵ For example, the foundation of most aspects of Egyptian chronology consists of first to eighth century CE extracts of the third century BCE *Aegyptiaca* of Manetho; a work itself reliant on other previous authors and traditions in order to provide a history of Egypt stretching back to c. 3000 BCE. Certain periods are also lacking in solid evidence. One of these 'dark ages' in Egypt, called the Third Intermediate Period, unfortunately corresponds to the time c. 1200–800 BCE, and so much of our period of interest. Greater uncertainty than usual thus attaches to dates in this period; in fact, a very recent book tries to argue that this 400 year period of 'history' is largely a later invention (consisting of an expansion of a core of about 160 years of 'real' history). The authors therefore

propose to lower all the chronologies by several centuries (James *et al.*, 1991). Although this is probably not the right judgement (see e.g. the review feature in the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 1991, 1(2), pp. 227–53; Manning and Weninger, 1992), James *et al.* do show the basis for uncertainty.

⁴⁶ They do so on the grounds of both historical correlation and scientific interpretation: see Betancourt, 1987; Manning, 1988, 1990, 1992.

⁴⁷ Francis and Vickers, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1988; for a contrasting argument, see Boardman, 1984, 1988.

⁴⁸ For a reliable chronology for Egypt over the time-frame in which we are interested, for example, see Hassan and Robinson, 1987, and Weninger, 1990.

⁴⁹ This is probable on the basis of finds of bronze tripods, reported in Coldstream, 1976, pp. 16–17, at a place later associated with Odysseus.

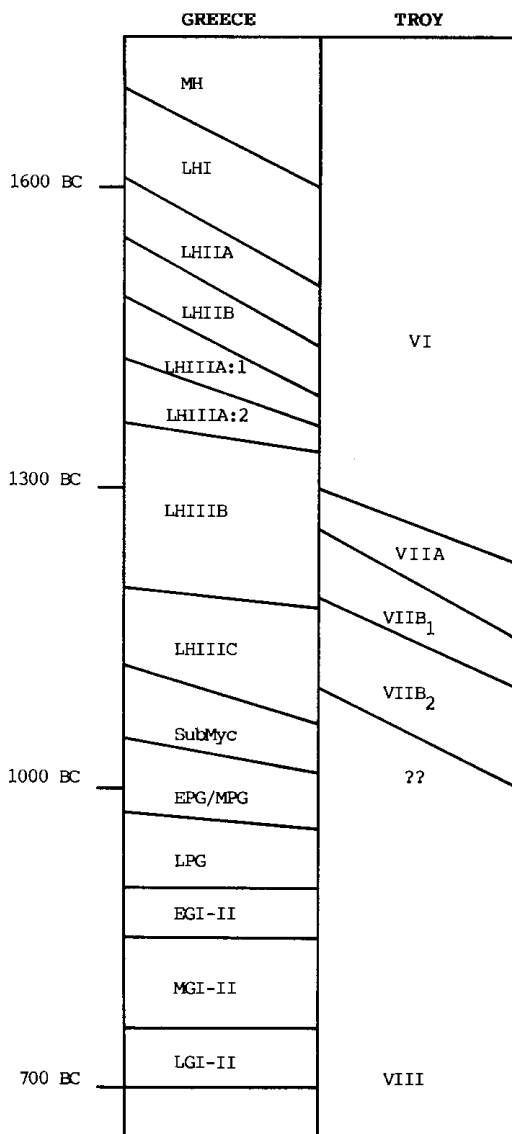


Figure 2 A chart showing the approximate chronology of Greece and Troy c. 1600–700 BCE. Further sub-divisions and regional variations are not taken into account. The abbreviations employed are: MH – Middle Helladic, LH – Late Helladic, SubMyc – Submycenaean, EPG/MPG – Early/Middle Protogeometric, LPG – Late Protogeometric, EGI-II – Early Geometric I-II, MGI-II – Middle Geometric I-II, LGI-II – Late Geometric I-II. Where debated, the chart shows the possible variations in dates for periods by means of sloping lines. Sources: Warren and Hankey, 1989; Betancourt, 1987; Manning, 1988, 1992; Blegen, 1963; Korfmann, 1990; Bloedow, 1988; Coldstream, 1968; and Snodgrass, 1971.

founder of Athens, was already receiving cult status in the early ninth century BCE, since a large deposit of Early Geometric kantharoi were found very close to his known cult place of Late Geometric date. It is unlikely these offerings were not intended for Academus, and that the site was not already sacred at this time (Coldstream, 1976, p. 16; 1977, p. 347). Therefore, even before the written Homer, some interest is apparent in the 'heroic' age.

The major revival of interest follows in the course of the eighth century BCE. Hero-cults appear in many parts of the Aegean where Mycenaean sites had previously existed, a number at Mycenaean tombs.⁵⁰ Others appear at sites connected with the deaths of heroic figures in poetry, such as Phrontis, the helmsman of Menelaos, whose death Homer (*Odyssey* 3.278–285) describes at 'holy' Sounion.⁵¹ The heroic ideals also become evident in a number of aspects of aristocratic life, burial, and art.⁵² [See Plate 16.] Of course, as Hiller (1983) points out, it is not clear whether Homer, or the interest, came first. In the following Classical periods, the Homeric past formed a central part of educated culture. Visits to the famous locations were prized experiences. For example: Herodotos describes Xerxes visiting the ruins at Troy, and Alexander the Great visited the tombs of the heroes Achilles, Ajax and the rest.⁵³ In time, scholars such as Strabo, and especially Pausanias, provided suitable gentleman's travel, or discussion, guides.

Where a relic existed, such as the ruins at Mycenae or Tiryns, or the Mycenaean hall at Eleusis, or a Mycenaean tomb, it is not clear how much later Greeks really knew about them *per se*. Such material was undoubtedly known to be old or heroic, and so venerated.⁵⁴ However, the actual basis by which artefacts – the old bones Kimon brought back to Athens from Skyros as those of Theseus (Plutarch *Kimon* 8), for example – were assigned to particular individuals of the past is unknown. In the case of the Athenian purification of Delos in the fifth century BCE, where Thukydides (1.8) reports that more than half the graves were Carian (an Anatolian people), modern archaeology suggests that either Thukydides, or his informant(s), were incorrect and, worse, had failed to identify Greek Geometric pottery.⁵⁵

It would seem in most cases that 'knowledge' was derived from Homer, as well as other literature/legends, which would then be associated with an object or construction or site. The only test for such 'evidence' was analogy to present experience, such as when Thukydides (1.10) discusses the ruins of Mycenae in terms of a comparison between Homer's description and contemporary Sparta. In general, it appeared not to matter (or it was not known) that material from periods of several centuries was often indiscriminately combined into what is presented as the few generations of the 'heroic' era. The culmination of this

⁵⁰ These are discussed in Snodgrass, 1971, pp. 397–9, 422–3, also 1982; Coldstream, 1976, 1977, pp. 346–8; Morris, 1988.

⁵¹ The link between verse and site is made in Abramson, 1979.

⁵² See Snodgrass, 1971, pp. 429–36; Coldstream, 1977, pp. 349–56.

⁵³ For collections of such ancient references, see Schliemann, 1880, pp. 168–73; Jebb, 1882, pp. 22–8.

⁵⁴ Such veneration is seen, for example, in the case of a Mycenaean tomb in the Athenian Agora, where, during the course of fifth century BCE building work, the legs of the interred skeleton were chopped off, and the missing bones appear to have been carefully replaced with a deposit of White Ground *lekkythoi*: Townsend, 1955, pp. 195–6, Fig. 3, pl. 77.

⁵⁵ For details, see Cook, 1955, pp. 267–9.

process is seen in the second century CE traveller's guide of Greece by Pausanias. All old remains had heroic association. It seems that few in the Classical world took the sceptical approach of Thukydides (1.20): 'In investigating past history, and in forming the conclusions which I have formed, it must be admitted that one cannot rely on every detail which has come down to us by way of tradition. People are inclined to accept all stories of ancient times in an uncritical way... Most people, in fact, will not take trouble in finding out the truth, but are much more inclined to accept the first story they hear.'⁵⁶

Before Schliemann

Little changed in the following millennium and a half. In fact, until the Renaissance, the advance of the Islamic world through the eastern Mediterranean and Anatolia had cut most in Europe off from Troy and much of the world of Homer.⁵⁷ In the period from the sixteenth century, a number of travellers visited the Aegean, and went to see the ruins at various sites. In Crete, for example, several visited the labyrinth built for King Minos by Daedalus, even though what they actually saw did not necessarily bear any relation to Minos or the 'heroic' age.⁵⁸ In general, these travellers were not interested in trying to prove the relation of particular monuments to legend from the physical evidence, or in establishing their date. Rather, their interest and 'knowledge' was concentrated on, and drawn from, the literary texts from antiquity. Thus they went looking for Homer's Troy, spotting visible ruins (e.g. Alexandria Troas), or mounds which might be the tombs of Achilles, or Ajax.⁵⁹ It was on the basis of the literary evidence, and not examination of the various ruins, that one chose whether to believe in a reality behind Homer, or whether to regard his stories as mere invention. Indeed, until almost 1800, a number of scholars, even those who accepted that there might have been some historical basis to the texts, were led by the lack of clear literary evidence for the location of Priam's Troy to regard it as pointless to look for the real Troy. This attitude was no doubt assisted by comments in Homer (*Il.* 12.17–33), and later Classical authors,⁶⁰ suggesting that all traces of the city had vanished.

Things changed in 1785 when Lechevalier discovered the springs of Kirk Göz at Pınarbaşı which seemed so very like those described in the *Iliad*

⁵⁶ There were exceptions. Up until the Hellenistic-Roman period, there seems to have been little dispute concerning which ruins represented the site of Priam's Troy. However, from the discussion of Strabo (13.1.24–44), it is apparent that scholarship belatedly came to bear on this issue (the new 'Trojan war': Schliemann, 1880, p. 174). As Cook describes (1984, pp. 165–6, 1973, pp. 186–8), we see from Strabo's discussion that Hestiaea of Alexandria, and Demetrius of Scepsis, argued that there had been a delta/embayment in front of Classical Ilium now filled in by alluvium (esp. Strabo, 13.1.36 *ad fin.*); hence, to provide the room for Homer's descriptions, they proposed that Priam's Troy had been further east.

⁵⁷ We may note in passing, however, that the conqueror of Constantinople, Mehmet II, visited Troy and inquired after the burial mounds of the various heroes (Cook, 1973, p. 160 and n. 2).

⁵⁸ For example, what the British traveller Lithgow in fact saw was not the labyrinth at all, but only a Roman stone quarry near Gortyn in southern Crete (Warren, 1972). Among other sites, the impressive ruins at Mycenae or Tiryns were generally visited, and described and illustrated (in e.g. Dodwell, 1834) as examples of 'Cyclopiian' architecture.

⁵⁹ Such travellers are listed and discussed by Cook, 1973, pp. 15–44.

⁶⁰ For example, Strabo, 13.1.38; see also Jebb, 1882; Cook, 1984, p. 163.

(22.145–157).⁶¹ Lechevalier proposed that the ruins on the hill above the village, Ballı Dağ, were Priam's Troy. This news led to renewed study of Trojan geography and, by the time Schliemann came to dig, the majority of opinion supported Lechevalier's identification. The primary reason for that choice, apart from the apparent correspondences with Homer's geographic references, was that somewhere other than the site of Classical Ilion had to be found, since scholars believed Strabo knew what he was talking about when he (on the basis of studies by Hestiaea of Alexandria, and Demetrius of Scepsis, rather than any personal visit to the Troad) rejected Ilion. Schliemann in fact dug at Ballı Dağ over two seasons (1868, 1873) but, like von Hahn who had excavated there in 1864, found nothing of interest (Cook 1973, p. 131). Schliemann re-studied the *Iliad*, and turned to a much smaller hill which a few scholars, and Calvert, the American vice-consul at the Dardanelles who had mounted a small excavation in 1865, backed as the site of Troy/Ilion.⁶²

Schliemann, Troy, and the rediscovery of the Bronze Age

The hill was Hissarlik. After preliminary work in 1870, Schliemann carried out full-scale excavations from 1871–73. These were by no means the first excavations in the Aegean, but they have proved a turning point. Despite controversy over his methods, and an occasional latitude with the truth, Schliemann unearthed a pre-Classical civilization and, combined with his later work at Mycenae and Tiryns, established the reality of the Bronze Age.⁶³ The search for 'Homer' had also changed. Previously, armed with the text, one tried to find landmarks or ruins to fit. Now, one had a body of archaeological data, and had to ask whether the text belonged with it.

Schliemann was sure that he had found Troy and, after a period of debate following his first excavations, most scholarship since has agreed with him. McDonald and Thomas (1990, p. 442) affirm that 'few authorities nowadays doubt that Schliemann correctly identified the site of Hissarlik as Troy's (see also, e.g. Meyer, 1975). However, it must be remembered that no archaeological evidence from the excavations of Schliemann at Hissarlik, nor indeed from those who have followed him, has provided any evidence as to the name of the pre-Classical site, nor any of the cities built there over several thousand years. Thus, pending discovery of *in situ* inscriptional evidence at Troy (not totally out of the question even yet, since the Troad was part of the literate Hittite world of the later second millennium BCE: see below), the identification of a particular anonymous site like Hissarlik as Troy remains a question for the philologists and historical geographers. None the less, in the absence of other candidates after many years of research, it is a reasonable working hypothesis that Hissarlik is Troy.

This likely advance was, however, only the beginning of the real problem. Schliemann began confident that he would find the splendid city of Priam in the lowest level of occupation on the hill. He was expecting to find things which

⁶¹ These changes and further developments are described in Cook, 1984, 1973, pp. 21–2, 46, 130–45.

⁶² Cook, 1973, p. 95. For a description of some books, engravings, and other material relating to the

'search for Troy 1553–1874', see Rees and Shefton, 1974.

⁶³ For an account of Schliemann's work and developments in the field since, see McDonald and Thomas, 1990.

would match the descriptions in the *Iliad*. The 80–160 workmen, employed over the nine and a half months of the first period of excavation, were set the task of destroying the hill so as to get to the lowest level. Within days in 1871, the team had dug through several settlements and several millennia. This work formed the great north-south trench which still scars the site. However, rather than uncovering Priam's city, Schliemann realized that he had dug through what he thought were four pre-Classical cities, or levels. Worse, by the close of the initial period of excavation, 1873, it was evident that it was not the lowest level which yielded the most impressive finds, rather the second level from the bottom. This second city offered the foundations of a tower, a ramp, a double gateway which Schliemann identified as the Skaian Gate (cf. *Il.* 3.145, etc.), and 'Priam's Treasure' (a hoard of precious metal objects). This first period of excavation ended with Schliemann (1875) regarding the second city as the Troy of the Homeric texts.

Schliemann's first publication on Troy, *Trojanische Altertümer* in 1874,⁶⁴ met with considerable scepticism, particularly in his native Germany (cf. Schliemann 1884a, pp. 324–8). Given his naïve first publication on Ithaka,⁶⁵ this is perhaps not surprising. As Calder (1984, p. 362) writes, in an article entitled 'A Scholar's First Article', '[S]cholarship is not journalism and a lifetime is not time enough to live down an early mistake'. Among other things, some scholars continued to argue that Ballı Dağ was really Troy; some criticized Schliemann's pre-Classical datings, some his Homeric attributions and simplistic methodology, and others his honesty, or rather lack thereof, concerning the circumstances of his discoveries. Stung by the lack of acceptance, Schliemann returned to Troy in 1878–1879, armed with greater experience following excavations at Mycenae, and with reputable collaborators.

The publication of the second period of excavations and research (Schliemann, 1880), saw a determined defence of Hissarlik as the site of Troy on the basis of text and topography, and the conclusion that there had been seven successive settlement levels at the site. What had previously been thought of as the lowest level was now seen to be two levels, the First and Second Cities; the next level, now the Third City, which showed evidence of destruction by fire, continued to be regarded as Priam's Troy. A building in this level, called the 'royal house', which contained a number of caches of artefacts in precious metals, offered further grounds for concluding that this was Priam's city (1880, pp. 485–502). However, at the same time, Schliemann was facing up to the lack of any actual evidence to tie his Third City to the text of Homer, and wrote: 'I wish I could have proved Homer to have been an eye-witness of the Trojan war! Alas, I cannot do it! At his time swords were in universal use and iron was known, whereas they were totally unknown at Troy. Beside, the civilization he describes is later by centuries than that which I have brought to light in the excavations. Homer gives us the legend of Ilium's tragic fate, as it was handed down to him by preceding bards, clothing the traditional facts of the war and destruction of Troy in the garb of his own day' (1880, p. 517). Schliemann was thus now in line with other German scholars⁶⁶ who accepted his findings concerning the location of Troy,

⁶⁴ This is the same as Schliemann, 1875, but with fewer illustrations.

⁶⁵ See Finley, 1978, p. 162.

⁶⁶ For example, Meyer, 1877.

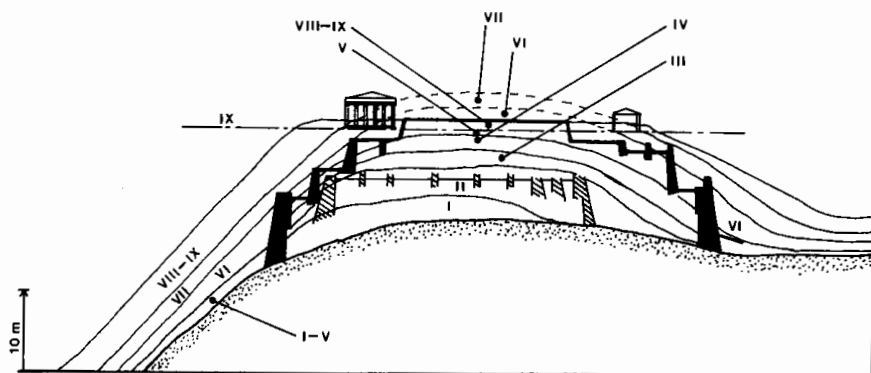


Figure 3 A schematic cross-section of the mound at Troy from north to south (after Blegen, 1963, Fig. 4; Korfmann, 1990, Fig. 4). The hatched walls belong to Troy II; the solid walls and surfaces to Troy VI. Note how the Hellenistic and Roman city (Troy IX) removed the top of the mound and so much of Troy VI–VII (indicated by the dashed lines).

and its pre-Classical nature, but disputed the existence of any evidence for a direct link with the Homer texts, or even the certainty that the Trojan war had actually happened.

The Third City was very small (as Schliemann records, 1875, pp. 343–4; 1880, pp. 514–5). Despite the passage of time until Homer, could this really have been the basis behind the great city he described? Concerned with this question, Schliemann returned to Hissarlik in 1882 (see Schliemann, 1884b). He also brought with him the architects/archaeologists Dörpfeld and Höfler. The major conclusion of this work was that Schliemann had been mistaken in his division between the Second and Third Cities in his publication of 1880. The Third City was not the burnt City, rather the burnt debris belonged with the Second City which again became Schliemann's candidate for Priam's Troy – although the problem of its lack of size remained.

In the following years, Schliemann worked in Greece, excavating at Tiryns, where at last he did uncover a real Bronze Age palace (Schliemann, 1886), and also on Kythera, and near Pylos. Over these years, prehistoric archaeology became a subject of serious study, and a number of other scholars worked at sites in various parts of the Aegean.⁶⁷ Schliemann himself did not return to Troy until 1890, the year of his death.

The excavations of 1889–90, and the subsequent work carried out by Dörpfeld in 1893–94, produced a shock (see Schliemann, 1891; Dörpfeld 1894, 1902). Outside the walls of the Second City, buildings were discovered which contained pottery identical to that found by Schliemann and others at Mycenae and Tiryns. The conclusion, however unwelcome given previous work and conclusions, was obvious: here was the city of the Mycenaean period, and surely of Priam. These remains belonged to the hitherto largely ignored Sixth City – previously thought of as Lydian. This city level did not exist in the centre of the hill, as later Classical

⁶⁷ For an early synthesis of such work, see Tsountas and Manatt, 1897.

building activity had levelled off the site, but its outer buildings and, most crucially, large walls, lay outside the scope of the earlier excavations (see Fig. 3). On the grounds of the clear Mycenaean link for the Sixth City at Troy, Dörpfeld concluded that the basis of the Homeric epics lay in the Mycenaean period. He saw it as the task of subsequent scholarship to see how closely the eventual culmination of the epic tradition in Homer corresponded with its original reality.

The introduction of chronology

Schliemann had shown that he had uncovered pre-Classical civilization. However, the dating of such remains depended entirely on attempts to relate some aspect of the archaeological finds to chronological statements made by an ancient author.⁶⁸ The breakthrough came not in the Aegean, but in Egypt, where an approximate historical chronology had been established for the second and third millennia BCE, through the co-ordination of lists of the pharaohs, and a couple of references to the rising of the star Sirius (Sothis) on a particular day of a regnal year of a named pharaoh.⁶⁹ Then in 1889, the Egyptologist Petrie found Mycenaean pottery at Gurob along with material from the Egyptian 18th and 19th Dynasties. The real age of the Mycenaean civilization was now demonstrated, and, despite some early dissent, the beginnings of a chronology established.⁷⁰

The end of the Mycenaean civilization was thus established as having been in the twelfth century BCE, long before Homer himself. It was understood that this long gap made it possible that Homer's epic related to something else. However, the coincidence that the very sites mentioned by Homer yielded their great phases in the Mycenaean era (see especially the 'Catalogue of Ships': *Il.* 2.494–759), and that a contemporary walled city was known at Troy, was generally believed to show that the Mycenaean period did indeed form the basis of Homer's epic.⁷¹ Any problems, or anachronisms, were to be explained as resulting from the final version of this tradition not being written down until the early Classical period.

The challenge for prehistorians, given real dates, was the development of a refined phase by phase chronology, a sort of ceramic 'history' for the Bronze Age. As discussed above, this was achieved by detailed study of the pottery sequences of sites, and regions.⁷² Such divisions were, moreover, no longer just stylistic; stratigraphic excavation had reached the Aegean (e.g. Blegen, 1921, p. 3). It thus became clear that when Schliemann, following the tradition recounted by Pausanias, gazed on the face of Agamemnon in Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae in 1876, he had in fact been looking at a burial made some centuries before the late Mycenaean period, or the fall of the Sixth City at Troy. Chronology brought a firm end to the era of simple, text-led, Homeric archaeology.

⁶⁸ It was this chronological void that permitted some critics at the time (usually non-archaeologists) to argue that Hissarlik was not prehistoric at all. For example, see Jebb, 1883.

⁶⁹ In particular, see the seminal work of Meyer, 1904. For recent treatments, see Kitchen 1987, 1989, 1991.

⁷⁰ Petrie, 1890. Some early dissent is referred to in James *et al.*, 1991, pp. 16–17.

⁷¹ Several different strands of information and interpretation supported this view; see e.g. Tsountas and Mannatt, 1897, pp. 347–66.

⁷² See e.g. Wace and Blegen, 1916–18, 1939; and among recent studies, Furumark, 1972, Coldstream, 1968.

The Cincinnati excavations

From 1932–38, excavation was renewed at Troy under Blegen (Blegen *et al.* 1950, 1951, 1953, 1958). Although all periods at Troy were examined, it was the possible Homeric connection which dominated the expedition: in particular, Dörpfeld's work offered little evidence for a catastrophic fire destruction of the Sixth City (Troy VI) – which was to be expected if it had in fact been Priam's city sacked by the Achaeans – and there was also a problematic successor level, VII¹, which was often difficult to distinguish from the Sixth City. Some of the conclusions reached by Blegen *et al.* were due to the fact that, in the intervening years, both the methods of excavation, and the relevant artefact sequences, had become much better understood. Thus within the main phases identified by Dörpfeld, Blegen and his team found no fewer than 49 sub-phases. The main conclusion, though, was not a matter of evidence, but one of interpretation. On the basis of arguments made from examination of the architecture, Blegen held that Troy VI was destroyed by earthquake, and not fire or warfare. From an examination of the Mycenaean pottery from late Troy VI, he dated this earthquake c. 1300 BCE. Attention turned to the succeeding settlement, Troy VIIa, which re-used most of Troy VI, and also saw the construction of much smaller, more crowded, buildings near the walls – a number with *pitthoi* (large storage jars) sunk into the floor which suggested a city ready for a siege. Moreover, Troy VIIa was destroyed and there is evidence of destruction by fire. Mycenaean pottery assigned by Blegen to Late Helladic IIIA and early Late Helladic IIIB was found in Troy VIIa, and this led him to date the destruction of Troy VIIa to c. 1230 BCE (Blegen *et al.* 1958, p. 9), or 1260 BCE or somewhat earlier (Blegen, 1963, p. 163). He was confident that Troy VIIa was Priam's Troy, and its siege was the basis of the Homeric epics (see esp. Blegen *et al.* 1958, pp. 10–13; Blegen, 1963, pp. 20, 160–2). Blegen was a Homeric believer; he later excavated a Mycenaean palace at Pylos, which he published under the title *The Palace of Nestor*.

Developments since World War II

Excavations continued all over the Aegean, including at several of the key Mycenaean sites, but the primary facts were now in, and all the great Homeric centres had been examined. The search for the basis to Homer thus concentrated more on library-oriented studies of the evidence. The fundamental question was: what evidence was there in the poems for genuine reflections of Mycenaean civilization? Without these, the theory of a clear link between an actual Mycenaean war, its translation into epic verse, and recension by Homer, was unnecessary. Detailed studies by Gray (1947, 1954, 1955, 1958, 1968) and Lorimer (1950) did find evidence of a Late Bronze Age basis, but were unable to identify many clear Mycenaean features. These authors instead highlighted the much clearer evidence from archaeological and other comparisons for post-Bronze Age features in the poems.

The decipherment by Ventris in 1952 of the Linear B tablets found at several Mycenaean palaces as Greek led to further problems for the theory of a Mycenaean basis to Homer. The texts revealed a palace administration and a world very unlike anything in Homer.⁷³ Mycenaean features in Homer were fast

⁷³ See Ventris and Chadwick, 1973; Chadwick, 1976.

seen to be the anachronisms in an otherwise later world. Against this background, the work of Parry and Lord with oral poets in Yugoslavia enjoyed a new attention (see A.M. Parry, 1971; Lord, 1960). They had shown, from a comparison of these modern oral poets with the works of Homer, that Homer must have been an oral poet. Such poetic performances re-created traditional stories or history. However, despite claims of near verbatim reproduction of the tradition, each performance was aimed at, or at least accommodated, the contemporary audience, and so over time the poems changed and became largely 'modern', despite some traditional or deliberately retained archaizing elements.⁷⁴ A few scholars accepted this, but still argued for a Late Bronze Age historical core to the poems.⁷⁵ Without doubt, however, opinion was shifting. Snodgrass (1974) argued that the poems are a composite of Mycenaean and eighth-century BCE elements obtained from a long epic tradition defined in the eighth century BCE. Then, taking the obvious next step, several scholars began arguing that, despite the odd Mycenaean element – usually misplaced/misused and the result of deliberate archaizing by the poet – the world the poet described was in fact wholly, or almost wholly, Dark Age. Most accepted that the actual *raison d'être* for the poems, the Trojan war, did represent some late Mycenaean event, but even this was under attack by Finley.⁷⁶ Some instead sought the original events behind the Homeric stories in the early colonizing period.

The current situation

The last few years have seen some major new developments in the archaeological search for Homer. At Troy itself, the date of the Mycenaean pottery in Troy VI and VIIa has been the subject of reconsideration. It had been early–mid Late Helladic IIIB, or c. 1260–1230 BCE (above). In 1964 Caskey wrote: 'if the sack of Settlement VIIa is ever shown to have occurred after the fall of Mycenae and Pylos, or at the same time, we shall indeed have to reject most of Homeric tradition' (p. 11). But in fact serious doubts were soon raised – even before Caskey's words were published. Nylander (1963) provided a strong case that the ceramics from Troy VIIa included Late Helladic IIIC material, and so post-dated the main Mycenaean phase (Late Helladic IIIB).⁷⁷ Careful re-examination of the Mycenaean pottery from Troy VIIa⁷⁸ shows that its destruction can be placed around the mid-twelfth century BCE, or *later*. This is contemporary with, or later

⁷⁴ On the technique of oral poetry as represented by Homer, and its consequences for both texts and archaeology, see Morris, 1986, pp. 83–91 with further references; and Finley, 1964, pp. 2–3.

⁷⁵ For example Schachermeyr, 1950; Kirk, 1964; Caskey, 1964; Page, 1959a, 1959b; Luce, 1975; Wood, 1985.

⁷⁶ For Finley, 1956 [1978], 1957, 1964 and, recently Dickinson, 1986, the period in question meant the tenth and ninth centuries; for Kurtz and Boardman, 1971, pp. 186–7, and especially Morris, 1986, it was the eighth century BCE.

⁷⁷ Some scholars countered (e.g. Mylonas, 1964), but recent work has supported Nylander, and shown that just such a revision is necessary (although cf. Green, 1988).

⁷⁸ Bloedow, 1988 – see also Mee, 1984, p. 48 – showed that this pottery includes material (often locally made) of the Late Helladic IIIC type – indeed of later Late Helladic IIIC type. Podzuweit, 1982 has also analysed the material from Troy, and especially the material from the cemetery just south of Troy, and reaches similar, or even more radical, conclusions. (For a recent chronology of the ceramic periods in question, see Warren and Hankey, 1989, p. 169, Table 3.1.)

than, the main destructions of the key Mycenaean centres in Greece, Mycenae, Tiryns, Thebes and Pylos, near the close of the Late Helladic IIIB period.⁷⁹ If the Trojan war *was* a Mycenaean adventure, then, as it must pre-date the destruction of the main Mycenaean centres, Troy VI returns as the necessary candidate.

This is not of itself an unsatisfactory situation in the eyes of those scholars⁸⁰ who have argued previously that the fine, walled, city of Troy with its gates and towers as characterized by Homer (see Bowra, 1960) must have been Troy VI – regardless of which city was in fact sacked by the Achaeans.⁸¹ However, the trouble with Troy VI is that Blegen *et al.* concluded that it was destroyed by earthquake, not warfare.⁸² The problem then is how and where to place the Achaean sack of Troy.⁸³ Now, in contrast to Blegen, Dörpfeld, who actually excavated the majority of Troy VI, believed that Troy VI ‘... was thoroughly destroyed by enemy action. Not only were the traces of a great conflagration recognisable in many places, but the upper parts of the city walls and the gates and especially the walls of the buildings inside them underwent a violent destruction which can have happened neither through an outbreak of fire alone nor through an earthquake’ (1902, p. 181, translation). We must suppose Dörpfeld had some reason to see evidence of fire. Another respected archaeologist, Bittel, who closely followed Blegen’s excavations, apparently also regarded an earthquake as an unlikely agent for the destruction of Troy VI (Korfmann, 1986a, p. 25 and n. 4). Finally, Easton (1985, pp. 190–1) has provided further arguments against the earthquake, and for the warfare, hypothesis.⁸⁴

Exciting excavations in Beşik Bay have added a new twist. Although out of favour for many years, Beşik Bay must be – if there ever was an Achaean encampment of any sort behind the *Iliad* – the most likely candidate for the location.⁸⁵ Now, near where the beach would have been in the Late Bronze Age, a group of graves have been found (Korfmann, 1986a, 1986c, pp. 308, 311–29). The grave goods include Mycenaean pottery (some locally made) contemporary with late Troy VI or VIIa. Some of the bodies had been partially /completely cremated – consistent with Homeric practice, and contrary to the usual argument that Homeric cremation is an element post-dating the Mycenaean period.⁸⁶ It is very

⁷⁹ Earthquakes or other destructions wrecked these centres, and seem to have initiated a general collapse of the Mycenaean palace states: see Desborough, 1964; Betancourt, 1976; Kilian, 1986, pp. 134–5, Fig. 10 and p. 151 n. 2. The latest Mycenaean material from the last phase of Troy VI has also been down-dated to later Late Helladic IIIB, or c. 1250–1200 BCE. (Bloedow, 1988; for absolute dates, see Warren and Hankey, 1989, p. 169, Table 3.1) – or, according to Podzuweit, 1982 (but cf. Korfmann, 1986a, p. 27), even earlier Late Helladic IIIC (twelfth century BCE). In the case of Pylos, the destruction of the Mycenaean palace may be even earlier than the Late Helladic IIIB dating suggested above: Popham, 1991.

⁸⁰ In particular, Nylander, 1963, Schachermeyr (e.g. 1982, pp. 93–112) and Akurgal (e.g. 1978, pp. 54–60).

⁸¹ On this particular ‘Homer problem’ it is worth consulting Hooker, 1979 who has a review of the relevant literature.

⁸² This conclusion (Blegen *et al.*, 1958) is supported by the geological studies by Rapp and Gifford, 1982, pp. 43–58 which argued for the likelihood of earthquakes in the Troad.

⁸³ The problem can perhaps be circumvented if one accepts an hypothesis which seeks to link stories involving Poseidon and the wooden horse with seismic activity (Schachermeyr, 1950, pp. 189–203).

⁸⁴ If that hypothesis is accepted, we might choose to follow Pliny (*Natural History* VII.202) and Pausanias (1.23.8), and connect the story of the wooden horse with the use by the besiegers of siege engines and battering rams.

⁸⁵ For the Beşik Bay hypothesis, see e.g. Korfmann, 1986b; Cook, 1984; Rapp and Gifford, 1982, pp. 37–40; for a quite different view, see Luce, 1984.

⁸⁶ This argument is discussed by, e.g., Snodgrass, 1971, pp. 140–212; Powell, 1991, pp. 196–7.

tempting to speculate about the relation between these graves and an Achaian camp. However, there is as yet no further pertinent evidence.⁸⁷ It can also be objected that the Beşik graves may merely be like similar ones known from further south on the west coast of Anatolia from the fifteenth–thirteenth centuries BCE. The latter are usually linked with the general evidence for Mycenaean expansion and trade at this time.⁸⁸ In addition, although there is scattered evidence from further west, it is notable that the evidence for late Mycenaean cremations does tend to emanate from the eastern Aegean.⁸⁹

The three other main recent developments in Homeric archaeology derive from textual study: (i) Hittite texts, (ii) indications of early Greek in Homer, (iii) the archaeology of epic text.

(i) The first is in fact a renewed interest in an old problem. Hittite tablets found at Hattusa, the Hittite capital Bogazköy, in central Turkey in 1906–1907 proved to contain some names which suggested a similarity to certain Greek names known from Homer: Ahhiyawa = Akhaioi; Alaksandus = Alexandros; Attarissiyas = Atreus; Millawanda/Milawata = Miletos; Piyamaradas = Priam; Taruisas = Troia; Tawagalawas = Eteokles; Wilusa = Ilios.⁹⁰ Some of these links were noted quickly, but it was an article by Forrer (1924a; also 1924b) which claimed that Greece was the land of Ahhiyawa, and that several other names could be equated with names of Homeric heroes, which ignited initial interest. The question then, as now, is: are these identifications correct? Unfortunately, we do not know, as there remains an absence of proof either way.⁹¹ The debate now hinges on the geography evident in the Hittite texts, the correspondence, or not, of archaeological evidence, and interpretation of the role of Ahhiyawa in the texts. Current scholarship remains divided—some believe, others do not.⁹² Indeed, even among believers or semi-believers, the location of Ahhiyawa varies from Greece to Rhodes or Cyprus or Crete. Non-believers usually suggest a location somewhere in western Anatolia, or Thrace. Circumstantial evidence either way is, again, slight.⁹³

However, *even if* the equations of Ahhiyawa = Mycenaean Greeks and Wilusa/Taruisas/Atriya = Ilios/Troy are correct, and it must be noted that this is the most common view in recent scholarship,⁹⁴ we must ask, what do we learn? To begin, one must be careful. For instance, on the basis of one fragmentary text (*Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi* 23.13), it has been argued that (a) the king of Ahhiyawa was personally waging war in Anatolia, and (b) that this man was perhaps 'Agamemnon himself' (Huxley, 1960, p. 37). There is, of course, no

⁸⁷ For work last century, see Cook, 1973, pp. 170–1.

⁸⁸ See Mee, 1978, 1988.

⁸⁹ See, e.g., Snodgrass, 1971, pp. 187–9.

⁹⁰ For a discussion, see Page, 1959b, pp. 1–40.

⁹¹ Among others, notably Sommer, 1932, 1934; Bengtson, 1942, pp. 209–11, and later Steiner, 1964, raised serious objections, and then went on to reject the whole hypothesis; but others, such as Schachermeyr, 1935, 1986; Page, 1959b and Huxley, 1960, have supported the identifications.

⁹² See, with many further references, e.g. Bryce, 1989a, 1989b; Easton, 1984, 1985, pp. 191–2; Gurney, 1961, pp. 55–6; Güterbock, 1983, 1984, 1986; Helck, 1987; Houwink ten Cate, 1983–4; Kosak, 1980; Macqueen, 1968, 1986, pp. 39–41; Mellaart, 1984, 1986; Muhly, 1974.

⁹³ The ancient Egyptians do not appear to have referred to the Mycenaeans/Aegeans by a name derived from Akhaian (see discussions in Cline, 1987).

⁹⁴ For references, see note 92 above.

evidence for the latter, and now the former is also unlikely on the basis of a closer understanding of the document.⁹⁵ In fact, on careful examination, no Hittite text provides any particularly useful information on Ahhiyawa, nor indeed much information at all.⁹⁶ One individual mentioned in the texts, Attarissiyas of Ahhiyawa, is known. He seems to have engaged in warfare both in south-western Anatolia, and against Alashiya (=Cyprus).⁹⁷ However, the evidence from these texts is far short of helping 'to confirm the general reliability in historical matters of Homeric tradition' (Huxley, 1960, p. 45).

In the past, the key texts mentioning Ahhiyawa were usually placed in the thirteenth century BCE, and associated with the Hittite Great Kings Tudhaliyas IV and Arnuwandas III. The scenarios of Page (1959b) and Huxley (1960) were based on this assumption. However, in the last couple of decades, a number of analyses and arguments combine, although partial in themselves, to suggest that several of the key texts (The Annals of Tudhaliyas, the Annals of Arnuwandas, and the Indictment of Madduwattas) in fact belong with the earlier Great Kings Tudhaliyas II and Arnuwandas I.⁹⁸ As Tudhaliyas II and Arnuwandas I are (depending on various debates) one/two/three and two/three/four generations before Suppiluliumas I, whose reign overlapped with the last years of the Egyptian pharaoh Amenophis III, and continued until shortly after the death of Tutankhamun, an approximate date around, or a little before, 1400 BCE may be estimated for these documents.⁹⁹ The result is that the rampaging Attarissiyas of Ahhiyawa, referred to in the Madduwatta text as engaged in warfare somewhere in west Anatolia until checked by the Hittite general Kisnapili, dates c. 1400 BCE, plus or minus a generation, and so to the Late Helladic IIB–IIIA: 1 period. This is not the time traditionally associated with the Trojan war. Other texts mentioning Ahhiyawa span the period from then until the second half of the thirteenth century BCE.¹⁰⁰ It is clear that Ahhiyawa was a major player in the Aegean region over these two centuries, often anti-Hittite, sometimes engaged in military action, and from chronology and geography perhaps in Mycenaean Greece (e.g. Bryce, 1989a, 1989b); but there is no clear link with any particular war or place – except, in the Tawagalawa Letter, Millawanda/Milawata, but this is usually argued to be Miletos in south-western Anatolia, some 300 km from Troy.

⁹⁵ The crucial phrase supposed to show prior involvement – 'the King of Ahhiyawa withdrew' – has been re-interpreted to mean either the King of the Seha-River Land 'took refuge with the King of Ahhiyawa', or '... and relied on the King of Ahhiyawa [reasonably from a distance]' (Easton, 1984, p. 29; Güterbock, 1983, pp. 137–8).

⁹⁶ The sum of our knowledge is that Ahhiyawa is most likely reached by sea (such as when providing a safe haven to the exiled royal family of Arzawa, who fled first 'to the islands' and then to Ahhiyawa), had some relation to, or control over, some islands, had various alliances/links with other states thought to be located in western Anatolia (especially Millawanda), and participated in some warfare in the same region (see Starke, 1981; Güterbock, 1983; Singer, 1983; Bryce, 1989a, pp. 299–300, 1989b).

⁹⁷ The identification of Alashiya with Cyprus is generally accepted, see e.g. Knapp, 1985.

⁹⁸ This re-dating, is discussed by Carruba, 1969; Houwink ten Cate, 1970; Heinhold-Krahmer, 1979; Easton, 1984, pp. 30–4. However, a few scholars still demur (see the review of scholarship by Heinhold-Krahmer and other papers in Heinhold-Krahmer *et al.*, 1979; also see the review of the Heinhold-Krahmer volume in Gurney, 1982).

⁹⁹ Exact dates and details depend on minor debates on Egyptian chronology. For Egyptian chronology, see e.g. Kitchen 1987. For Hittite chronology, but based on the low Egyptian chronologies favoured in the German world, see Wilhelm and Boese, 1987; Astour, 1989.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, Güterbock, 1983; Mellink, 1983.

What about Troy itself, and the Trojan war? Here the evidence is silent; it is not clear if Troy is even mentioned in the Hittite texts. The land of Wilusa/Wilusiya (=Ilios?), and the toponym of Taruisa (=Troia?) which is listed next to Wilusa (*Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi*, 23.11,12), is one candidate. Moreover, the fact that an Alaksandus (=Alexandros?) of Wilusa is known from a treaty with the Hittite Great King brought it to early prominence (Güterbock, 1986). It is also known that a Hittite king and a king of Ahhiyawa were at odds over the matter of a place whose reading is usually restored as Wilusa, probably in the mid-thirteenth century BCE, which, although not the type of war Homer describes, does sound very promising for some major struggle (Güterbock, 1986, p. 37; Bryce, 1989a, p. 300; cf. Easton, 1985, p. 194). However, there are major problems with both names. First, from the syntax, Taruisa and Wilusa both appear as countries, not city and surrounding region (e.g. Güterbock, 1986, pp. 40–1). Second, although many scholars have argued that Wilusa was in the Troad, Easton (1985, p. 192) rightly highlights the statement of Muwatallis, in the Alaksandus Treaty, that he had given Alaksandus of Wilusa lands ‘which are up to the borders of Hatti’. Unless Alaksandus/Wilusa is credited as *the* major north-west Anatolian power,¹⁰¹ it is difficult to see how he could have lands bordering Hatti (in central Anatolia), and also be based in the Troad. Difficult, that is, unless one turns to a revised reading of the Manapa-Tarhundad Letter (Houwink ten Cate, 1983–4, p. 42). This might suggest that one reached Wilusa by passing through the Seha River land (i.e. Wilusa lay to its north or west), and that Wilusa was also somewhere near Lazpa. As the Seha River land is for other reasons usually placed in western Anatolia, and Lapza is often thought to be the island of Lesbos, this would favour a location for Wilusa in central-western, or north-western, Anatolia. The Troad would be a *possibility*.

Faced with such problems and debates, a couple of scholars have thus suggested that another toponym, Atriya, is in fact a better candidate for Troy.¹⁰² It is described in the Tawagalawas Letter, a [?]mid-thirteenth century BCE communication between a Hittite king and the king of Ahhiyawa, as a fortified site in the land of Iyalanda. It is also noteworthy as a place in the land of Iyalanda that the Hittite king states he has not attacked. This action might suggest that Atriya was in the control of Ahhiyawa, and so, if assumed to be Troy, might suggest it had been captured by Ahhiyawa=Akhaians before about 1250 BCE. This could link with the Troy VI destruction, and so Homer, but the ‘ifs’ are rather prominent.¹⁰³ The only other pertinent reference appears in the Milawata Letter, assigned to the second half of the thirteenth century BCE, where mention is made of hostages from Atriya at the time of the recipient’s father.

Although Millawanda is usually identified as Miletos, Macqueen (1968, 1986, pp. 39–41) has argued that it too is a candidate for Troy. The evidence in this case suggests that Ahhiyawa did gain control of Millawanda, and then lost it to the

¹⁰¹ Something not suggested by any other evidence except, perhaps, the occurrence of a name (Wilj/Wirj) which *might* be interpreted as Wilios in an Egyptian inscription of c. 1400–1350 BCE listing several key Aegean place names: see Cline, 1987, pp. 3–4, 28, no. 9.

¹⁰² See Easton, 1984, pp. 29–30, 1985, pp. 192, 195.

¹⁰³ One must also face the question of *which* legendary Greek conquest of Troy! Herakles, Achilles and Agamemnon all made different raids (for the pre-Agamemnon raids, see *Il.* 5.638–42, 648–51; 9.328–32; 14.250–6; also Taplin, 1986a).

Hittites during the mid-thirteenth century BCE (Bryce, 1989a, pp. 301–2, 304–5). An apparent embargo against Ahhiyawa followed (Cline, 1991; although Cline's case is weakened as he relies on a mistaken reading, and not the study of Steiner, 1989). Such adventures might be associated with a Trojan war. However, the fundamental problem is that there is no solid evidence in favour of a location for Millawanda in the Troad, and every suggestion that it ought to be in the south-west.

In conclusion, it must be held that at this time the Hittite texts, whilst tempting because of the smell of real 'history', in fact offer no clear cut evidence about the Trojan war. The suggestion¹⁰⁴ that they contain a picture relevant to the expansion of Mycenaean power c. 1450–1250 BCE is perhaps more likely, but is itself only an assumption.

(ii) The second area of development stemming from text analysis, builds on the identification of pre-Homeric, Mycenaean and indeed early Mycenaean, Greek in some lines of Homer (Vermeule, 1986, 1987; Morris, 1989). This is allied with the previous recognition that some objects in Homer best suit an early Mycenaean context, and with the abundant evidence from the early Mycenaean period for the central place of sieges and related warfare in art. It is argued that epic poetry (and art) began in the early Mycenaean period, and that some of the key historical events behind the formative epics which continue to find currency some seven or eight centuries later will also date to this period around or before c. 1500 BCE. It is certainly of more than passing interest that similar epics seem to have been circulating in contemporary Anatolia.¹⁰⁵

The history of other early Greek raids on the Troad in Homer (Achilles in *Il.* 9.328–32; Herakles in *Il.* 5.638–42, 648–51),¹⁰⁶ apart from the Trojan war itself, is linked by some scholars with the archaeological evidence for Mycenaean expansion and presence in west Anatolia over the period from Late Helladic IIIA:1 to Late Helladic IIIB, and the history of the Ahhiyawa presence/involvement in western Anatolia over the same period. A picture on an incised bowl buried at Hattusa c. 1400 BCE, which looks something like an earlier Mycenaean warrior, is also cited (Vermeule, 1987, Fig. 5; Morris, 1989, Fig. 10). Moreover, in a reversal of previous approaches, Vermeule (1986, pp. 90–1; cf. 1983, pp. 142–3) argues that the key 'historical' Trojan war incidents, and epic account thereof, pre-date the main (later) Mycenaean phase. Vermeule suggests that this explains the preponderance of early Mycenaean weapon and armour types, and the lack of mention of walls at most of the Mycenaean centres. If such adventures are specifically linked with Troy, then Troy VI is regarded as the subject of interest: both its final destruction, and also indications of earlier destructions, as marked by the burning of one house, and a deposit of broken Mycenaean vases in another.

(iii) The third text-based development is found in the paper of Sherratt (1990; included here as Essay 10). Rather than try and support either a primarily early Mycenaean, or later Mycenaean, or Dark Age, context and/or origin for the poems of Homer, Sherratt merely accepts the role and importance of all these

¹⁰⁴ In, for example, Bryce, 1989b.

¹⁰⁶ Taplin, 1986; also Houwink ten Cate, 1983–4, p. 55, n. 48.

¹⁰⁵ See Watkins, 1986, pp. 45–62.

constituent elements, and so combines a number of the lines of argument discussed in the sections above. The Homeric poems are thus seen in terms of a number of layers from various historical periods, rather than as a text from one period containing the odd anachronism. This 'archaeology' of the text is clearly demonstrated in an analysis of the apparently conflicting and contradictory roles of iron, spears and shields in the *Iliad* (Sherratt, 1990, pp. 809–12, 814).

Sherratt then addresses the question of how and why such a stratified epic text formed. It is argued that the heroic, exclusive, society presented in Homer is a product of an élite in a real society which is actively seeking self-definition, and self-justification. This invariably means that the élite behind the devices such as heroic poetry, or art, or ritual (societal mores), or monumental constructions, is in fact short of legitimation and definition. These devices thus mark times of socio-political change, when new groups are seeking to establish themselves and create the basis of their authority.¹⁰⁷

Sherratt argues that three periods in Greek history, the early Mycenaean (sixteenth–fourteenth centuries BCE), the early Dark Ages (later twelfth–tenth centuries BCE), and the time of the formation of the Greek city states (later eighth century BCE), offer such conditions, and that each contributed to, and redefined, the Homeric epic tradition. In between these bursts, the tradition was maintained and gradually became fossilized until the next period of dynamic re-creation. The palatial period of Mycenaean civilization would have been such a time of maintenance. Hence, whereas Finley (1978) and Dickinson (1986) attack a Late Bronze Age basis to Homeric epic because of a lack of any solid trace of the palatial world we know from archaeology and the Linear B tablets, we can now see this silence in another light, and do not expect any significant contribution from this period.

Conclusion

'Homer problems' have a very long history and, as we have seen, remain both alive and unsolved. At Hissarlik/Troy, the ruins of a ruin remain problematic, and, so far, nothing from excavation has substantiated the story of the Trojan war.¹⁰⁸ It is possible further work may change this. Even as I write this paper, the fourth season of new excavations at Troy under Professor M. Korfmann is in progress. Already from this work it has become clear that Troy VI was larger than thought, with a substantial town outside the walls.

However, even with new work employing the latest science, it is likely that Homer and archaeology will remain uncomfortable bedfellows. It is already known, and curious, that Troy is one of the very few north west Anatolian sites with Mycenaean pottery; moreover, in relative terms, it has a remarkable amount. It appears in Troy VI d–e, is notable in Troy VI f–h, continues (but with a majority locally produced) in Troy VII a, and in fact still occurs in Troy VII b. Further, much of this pottery consists of open shapes, rather than the closed shapes typical where trade (of the contents of a vase) is involved. This evidence does

¹⁰⁷ In addition to Sherratt, 1990, pp. 815–6, see for discussion of such issues Rupp, 1988; Morris, 1987; A. Sherratt, 1990; Trigger, 1990 and Bradley, 1984.

¹⁰⁸ See, e.g., Hachmann, 1964.

suggest that Troy was special in some way to part, or parts, of the Mycenaean world.¹⁰⁹ In such circumstances, disputes over control of the Troad might be expected, and might involve Mycenaeans. These events might enter epic literature, and Homer presents at least three candidates (wars of Herakles, Achilles, and Agamemnon). However, it remains impossible to provide a link for such a specific event with any particular archaeological stratum at Troy (and there are at least seven major choices from Blegen's excavations) from either Homer, or archaeology. Instead, archaeology only shows that there was a history of some form of general interaction. Therefore, in the sense of concrete proof, the problem of whether there really was a Trojan war remains.¹¹⁰ In general terms, when Vermeule (1987, p. 122) wondered whether the Classical world invented their 'heroic' age, or whether the Classical authors did know stories and traditions about the real Bronze Age as recovered by modern archaeology, the answer is 'yes'. The problem is one cannot be specific about any one of the particular stories or traditions.

The main recent advance thus seems to be the attempt to extricate the argument from the problematics of specifics, and to turn attention to the longer term process. Here both archaeology and epic text may be considered together in terms of their socio-political context (Sherratt, 1990). The range of archaeological and textual elements in Homer thus corresponds to the phases of major socio-political change in early Greece. Each dynamic phase creates and transforms the epic tradition, but in some cases (for reasons of technicalities of language, or context) older elements are kept. Such elements are moreover necessary since the heroic epic, or propaganda, only achieves its purposes of legitimation and élite definition if it is seen to be reasonably linked to the society's previous tradition, not just to the present élite. In turn, the final version of this composite tradition in the late eighth century BCE has several realities. There is no one 'World of Odysseus'.

¹⁰⁹ See Mee, 1984. Such arguments could even be used to support Macqueen (1968; also 1986, pp. 39–41) in his identification of Millawanda with Troy.

¹¹⁰ For a recent survey which rejects an historical basis for the Trojan war, see Cobet, 1983.