

Large print exhibition text



# Troy myth and reality

Please do not remove from the exhibition

**This two-part guide provides all the exhibition text in large print.**

There are further resources available for blind and partially sighted people:

Audio described tours for blind and partially sighted visitors, led by the exhibition curator and a trained audio describer will explore highlight objects from the exhibition.

Tours are accompanied by a handling session. Booking is essential (£7.50 members and access companions go free) please contact:

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Thursday 12 December 2019 14.00–17.00  
and Saturday 11 January 2020 14.00–17.00

There is also an object handling desk at the exhibition entrance that is open daily from 11.00 to 16.00.

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For more than a century BP has been providing energy to advance human progress. Today we are delighted to help you learn more about the city of Troy through extraordinary artefacts and works of art, inspired by the stories of the Trojan War. Explore the myth, archaeology and legacy of this legendary city.

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Foyer

# **Troy myth and reality**

The Trojan War is one of the world's greatest stories, told for over 3,000 years.

## **CONTENT WARNING**

**Troy: myth and reality tells a story about war. It includes depictions and discussion of violence and other aspects of conflict.**

# The Trojan War

**The story of Troy speaks to people across place and time.**

The myth of the Trojan War dates back over 3,000 years to the early days of ancient Greece. The abduction of one of their queens, Helen, prompts the Greeks to wage a ten-year campaign against Troy. Many atrocities are committed. There are heroes and victims on both sides. The Greeks win, annihilating the great city.

The story addresses universal themes of heroism and violence, love and loss, hope and despair. It is a powerful archetype for all wars. Its characters – fierce Achilles, dutiful Hector, beautiful Helen – are as alive for us today as they were for the ancient Greeks.

### **Love and death**

Achilles was the greatest hero fighting for the Greeks at Troy. Here he kills Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons – warrior women fighting on the Trojan side. Their eyes meet and Achilles falls in love with dying Penthesilea. This painting by the vase-painter Exekias is one of many accomplished images created by ancient artists inspired by the myth of the Trojan War.

Athenian jar (amphora), made by Exekias, about 530 BC  
Vulci, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

# The Trojan War

## **Burnt pots**

Made by anonymous potters, these clay vessels were last used by ordinary Trojans thousands of years ago. They lay undisturbed in the ground as the city was repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt, until archaeologists excavated them in the 19th century. They saw destruction once more when they were burned in the bombing of Berlin in the Second World War.

- 1 Tripod vessel, 2550–2300 BC
- 2 Stirrup jar, 1400–1200 BC

Hisarlık, Turkey

Pottery

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,

Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Wall quote:

**Rage – Goddess, sing the rage  
of Peleus' son Achilles...**

Homer, **Iliad**, about 700 BC

## **Vengeance of Achilles**

**1962**

Cy Twombly (1928–2011)

The vengeance that the Greek Achilles wreaks on the Trojan prince Hector is a key episode in the story of the Trojan War. American artist Cy Twombly dramatically abstracts Achilles' rage into a form that evokes both the first letter of his name and a bloodied spear. The power of Achilles' emotion seems to burn from the huge canvas and to have inscribed itself into the lines scrawled on its surface.

Oil, chalk and graphite on canvas  
Kunsthaus Zürich, 1987

## The Trojan War

Wall quote:

**Troy the ill-omened, joint grave of Europe  
and Asia,  
Troy, of men and all manliness most  
bitter ash...**

Catullus, poem 68, about 70–54 BC

## **The Trojan War**

**1993–4**

Anthony Caro (1924–2013)

British artist Anthony Caro's installation of 40 sculptures recreated the Trojan battlefield on an epic scale. From wood, salvaged steel and rugged chunks of clay emerge gods, heroes and the Scaean Gate, the main gate in Troy's walls.

Caro commented: 'My Trojan war... is more to do with the sort of brutality we've seen in Bosnia than with the Greek and Trojan heroes we're meant to admire. It's about fighting and it's about being human.'

**The Death of Hector 1993–4** (left)

Ceramic, pine wood, steel

**King Priam 1993–4** (centre)

Ceramic, pine wood, steel

**The Skaian Gate 1994** (right)

Stoneware, steel, jarrah wood

On loan from Barford Sculptures Ltd (Antony Caro studio)

# Storytellers

The story of Troy belonged to a long tradition of oral storytelling and was told in many versions. It inspired poets, playwrights, artists and artisans across the ancient Mediterranean. Homer, who may have lived sometime between 800 and 600 BC, is the best-known early storyteller. Greeks revered him as the author of two great epic poems, the **Iliad** and the **Odyssey**.

For ancient Romans, Virgil (70–19 BC) was the most important poet to tell the story. His **Aeneid**, which links the foundation of Rome to the fall of Troy, became Rome's national epic.

Wall quote:

**Tell me about a complicated man.  
Muse, tell me how he wandered and was lost  
when he had wrecked the holy town of Troy...**

Homer, **Odyssey**, about 700 BC

Wall quote:

**Arms and a man I sing, the first from Troy,  
A fated exile to Lavinian shores  
In Italy.**

Virgil, **Aeneid**, 29–19 BC

Wall image caption:

Mosaic from ancient Hadrumetum in Tunisia showing Virgil between the Muses of history and tragedy.

Photo: Scala, Florence

## Storytellers



The opening lines of Homer's **Iliad** and **Odyssey**, about 700 BC, read in the original Greek and English translations, and of Virgil's **Aeneid**, 29–19 BC, read in the original Latin and English translation

Duration: about 2.5 minutes

A transcript is available in the large-print text holder by the exhibition entrance.

## **‘Portrait’ of Homer as a blind man**

Almost nothing is known about Homer. This portrait of him as a blind old man with flowing locks and weather-beaten features is purely imaginary.

Most scholars think that Homer may have come from the eastern Greek islands or the west coast of modern Turkey. But some question his existence and think that the poems arose from a long tradition of storytelling by many poets.

Sculptors invented images of Homer for wealthy clients who commissioned busts of great writers and thinkers.

Roman bust of Homer, AD 100–200,  
copy of an original dating from 200–100 BC  
Baiae, Italy  
Marble  
British Museum

### **Homer as a god**

Homer is welcomed into the company of the gods and goddesses. He sits on a throne, flanked by personifications of the **Iliad** and **Odyssey**. Figures representing Time and the Inhabited World crown him. Other figures include a reclining Zeus, Apollo with his lyre, and the nine Muses. The monument was commissioned by the winner of a poetry contest, represented by the draped statue on the right.

Hellenistic relief, probably made in Alexandria  
by Archelaos of Priene, about 225–205 BC  
Bovillae, Italy  
Marble  
British Museum

## The spread of Greek poetry

Found in a tomb at Pitheculsae, an early Greek settlement in Italy, this drinking cup was made in the area of modern Turkey where Homer may have lived. A scratched inscription in verse humorously identifies it as 'the cup of Nestor', King Nestor's heavy golden cup in Homer's **Iliad**. One of the earliest known examples of Greek writing, it shows the importance of epic poetry in the wider Greek world.

Cup (**skyphos**), made in Teos, Turkey, about 715 BC  
Lacco Ameno, Ischia, Italy  
Pottery  
Museo Archeologico di Pitheculsae, Villa Arbusto

Image caption:

The inscription reads:

**I am the cup of Nestor, good to drink from;  
whoever drinks from this cup,  
immediately desire of fair-garlanded  
Aphrodite will strike him.**

Image credit:

Courtesy the Museo Archeologico di Pitheculsae

## Storytellers

### **Artist storytellers**

The Greeks told epic stories with both poetry and images. The painting on this bowl is one of the earliest narrative scenes in Greek art. A ship lined with banks of oarsmen is ready to leave. On the shore a man grasps a woman's wrist in a gesture typical of marriage scenes. If this is the Trojan Paris taking Greek Helen to Troy it might be the earliest known image of the Trojan War story.

Athenian wine-mixing bowl (**krater**),  
about 735 BC  
Probably Thebes, Greece  
Pottery  
British Museum

## Travelling poets

Bards (**rhapsodes**) were familiar figures at feasts and festivals in ancient Greece. They recited and sang poetry, especially Homer's epics. The first words of a metrical poem issue from this poet's open mouth: 'Once upon a time in Tiryns'.

Athenian storage jar (amphora), about 500–480 BC  
Probably Vulci, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## Homer in the schoolroom

A boy is learning to recite poetry from a scroll. Another holds a lyre, ready to accompany him. Homer's works were already centuries old when this jug was made. Ancient Greek pupils would have learned them by heart.

Athenian wine-jug (**chous**), about 440–430 BC  
Probably Viterbo, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## Storytellers

### Studying Homer's poems

Manuscripts of Homer's texts were circulating by the late 500s BC. Greek and Roman scholars pored over the poems, copying and so preserving them. The manuscript on the left records passages from the battle for the Greek ships in the **Iliad**.

The one on the right describes Telemachus visiting Nestor in the **Odyssey**. A scholar has added detailed comments in the margins.

1,2 Manuscript fragments, AD 1–100

Egypt

Papyrus

On loan from the British Library

## **Virgil in the schoolroom**

Just as Greek youths learnt their Homer,  
so Roman children learnt their Virgil. A pupil  
has written a line from the **Aeneid** seven times  
on this papyrus from Roman-period Egypt.

It is part of a passage where Venus tells Aeneas:

**Give up your hatred of the lovely Helen  
And wicked Paris, since it is the gods  
Who are so cruel and topple wealthy Troy**

Virgil, **Aeneid**, 29–19 BC

- 3 Fragment of a school exercise, AD 1–100  
Hawara, Egypt  
Papyrus  
University College London

## Storytellers

### **The Iliad as a school exercise**

Homer's poems were still being used as writing practice by schoolchildren in the Roman period and beyond. On this writing tablet found in Egypt, a pupil has written out lines from the first book of the **Iliad** describing drinking and singing in honour of the god Apollo.

- 4 Writing tablet, about AD 400–500
- Egypt
- Wood and iron
- British Museum

## **A Roman wall painting of Aeneas**

Wall paintings in Roman villas often depicted Trojan stories. This one from Pompeii shows an episode in Virgil's **Aeneid**. During a battle with the Italian king Turnus, an arrow has struck Aeneas in the thigh. The healer Iapyx tries to remove the arrowhead. Aeneas' weeping son Ascanius supports him, while his mother Venus (the Roman equivalent of the Greek goddess Aphrodite) secretly intervenes with divine remedies.

## **Aeneas seethed in pain, propped on his huge spear**

Virgil, **Aeneid**, 29–19 BC

Roman fresco, AD 45–79

Pompeii, Italy

Painted plaster

Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli

# Troy — the myth

**In a bygone age, on a distant shore, the Greeks fought a long war against the powerful city of Troy.**

It is the age of heroes. People are still close to the gods, who take human form and feel emotions. The gods can grant glorious victory to humans, but their meddling can cause disaster.

In the Greek world cities are scattered across the mainland and islands. Each has its own king, a warrior controlling the surrounding land. Across the sea from Greece on Anatolia's west coast lies the great city of Troy, ruled by King Priam.

Hanging title:

Discord "Ερις

Panel on the wall on the left:

## **War over a woman**

**Some say that Zeus, king of the gods, planned a great war to reduce the earth's population.**

At a wedding party the goddess of discord throws a golden apple among the guests. It bears the inscription 'for the most beautiful' and three goddesses claim it. Zeus asks the Trojan prince Paris to act as judge. Each goddess offers Paris a bribe. He chooses Aphrodite, who promises the love of the world's most beautiful woman. She is Helen, married to Greek king Menelaus. Paris steals her away across the sea to Troy. The Greeks assemble a large fleet commanded by King Agamemnon of Mycenae and lay siege to Troy for many years.

## War over a woman

To the right of the entrance:

### **The wedding of Peleus and Thetis**

The story of the Trojan War begins with the wedding of Peleus, king of Thessaly, to the sea goddess Thetis. A procession of divine guests approaches Peleus, who receives them at his home. Three goddesses, Hera, Aphrodite and Athena, are in the procession. They will soon become bitter rivals for a golden apple thrown among the guests by Eris, the goddess of discord. The newly-weds Peleus and Thetis will have a child, Achilles, destined to become the greatest hero of the Trojan War.

Athenian wine-mixing bowl (**dinos**) and stand  
painted by Sophilos, about 580–570 BC  
Pottery  
British Museum

To the right of the **War over a woman** panel:

### **The goddess of discord**

The flying figure is Eris, goddess of discord. Her name is written below. She has not been invited to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis so she takes her revenge, throwing a golden apple among the guests to stir up trouble.

Athenian drinking cup (kylix), 550–540 BC

Pottery

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung

War over a woman

## **The Judgement of Paris**

The goddesses Hera, Athena and Aphrodite approach Trojan prince Paris, here a shepherd playing a tortoiseshell lyre.

They try to bribe him. Queenly Hera, holding a sceptre, offers royal power. War-like Athena offers glory in battle. Aphrodite, the goddess of love, is unusually veiled like a bride. She offers Paris the hand of the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen of Sparta.

Athenian water jar (hydria), about 470 BC

Capua, Italy

Pottery

British Museum

On opposite wall:

Wall quote:

**My gift for you is the gift of love,  
and the daughter of Leda...**

Ovid, **Heroides**, 25 BC – AD 18

Wall quote:

**...in his complex mind Zeus resolved to  
relieve the all-nurturing earth of mankind's  
weight by fanning the great conflict of the  
Trojan War...**

**Cypria**, about 625–600 BC

## War over a woman

### **Helen is promised to Paris**

On the left, Trojan prince Paris is approached by Hermes, the gods' messenger, followed by Athena, Hera and Aphrodite. Zeus has decided that Paris must judge which goddess is most beautiful. Aphrodite, lifting her dress to show off her breasts and a flash of leg, will win. She has promised Paris the hand of Helen, on the right adjusting her snake-like girdle. Three women approach Helen with wedding gifts. But she looks away, perhaps unhappy to be offered as a prize.

Etruscan wall painting, about 560–550 BC  
Cerveteri, Italy  
Terracotta  
British Museum

On opposite wall:

### **Paris and Helen meet**

Paris, prince of Troy, travels to Sparta on a state visit. He leaves with his host Menelaus' wife, Helen. This scene clearly blames the gods for their relationship. Eros, the personification of love as a winged boy, plants desire in Paris. A modest-looking Helen is being coaxed by Aphrodite, who sits beside her. Peitho, the goddess of persuasion, presides over the meeting from the top of a column.

Roman relief based on Greek models, 100 BC – AD 100

Rome

Marble

Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli

War over a woman

## **Paris falls in love with Helen**

Paris is transfixed by Helen's beauty as she sits admiring herself in a mirror. The daughter of Zeus, king of the gods, she is exceptionally beautiful. Zeus had sex with Leda, queen of Sparta, in the form of a swan and Helen was born from an egg. This was all part of Zeus' plan to start the Trojan War. Himeros, god of uncontrollable desire, flies above.

Athenian water jar (hydria), about 380–370 BC

Kymissala, Rhodes, Greece

Pottery

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung

## **Paris abducts Helen**

Etruscan funerary urns sometimes show a reluctant Helen, as if her love-affair with Paris was a cold-hearted abduction. Here a bored-looking Paris sits by his ship while his men push Helen on board, just another treasure that he is taking from Menelaus' palace. On funerary urns the unwilling Helen may stand for the dead person reluctantly parting from life.

Relief from an Etruscan funerary urn, made in Italy,  
about 125–100 BC

Tufa limestone

British Museum

War over a woman

## **Aphrodite introduces Helen to Paris**

Did Paris abduct Helen or did she fall in love and follow him willingly? The painter of this vessel suggests that it was love, but arranged by the gods. Aphrodite stands behind Helen as she lifts her veil for the first time to Paris, an attractive horseman. Eros playfully allows a dog to chase a goose, perhaps suggesting that infatuated humans are just the gods' playthings.

Container (**situla**), made in Campania, Italy,  
about 350–340 BC

Pottery

British Museum

Wall quote:

**Helen, destroyer of ships,  
destroyer of men, destroyer of cities...**

Aeschylus, **Agamemnon**, 458 BC

On central wall next to case:

### **Helen leaves for Troy**

A servant helps Helen onto the ship that will take her to Troy, steadying her as she steps hesitantly onto the gangplank. Helen seems to leave her husband willingly, but with a sense of foreboding.

Roman fresco, AD 45–79

Pompeii, Italy

Painted plaster

Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli

War over a woman

## **Agamemnon sacrifices Iphigenia**

Over 1,000 ships set off for Troy to reclaim Helen. King Agamemnon, brother of Menelaus, commands the army. But he has killed a deer sacred to the goddess Artemis and the wind fails them. Only a heart-breaking sacrifice can appease Artemis: Agamemnon must kill his daughter, Iphigenia. Here he holds the knife. Iphigenia stands beside the altar, accepting her fate. In this version of the story Artemis substitutes Iphigenia with a deer at the last minute. Its head and legs appear behind her.

Apulian wine-mixing bowl (**krater**), about 370–355 BC  
Basilicata, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## **Achilles ambushes Troilus**

The Greeks sail to Troy and lay siege to the city. But it holds strong. They hear of a prophecy that Troy cannot fall if the Trojan prince Troilus reaches the age of twenty. So the Greek hero Achilles ambushes the boy when he leaves the city to fetch water with his sister Polyxena. Troilus flees on horseback. Polyxena looks back in terror as she runs, having dropped her water jar.

Athenian storage jar (amphora), about 540 BC

Pottery

British Museum

War over a woman

## **Achilles kills Troilus**

Achilles murders Troilus, who had taken refuge in a sanctuary of Apollo. Troilus' decapitated body lies on the altar. Achilles hurls the boy's severed head at two approaching Trojan warriors. His cruel deed removes an obstacle to Greek victory. But it also violates the sacred space of Apollo and the divine right of asylum, attracting the anger of the gods.

Athenian water jar (hydria), about 510–500 BC

Vulci, Italy

Pottery

British Museum

## **Ajax and Achilles pass the time**

The Greek army has settled into a prolonged siege of Troy. The two great warriors, Achilles (**right**) and his cousin Ajax (**left**), play a board game in full battle gear. During ten years of warfare the heroes endure many tedious hours of inaction.

Athenian storage jar (amphora), about 530–520 BC  
Chiusi, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

# The rage of Achilles

**It is the tenth year of the war. Agamemnon and Achilles quarrel, with tragic consequences.**

Achilles, the greatest Greek hero, angrily refuses to fight because King Agamemnon has taken his captive Trojan woman, Briseis. The Trojans advance. In desperation, Achilles' comrade Patroclus takes Achilles' armour and goes into battle. Patroclus fights heroically but is killed by Trojan prince Hector. In a fury of grief, Achilles re-enters the fight and kills Hector. He desecrates Hector's corpse. The distraught Trojan king Priam visits the Greek camp to beg for his son's body. Moved by pity, Achilles' anger subsides. Set over fifty-one days, these events are told in Homer's **Iliad**.

Hanging title:

War Πόλεμος

## **Achilles' anger**

The Greeks had awarded Briseis to Achilles as a prize for his fighting, but now Agamemnon claims her for himself. Two heralds lead her away. Furious at the dishonour, Achilles refuses to continue fighting for Agamemnon and withdraws his men from action. He sits wrapped in a cloak, aggrieved by her loss.

Athenian drinking cup (kylix) attributed to the Briseis Painter, about 480 BC

Vulci, Italy

Pottery

British Museum

Wall quote:

**They slammed their shields together, pike scraped pike with the grappling strength of fighters armed in bronze...and the thunder of struggle roared and rocked the earth.**

Homer, **Iliad**, about 700 BC

## The rage of Achilles

### **Heralds take Briseis from Achilles**

Agamemnon has sent two heralds to seize the enslaved woman Briseis. Achilles sits with his head turned away in outrage. His close companion, Patroclus, lays a comforting hand on Briseis' shoulder.

Roman relief, 30 BC – AD 80, reworked 1750–1850

Marble

British Museum

### **Odysseus tries to make peace with Achilles**

With Achilles refusing to fight, the Trojans gain ground and threaten the Greek ships. Agamemnon sends representatives to ask Achilles to re-join the battle, offering gifts and the return of Briseis. Here Odysseus appeals to Achilles, who sits heavily wrapped, a sign of grief and anger. The embassy fails.

Athenian drinking cup (kylix) attributed to the vase painter Douris, about 470 BC

Vulci, Italy

Pottery

British Museum

## **A family separated by war**

A warrior departs for battle. On the other side of this amphora, a woman holds a baby reaching out to him. It could be an Athenian soldier leaving his family to fight in the wars against Persia (499–449 BC). But it might also be the final parting of Trojan hero Hector, his wife Andromache and their child Astyanax. Homer describes this movingly in the **Iliad**. Ancient Greek artists often addressed contemporary themes through ancient myth.

Athenian storage jar (amphora), about 470–460 BC

Probably Vulci, Italy

Pottery

British Museum

## The rage of Achilles

### **Hector confronts Menelaus over fallen Euphorbus**

Disguised in Achilles' armour, Patroclus leads Achilles' men into battle. He fights heroically and drives back the Trojans, but the gods intervene. Patroclus is wounded by a Trojan called Euphorbus and killed by Hector. Menelaus then kills Euphorbus. On this plate Hector (**right**) confronts Menelaus (**left**) over Euphorbus' body.

The heroes wear the armour of Greek foot soldiers of the time this image was painted: large shields, helmets, breastplates and leg protectors (greaves).

East Greek plate, about 600 BC  
Kamiroi, Rhodes, Greece  
Pottery  
British Museum

## **Hephaestus forges new armour for Achilles**

Achilles' mother commissions new armour for her son from the smith god Hephaestus. Thetis inspects the armour in his workshop. The god sits on the left. A servant holds up the finished shield for Thetis, who is reflected on its surface. A craftsman is still working on the helmet. Bronze leg protectors and a corselet lie on the floor.

Roman fresco, AD 45–79

Pompeii, Italy

Painted plaster

Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli

## The rage of Achilles

### **Thetis brings new armour to Achilles**

Achilles is consumed by grief on learning of the death of Patroclus, his closest friend and probably his lover. Achilles needs new armour. His mother, the sea goddess Thetis, has it made so that he can avenge his friend's death. Thetis tenderly embraces her son, knowing from a prophecy that his return to battle means his imminent death. Around the vase, sea nymphs carry the armour.

Athenian storage jar (**pelike**), about 470 BC  
Kamiroi, Rhodes, Greece  
Pottery  
British Museum

In case next to large sarcophagi:

### **Achilles takes revenge on Hector**

Achilles' rage and grief for Patroclus drive him back into battle to seek revenge on the man who killed his comrade. Hector faces him in single combat under the walls of Troy. Achilles lunges for a final blow as Hector falls back, bleeding from a chest wound. The goddess Athena stands behind Achilles, offering her support. The god Apollo leaves Hector's side, since fate has decreed that he must die.

The heroes are nude to show their superhuman strength and beauty. But their weapons are those of Greek foot soldiers of the painter's time.

Athenian wine-mixing bowl (**krater**)  
attributed to the Berlin Painter, about 490 BC  
Cerveteri, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## The rage of Achilles

### **Achilles defeats Memnon**

The battle of Achilles and Hector on the other side of this vessel is paired with a combat from later in the war. Achilles, on the left, fights the Ethiopian king Memnon, who has brought his army to support the Trojans. Both heroes' divine mothers watch anxiously. Eos, goddess of the dawn, stands behind Memnon. She raises her hand to her head in alarm, knowing that her son will die.

Athenian wine-mixing bowl (**krater**)

attributed to the Berlin Painter, about 490 BC

Cerveteri, Italy

Pottery

British Museum

On the far side of the first sarcophagus:

### **Achilles hides among girls**

Achilles, seated in the centre, is disguised as a girl among the daughters of Lycomedes, king of Skyros. His parents hid him there to prevent him from fighting at Troy, as a prophecy predicted his death in the war. But the Greek heroes Odysseus and Diomedes trick Achilles. They lay out gifts for the girls, including weapons, then sound a trumpet call to war. Achilles instinctively grabs the weapons, dropping his disguise. Here he holds a helmet.

The short side on the right shows the young Achilles being taught by the wise centaur Chiron.

Attic sarcophagus, AD 150–200

Ierapetra, Crete

Marble

British Museum

## The rage of Achilles

On the short side of the same sarcophagus:

### **Achilles' new armour**

Roman sarcophagi were often decorated with scenes from Achilles' life. He embodied beauty and strength, and his story showed the fragility of a hero's existence, fitting for the funerary context. Here the god Hephaestus works on Achilles' shield. The leg protectors (greaves) and a scabbard are ready. Thetis hands them to her son.

Attic sarcophagus, AD 150–200

Ierapetra, Crete

Marble

British Museum

On the other long side of the first sarcophagus:

**Achilles drags Hector's body**

Achilles has killed Hector and drags the body behind his chariot through the dust. Images of the deaths of young heroes such as Hector reminded the mourning family that death is universal, coming even to the brightest and best. This side of the sarcophagus must have been less visible, as the mouldings here were left uncut. The surface is badly weathered.

Attic sarcophagus, AD 150–200  
Ierapetra, Crete  
Marble  
British Museum

The rage of Achilles

Large sculpture in the centre of the gallery:

## **The Wounded Achilles**

**1825**

Filippo Albacini (1777–1858)

Achilles knows from a prophecy that on killing Hector he too must soon die. After further fighting at Troy, here the fatal arrow has pierced his heel, his only vulnerable point. Like much 19th-century art, this statue is heavily influenced by classical Greece.

Marble with restored gilded wooden arrow  
The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth

## **Achilles mutilates Hector's body**

Achilles has killed Hector and drags him behind his chariot to the Greek camp. Day after day, in a fury of revenge, he drags the Trojan prince around Patroclus' tomb, shown as a white mound. Achilles runs alongside the chariot. It is driven by a charioteer in long white robes. The other side of the jar shows the Judgement of Paris.

Athenian storage jar (neck-amphora), 520–500 BC  
Vulci, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## The rage of Achilles

### **Achilles at Troy: the price of pity**

The sculptor chose scenes full of grief and pathos from the story of Achilles at Troy for this Roman sarcophagus.

Here, Achilles has finally agreed to return Hector's dead body to his family. It is weighed to determine how much gold they must pay as a ransom. Hector's grieving widow Andromache sits on the left with their son Astyanax. The short side on the left probably showed Achilles' mother Thetis (now missing) presenting him with new armour.

Attic sarcophagus, about AD 250–60

Ephesus, Turkey

Marble

From the Woburn Abbey Collection

## **Achilles at Troy: rage and redemption**

The front of the sarcophagus is badly damaged. On the left Achilles lifts Hector's ankle to attach the corpse (now mostly missing) to his chariot and drag it to the Greek camp. Twelve days later, old King Priam comes to beg for the return of his son's body. He places his hand on Achilles' arm in supplication.

Attic sarcophagus, about AD 250–60

Ephesus, Turkey

Marble

From the Woburn Abbey Collection

## The rage of Achilles

### **Achilles at Troy: the death of Patroclus**

On the right, Achilles sits grief-stricken.

His comrades bring him the dead body of Patroclus, his closest friend and probably lover.

The four sides of this Roman sarcophagus were separated around AD 500–600 and re-used as decorative reliefs in one of the city gates of Ephesus.

Attic sarcophagus, about AD 250–60

Ephesus, Turkey

Marble

From the Woburn Abbey Collection

Wall quote:

**Like the generations of leaves,  
the lives of mortal men.**

Homer, *Iliad*, about 700 BC

### **Achilles sacrifices Trojan prisoners**

With Hector dead, Patroclus' funeral takes place. Achilles kills twelve Trojan prisoners at his friend's tomb – a horrific perversion of the Greek custom of making offerings to the dead. Here Achilles cuts a Trojan youth's throat. More bound prisoners are led towards him. Pieces of captured armour are piled up on a log pyre. The goddess Athena looks on.

Etruscan container (**cista**), 350–250 BC

Palestrina, Italy

Bronze

British Museum

The rage of Achilles

**King Priam begs Achilles  
to return Hector's body**

Achilles abuses Hector's body for twelve days, but the gods prevent it from being damaged. Finally, Priam makes a moving appeal to Achilles for the return of his son's body for burial:

**I have endured what no one on earth  
has ever done before—**

**I put to my lips the hands of the man  
who killed my son.**

Homer, **Iliad**, about 700 BC

Achilles' rage subsides and he releases Hector's body. On the other side of the cup, Greeks sleep while a Trojan guards Priam's chariot.

This Roman silver cup was found in Denmark in a chieftain's grave of around AD 50 with the similar cup displayed nearby, probably a diplomatic gift.

## The rage of Achilles

Roman cup, made and signed by Cheirisophos,  
30 BC – AD 40

Hoby, Denmark

Silver

On loan from The National Museum of Denmark

# The fall of Troy

**Bitter fighting has not taken Troy, so the Greeks think up a clever trick to secure victory.**

The Greeks build a huge wooden horse that conceals their best warriors and pretend to sail away. The Trojans bring the horse into the city as an offering to the gods. While they celebrate victory, the Greeks creep out and open the gates to their army, which has secretly returned.

Troy is sacked, the men and boys are brutally slain, and the women are taken captive.

The city has fallen, but Aeneas escapes with other Trojan refugees. His story is told in Virgil's **Aeneid**.

Hanging title:

Fall Ἰλῶσις

Showcase opposite panel:

### **Philoctetes' bow**

The Greeks learn from a prophecy that to achieve victory they need the bow of the hero Heracles. The Greeks had abandoned Philoctetes, the bow's current owner, when he was wounded on the way to Troy. Odysseus and Neoptolemus, Achilles' son, go to find him. Here Odysseus talks to a dishevelled Philoctetes, while Neoptolemus takes the bow. On the other side, a younger-looking Philoctetes has his wound washed. This Roman cup was found in a chieftain's grave in Denmark with the similar cup displayed nearby.

- 1 Roman cup, made and signed by Cheirisophos,  
30 BC – AD 40  
Hoby, Denmark  
Silver  
On loan from The National Museum of Denmark

## The fall of Troy

### **The Death of Achilles**

Although Achilles knows that on killing Hector he is also destined to die, he continues to fight mercilessly. Achilles' divine mother Thetis protected him from injury by dipping him into the River Styx when he was a baby. But the heel she held him by became his one vulnerable spot – the proverbial Achilles' heel. Paris shoots an arrow, guided by the god Apollo. This scarab shows the fatal arrow protruding from Achilles' heel.

- 2 Etruscan scarab, made in Italy, 400–350 BC  
Cornelian  
British Museum

## **Fight over the armour of Achilles**

After Achilles' death, the Greek heroes argue about who should inherit the armour that the god Hephaestus had crafted for him.

The quarrelling heroes here may be Ajax and Odysseus. The commanding figure standing in the centre may be King Agamemnon.

- 3 Athenian water jar (hydria), about 520 BC  
Vulci, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## The fall of Troy

### **Vote to allocate Achilles' armour**

A vote is held to end the quarrel over Achilles' armour. Both scenes appear on this cup.

Voters place tokens on a table. The contestants stand on either side: Odysseus (**far left**) and Ajax (**far right**). It is clear from the number of tokens on Odysseus' side and Ajax's mournful demeanor that Odysseus will win. The idea of a vote being preferable to violence as a way of resolving conflict was especially important in democratic Athens, where this cup was made.

- 4 Athenian drinking cup (kylix),  
attributed to the Brygos Painter, 490–480 BC  
Vulci, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## **Ajax's suicide**

Ajax has planted his sword in the earth and it pierces his powerful body as he falls onto it. Ajax was outraged by losing to Odysseus in the contest for Achilles' armour. He planned to attack his fellow Greeks. But, driven mad by Athena, he attacked a flock of sheep instead. Humiliated, he takes his own life.

- 5 Etruscan wine-mixing bowl (**krater**), about 400–350 BC  
Vulci, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## The fall of Troy

### **Protector of Troy**

The Palladium was thought to have fallen from the sky. It was a talisman that ensured the safety of Troy. Emblematic of the city, it was placed on later coins of Ilion, as Troy was also known.

These show Athena holding a distaff and spear with dangling knotted bands. The coin is inscribed ΙΛΙΑΔΟΣ, referring to Athena as 'of Ilion'.

- 6 Greek coin, minted in Troy (Ilion), about 188–150 BC  
Silver  
British Museum

## **Diomedes and Odysseus steal the statue of Athena**

A prophecy tells the Greeks that they cannot take Troy while the statue of Athena, the Palladium, remains in the city. On this exquisite gem signed by a craftsman called Felix, Diomedes has just stolen the statue. Odysseus gestures in horror at the body of a temple guard Diomedes has killed. This act of sacrilege is one of several deeds that provoke the gods' anger at the Greeks.

- 7 Roman gem known as the Felix Gem, about 25 BC – AD 25  
Sardonyx  
The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford  
Purchased with the aid of the V&A Purchase Grant Fund

Image credit:

© The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

## The fall of Troy

### **Diomedes steals the Palladium**

Diomedes creeps away with the Trojan statue of Athena. The coin was minted at Argos, one of several Greek cities that later claimed possession of the stolen Palladium.

- 8 Greek coin (**drachm**), minted in Argos, about 370–350 BC  
Silver  
British Museum

In the showcase on the opposite side of horse:

### **The Trojan Horse and the sack of Troy**

On the left of this sarcophagus lid the wheeled wooden horse is being pulled into Troy. It is armed with a helmet and shield, hinting at the warriors hiding inside. In the centre, the Greeks have emerged from the horse and attack the Trojans, who are celebrating their assumed victory with a feast. On the right is an earlier event from the Trojan War, the dragging of Hector behind Achilles' chariot.

- 1 Roman sarcophagus lid, AD 175–200  
Probably Rome, Italy  
Marble  
The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

## A Buddhist Trojan Horse

This apparent Trojan War scene comes from the region of Gandhara (in modern Pakistan and Afghanistan). The figures seem to be the Greek warrior Sinon pushing the horse towards Troy, King Priam behind it, the Trojan priest Laocoön trying to obstruct it, and Cassandra, Priam's daughter, predicting disaster. But 'Cassandra' wears traditional Indian clothing and ornaments worn by nature or fertility spirits (**yakshi**) in South Asian art.

The episode has probably been reinvented as a Buddhist mythological narrative. The Laocoön figure may have represented a bodhisattva, a Buddha of the future, intervening to avert disaster.

- 2 Relief panel, probably a stair-riser from a votive stupa, AD 100–200  
Probably near Hund, Pakistan  
Schist  
British Museum

## **The Trojan Horse**

The wooden horse carved into this gem is surrounded by the walls and buildings of Troy, as imagined by its Roman engraver.

3 Roman intaglio gem, AD 100–200

Jasper

The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

Image credit:

© The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

## The fall of Troy

### **The Greeks emerge from the Trojan Horse**

Images of the Trojan Horse are rare in Greek art. This vessel fragment shows the dramatic moment when the hidden Greek warriors climb out of the wooden horse to let the rest of the Greek army into Troy. Two heroes step down onto the shoulders of warriors below. All that can be seen of the horse is one leg.

- 4 Fragment of an Athenian wine-mixing bowl (krater),  
about 550 BC  
Orbetello, Italy  
Pottery  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung

## **The Trojan Horse is dragged into the city**

The Trojans pull the wooden horse into Troy. It does not seem large enough to contain a band of Greek soldiers (most ancient authors describe between 20 and 100). But its weight is suggested by the way the Trojans lean back to pull on the ropes. The female figure kneeling near the statue of Athena on the left is probably the priestess Cassandra, daughter of King Priam. No-one believed her predictions of disaster and now she despairs as the horse enters Troy.

5 Roman fresco, AD 45–79

Pompeii, Italy

Painted plaster

Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli

## The fall of Troy

### **Cassandra's fate**

During the sack of Troy a Greek warrior called Ajax of Locris drags Cassandra from the temple of Athena. Half-naked, she clings to the statue of Athena. In some versions of the story he rapes her. The priestess of Athena flees in horror. The rape and enslavement of the Trojan women by the Greeks reflect the real experiences of women in many ancient wars.

- 6 Campanian water jar (hydria), about 340–320 BC  
Nola, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## **Neoptolemus kills Priam and Astyanax**

Achilles' son Neoptolemus joins the Greek army in the last year of the war. During the sack of Troy he kills King Priam, who has taken refuge at an altar. The murder is all the more horrific as his weapon is Priam's young grandson Astyanax, son of Hector and Andromache. The past and future of the royal house of Troy are extinguished in a single moment.

- 7 Greek storage jar (amphora), 550–540 BC  
Vulci, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## The fall of Troy

### **Menelaus recovers Helen**

As Troy falls, Menelaus finally comes face to face with his wife Helen. He draws his sword to kill her. Helen flees into the arms of a female figure who may be Aphrodite. On seeing Helen's beauty once again, Menelaus relents. The couple are reunited and the goal of the Greek expedition is achieved.

- 8 Greek water jar (hydria), about 480 BC  
Vulci, Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## **Neoptolemus sacrifices Polyxena**

When Troy has fallen, Achilles' ghost appears to the Greeks and demands the sacrifice of Polyxena, youngest daughter of Priam and Hecuba, to ensure the winds they need to sail home.

In this brutal image, the trussed Polyxena is held by three Greeks while Neoptolemus cuts her throat. Her blood runs onto the altar.

He slaughters her as a priest might sacrifice an animal. It is a horrific act that angers the gods.

- 9 Athenian storage jar (amphora), about 570–550 BC  
Italy  
Pottery  
British Museum

## The fall of Troy

### **Aeneas escapes the destruction of Troy**

As the Greeks sack Troy, Aeneas is visited by his divine mother Aphrodite (Roman Venus) and his brother-in-law Hector's ghost. They convince him to flee the burning city with his family. Aeneas lifts his old father onto his back and leaves Troy. Here they are flanked by two women, an archer and an old man. One of the women might be Creusa, Aeneas' wife, who is left behind in the confusion.

Aeneas' escape ensures the survival of the Trojans following the destruction of their city. He will settle in Italy and his descendants will found Rome.

Greek storage jar (amphora), 490–480 BC

Vulci, Italy

Pottery

British Museum

## **Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius**

Roman artists depicted Aeneas fleeing from burning Troy with his father Anchises on his back and holding his son by the hand. Anchises often holds the family's household gods. Sometimes, as on this lamp, he holds the Trojan statue of Athena, the Palladium.

Aeneas goes on to settle in Italy and his descendants become the mythical founders of the city of Rome. His piety, bravery and divine descent as the son of Venus (Greek Aphrodite), brought glory to Rome and its emperors.

Roman lamp, about AD 25–75  
Pottery

Roman gem, AD 1–300  
Onyx

Roman coin (**aureus**) of Antoninus Pius,  
minted in Rome, AD 140–144  
Gold

British Museum

## The fall of Troy

### **Aeneas arrives in Italy**

After a difficult journey Aeneas and his son Ascanius arrive in Italy. Aeneas marries Lavinia, the daughter of a local king, and founds the city of Lavinium. A prophecy foretells where to establish the city: a white sow suckling her offspring will mark the place. This Roman relief shows Aeneas and Ascanius discovering the sow. Their descendants will eventually found Rome.

Roman relief, about AD 140–150

Probably Rome

Marble

British Museum

# The adventures of Odysseus

**The Greeks have won the war and yearn for home, but the gods have other plans.**

Angry at the Greeks' horrific deeds during the war, the gods punish their heroes. Some die, others reach Greece only after many years. The most adventurous journey is that of wily Odysseus, king of Ithaca. Waylaid by storms and shipwreck, sea-monsters and sorceresses, his ten-year odyssey takes him to the furthest reaches of the Mediterranean. He finally returns to Ithaca, where he finds his house taken over by suitors for his wife's hand. Odysseus kills them and is reunited with Penelope. His story is told in Homer's **Odyssey**.

Hanging title:

Return Νόστος

## The adventures of Odysseus

### **Odysseus the traveller**

The Greek hero Odysseus is shown with deep-set eyes and furrowed brow, suggesting a man of intellect as well as action. His beard symbolises the experience and wisdom of age, while his conical hat (**pilos**) is that of a traveller.

Odysseus is an unusual hero, famous for his cunning. It is he who devises the Trojan Horse.

Head of Odysseus, AD 75–125, restored in the late 1700s

Marble

MACM (Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins) France

## The Sirens' lure

Odysseus' ship passes the Sirens' island.

The woman-headed, bird-bodied creatures perch on rocky promontories. Their enchantingly sweet singing is famous for luring sailors to their death on the rocky shore.

Forewarned by Circe, Odysseus has plugged the ears of his crew with wax. He asks his men to bind him to the mast so that he can hear the Sirens without succumbing to temptation. In despair at being outwitted, one Siren plunges into the sea.

Athenian jar (**stamnos**), about 480–470 BC

Vulci, Italy

Pottery

British Museum

## The adventures of Odysseus

### **Odysseus is enchanted by Circe**

Odysseus has landed on Circe's island and she has turned his men into pigs. Here he rushes to attack the sorceress, but seems startled by her respectable home, complete with loom. Circe offers Odysseus a drugged potion, but he is protected by a herb that Hermes has given him. He rescues his men, succumbs to Circe's erotic charms and stays for a year.

On the other side of the cup, Odysseus crosses the sea on a raft of wine amphorae blown along by Boreas the north wind.

The burlesque scenes, unusual in Greek art, may illustrate ritual theatre performances.

Cup (**skyphos**), 425–375 BC

Sanctuary of the Kabeiroi at Thebes, Boeotia

Pottery

The Ashmolean Museum,

University of Oxford

Wall quote:

**Zeus planned a bitter journey home for us,  
since some of us had neither sense nor  
morals.**

Homer, **Odyssey**, about 700 BC

### **Deadly Sirens**

Odysseus' adventures were popular subjects in wealthy Romans' houses. On this wall painting of his encounter with the Sirens, the bird-women perch high on the rocks, surrounded by the bones of their victims. One plays the twin pipes, another a lyre, while the third is presumably singing.

Roman fresco, AD 20–79

Pompeii, Italy

Painted plaster

British Museum

## The adventures of Odysseus

### **Musical Sirens**

The monstrous Sirens are shown as elegant musicians playing the pan pipes (**syrinx**), lyre and flutes. As Odysseus sails past, he struggles to free himself from the mast. One of the crew tightens his ropes.

The episode was a popular subject for Etruscan funerary urns, chosen as a metaphor for the final journey of the deceased as they reluctantly leave behind life's pleasures.

Etruscan funerary urn, probably made at Volterra, Italy,  
150–100 BC  
Alabaster  
British Museum

## **Odysseus pines for home**

Throughout his travels, Odysseus yearns for his home and his wife, Penelope. Here, tired of fighting, he has put down his sword and spear.

**...I want to go back home,  
and every day I hope that day will come.  
If some god strikes me on the wine-dark sea,  
I will endure it. By now I am used  
to suffering – I have gone through so much,  
at sea and in the war.**

Homer, **Odyssey**, about 700 BC

Helmet cheek-piece, 430–400 BC

Bronze

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung

## The adventures of Odysseus

### **Odysseus and his men blind the Cyclops**

Odysseus' ship is blown ashore near the home of the Cyclops Polyphemus, a one-eyed giant.

Odysseus and his men enter Polyphemus' cave and eat and drink the delicious provisions inside.

But Polyphemus traps them and devours six of the men. Wily Odysseus comes up with an escape plan. He gets Polyphemus drunk and with two companions drives a wooden stake into the Cyclops' single eye.

South Italian (Chalcidian) storage jar (amphora),  
about 520 BC

Pottery

British Museum

## Escape from the Cyclops

Odysseus and his men have blinded the Cyclops Polyphemus and now need to escape from the cave, also a sheep pen. Odysseus tells his men to tie themselves under the sheep. Blind Polyphemus unblocks the cave entrance and carefully feels the back of each sheep as it runs out, hoping to detect escaping prisoners. The plan works. One by one the men escape from the cave.

This oil bottle and bronze ram show Odysseus escaping in the same way.

Athenian oil bottle (**lekythos**), about 480 BC

Vulci, Italy

Pottery

British Museum

Figure, AD 1–200

Paramythia, Greece

Bronze

British Museum

## The adventures of Odysseus

### **Between Scylla and Charybdis**

Scylla, a human-eating, multi-headed sea monster, guards one side of a treacherous strait through which Odysseus must sail. On the other side is Charybdis, a whirlpool that swallows ships. Scylla is often shown as part-woman, part-octopus, with a girdle of vicious dog-heads and tentacles that she curls around Odysseus' men. Six sailors are lost to the ravenous monster, but Odysseus' ship makes it through.

On this Roman table support Scylla is paired with a centaur, part-man and part-horse, accompanied by Eros, god of love.

Roman table support, AD 120–40

Italy

Marble

Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli

### **Penelope's cunning trick**

Penelope mournfully waits for her husband, a wool basket under her stool. She is surrounded by servants, including Odysseus' old nurse, Eurycleia. Penelope is beset by suitors who compete to marry her, assuming that Odysseus will never return. She promises to choose one of them when she has finished weaving a funeral shroud for Odysseus' father Laertes. A true match for her crafty husband, she cunningly unravels each day's work at night and keeps the suitors at bay for years.

Roman relief, made in Italy, about 30 BC – AD 50  
Terracotta  
British Museum

## The adventures of Odysseus

### **Penelope, the ideal wife**

Penelope embodied the ideal of a loyal, intelligent wife. Artists often show her veiled, sitting cross-legged on a stool. Her head resting in her hand, she pines for her absent husband. This famous type, also shown on the relief displayed nearby, was first created as a life-sized sculpture in Athens around 470 BC. The head shown here is from a Roman copy of this statue type.

Roman head of Penelope, AD 1–100,  
after a Greek original of about 470–460 BC

Marble

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung

## **Odysseus returns to Ithaca**

Odysseus stands with his bow drawn. Disguised as a beggar, he has returned home to find his house overrun with suitors for his wife Penelope. An archery tournament will decide her new husband, but it is Odysseus who wins. Then he turns his bow on the suitors. One is hit and turns in anguish. Another rises from his couch, while a third hides behind a table, watched by two servants. Over a hundred men die, as do twelve servant girls, hanged for their disloyalty.

Athenian vessel (**skyphos**), about 440 BC

Tarquinia, Italy

Pottery

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung

Troy — the archaeology

On the wall opposite the entrance:

## **Troy — the archaeology**

**Unlike the enduring story of Troy,  
the city itself was lost for centuries.**

Although many scholars thought that Troy only existed in Homer's imagination, people still searched for it. In the late nineteenth century, businessman and self-taught pioneer of archaeology Heinrich Schliemann became famous for discovering Troy. His excavations at Hisarlık in northwestern Turkey revealed the remains of a great city.

Archaeology demonstrates the reality of Troy as a city, but has not proved that the Trojan War took place there. However, new research shows contact and conflict between the Greek world and Troy in the Late Bronze Age, particularly in the period between about 1400 and 1180 BC. This could provide a feasible historical context for the story.

Beside the entrance:

## **Homer in the library**

After the fall of Rome, the works of Homer and other classical Greek authors continued to be copied and studied in the Greek-speaking Byzantine world centred on Constantinople.

They were reintroduced to western Europe from about 1350 as part of Renaissance interest in ancient Greek art and thought. Later they became a cornerstone of formal education. The growing popularity of Homer's poems was a major motivation in the search for Troy.

Homer in the library

Wall quote:

**Be Homer's works  
your study and delight,  
Read them by day  
and meditate by night...**

Alexander Pope,  
**An Essay on Criticism, 1711**

## The Townley Homer

Dating to about 1059, this is one of the most important surviving manuscripts of the **Iliad**.

The poem, copied in fine script, is densely annotated. The notes range from explanations of obscure words to observations about events and characters. They belong to a long tradition of commentary on Homer's poems that goes back to the ancient world. The manuscript was formerly owned by classical collector Charles Townley.

Manuscript, possibly made in Constantinople,  
probably 1059

Ink on parchment

On loan from the British Library

Homer in the library

## **Homer printed in Greek**

This is the first printed edition of Homer's works in Greek. It was edited by Demetrius Chalcondylas of Crete and printed in Florence in 1488, with a dedication to the city's ruler Lorenzo de' Medici. The availability of printed texts disseminated Homer's works and advanced Homeric scholarship.

Demetrius Chalcondylas, **Opera Omnia**, Vol I, 1488

Book

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

## **Chapman's Homer**

George Chapman published the first complete English translation of Homer's works in 1616, capturing the essence of the original in his own poetic style. For the next 100 years most English-speakers encountered Homer's poems through Chapman's work.

George Chapman, **The Whole Works of Homer**, about 1616

Book

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

## Alexander Pope's Iliad

The 18th-century poet Alexander Pope's handwritten draft of the **Iliad** shows the work behind his translation, which took more than six years to complete. It was described by Samuel Johnson as 'the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen'.

Fascinated by Homer's description of the Shield of Achilles, Pope sketched his own reconstruction.

Manuscript draft of Alexander Pope's translation of the **Iliad** and drawing of the Shield of Achilles, 1712–24  
On loan from the British Library

**The Heads of the Seven Main Heroes  
of the Iliad  
about 1796**

Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein (1751–1829)

An illustration to Homer's **Iliad**, this print shows (**left to right**) Menelaus, Paris, Diomedes, Odysseus, Nestor, Achilles and Agamemnon, each based on an ancient model. Odysseus, with his distinctive cap, is a copy of the marble head displayed in the previous section.

Tischbein was one of many European artists and writers to spend time in Italy in the 1700s, attracted by its ancient culture.

Etching and engraving  
British Museum

## **Copy of the Laocoön group**

Rediscovered in Rome in 1506, the Laocoön group became one of the most famous sculptures from ancient Greece and Rome. It shows sea serpents sent by the gods strangling the Trojan priest Laocoön and his sons, to prevent him revealing the secret of the Trojan Horse. The sculpture, with its ambitious composition, inspired debates on art and poetry. Small-scale copies were made to decorate houses and libraries.

Bronze, 1600–1800, after a Roman copy of a Hellenistic Greek original of about 200–100 BC  
Victoria and Albert Museum. Salting Bequest

Wall quote:

**... But where I sought  
for Ilion's walls,  
The quiet sheep feeds,  
and the tortoise crawls...**

Lord Byron, **Don Juan**, 1819–24

## The search for Troy

Homer's descriptions make the general location of Troy clear. But the specific site, abandoned for centuries, was not easy to find. By the early nineteenth century Troy was widely believed to have been at a place called Bounarbashi. Yet a survey of the area also revealed an ancient site at nearby Hisarlık.

Coins discovered there showed that this was the Greek city of Ilion. Scottish journalist and geologist Charles Maclaren suggested in 1822 that Homer's Troy lay beneath Greek Ilion. Frank Calvert, an Englishman who owned part of the mound, excavated there in 1863. Their work set Heinrich Schliemann on the right track.

Wall quote:

**...I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,  
And heard Troy doubted:  
time will doubt of Rome.**

Lord Byron, **Don Juan**, 1819–24

### **Homer's Troy and Greek Ilios**

The mistaken belief that the Greek town Ilios and Homer's Troy (also called Ilios) were in different places started with the Greek geographer Strabo (about 64 BC – AD 24). It caused endless confusion. On this map of northwestern Turkey, Old Troy (**Ilium Vetus**) is marked at Bounarbashi, while New Troy (**Ilium Recens**) is marked at Hisarlık (not named). The map reflects the widely accepted theory that Homer's Troy was at Bounarbashi.

- 1 Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier,  
**Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce**, Volume II, 1809  
Book  
British Museum

## The search for Troy

### **The ‘Tomb of Achilles’**

This tomb stone of a woman called Hieroklea was found near a burial mound popularly known as the ‘Tomb of Achilles’. From antiquity onwards, mounds in the plain of Troy were identified as the tombs of heroes. When excavated in 1787, however, the mound revealed a cremation burial and classical pottery that were hard to reconcile with a hero’s tomb.

- 2 Stele with Greek inscription, probably AD 1–100  
‘Tomb of Achilles’, near Sigeion, Turkey  
Marble  
British Museum

**Bounarbashi, Believed to be the Site  
of Homer's Troy  
about 1804**

After William Gell (1777–1836)

Archaeologist and artist William Gell travelled extensively in the Troad (northwestern Turkey). He thought Homer's Troy was at the modern village of Pinarbaşı, or Bounarbashi as the name was written by early travellers. Gell made a series of fine drawings with Bounarbashi as a focus.

- 3 Engraving with hand-colouring, bound in a sketchbook  
British Museum

The search for Troy

## **The Plains of Troy**

**1839**

F. C. Lewis (1779–1856)

after Henry Acland (1815–1900)

Acland made three visits to the Troad in 1838.

He wrote an account of his travels in **The Plains of Troy**, accompanied by this fine panoramic drawing made from the heights around Bounarbashi.

- 4 Etching and aquatint with additional hand colouring  
Victoria and Albert Museum. Purchased with the assistance  
of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Art Fund,  
Shell International and the Friends of the V&A

## **Roman hero-worship**

Most ancient Greeks and Romans saw Ilion as the successor of Troy – unlike Strabo and the later scholars who relied on him. Ilion became a place of pilgrimage. Visitors, including Alexander the Great and the Roman emperor Hadrian, paid their respects to the heroes.

This Roman statue base once carried a sculpture of Hector. Its inscription reads:

**Bring forth, my Art,  
the splendid protector of the Trojan land,  
Just as Zeus aroused, just as Homer created.  
His eyes searing with the flame of tireless fire  
kindle (the Greeks) with terror, for his country.  
Tight in his grasp (his spear) still rages...**

- 5 Inscribed statue base, AD 100–200  
Troas, Turkey  
Marble  
British Museum

## The search for Troy

### **Greek Ilion at Hisarlık**

In 1801, British traveller Edward Clarke visited Hisarlık, and found (or bought) ancient Greek coins bearing images of Athena and inscribed 'Iliados' or 'of Ilion'. Clarke's discovery identified the site as the Greek city of Illion.

- 6 Coin (**tetradrachm**) of Ilion, about 95–87 BC  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
Silver  
British Museum

## Frank Calvert's excavations in the Troad

Frank Calvert (1828–1908) owned land in the Troad, including at Thymbra and Hisarlık. His first recorded excavations were at Thymbra, where he found tombs containing imported and locally made ceramics, including the pieces displayed here.

In 1863 Calvert began excavating at Hisarlık, convinced it was both Greek Ilion and ancient Troy. In 1868, Calvert shared his theory with Heinrich Schliemann. Calvert and Schliemann collaborated on excavating Troy, but Calvert's contribution never received the recognition it deserved.

- 7 East Greek figure of dove, Corinthian jug and East Greek lidded bowl, plate with a Siren, and miniature libation bowl (**phiale**), about 600–475 BC

Thymbra, Turkey

Pottery

British Museum

The search for Troy

Image caption:

Frank Calvert (**left**) and Schliemann (**third from right**) at Thymbra with other participants at the Hisarlık conference, 1889

Image credit:

© D-DAI-ATH-Troja-0120

## **The first find excavated on the site later identified as Troy**

John Brunton served in the British Army Works Corps in the Crimean War. After the war he set his men to digging archaeological sites, including at Hisarlık, which he knew to be the site of Greek Ilium. He had unknowingly conducted the very first excavation on the site that would later be recognised as Troy. He found this fragment of Roman mosaic there.

- 8 Roman mosaic, AD 300–400  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
Stone  
British Museum

## Schliemann's view of Troy

Heinrich Schliemann had his workers dig rapidly through many layers of settlement in the mound at Hisarlık, convinced that Homeric Troy lay at the lowest level. They revealed a strongly-fortified citadel that had been destroyed by fire.

Schliemann announced that this 'Burnt City' was the Troy of the Trojan War. Yet it was disappointingly small, and Schliemann had to make exaggerated claims about his finds to support this theory.

The Burnt City is now known to belong in the Early Bronze Age, around 3000 to 2000 BC, too early for any feasible historical context for the Trojan War.

Schliemann's view of Troy

Wall quote:

**There can remain no doubt whatever that this is the very city sung by Homer, that this is the very city destroyed by the Greeks, that this is the Ilium of eternal glory.**

Heinrich Schliemann, 1875

Labels for stratigraphy layers:

Schliemann's 7th City

Schliemann's 6th City

Schliemann's 5th City

Schliemann's 4th City

Schliemann's Burnt City  
(2nd/3rd City)

modern Troy II

Schliemann's 1st City

**Backdrop image:**

This photograph of Schliemann's Great Trench shows that his team removed huge quantities of earth. He missed or even destroyed vital evidence in his haste to find Troy and never fully understood the site's complex layers.

Plate 111 from Heinrich Schliemann's **Atlas of Trojan Antiquities: Photographic Reports on the Excavations in Troy**, 1874

Schliemann's view of Troy

## **Portrait of Heinrich Schliemann**

**1877**

Sydney Hodges (1829–1900)

Heinrich Schliemann (1822–1890), born in Neubukow, Germany, made his fortune in business before turning to archaeology. This portrait was probably painted when he visited London in 1877.

In his autobiography, Schliemann says he was given Jerrer's **Universal History for Children** at the age of seven. His father explained that the illustration of Aeneas fleeing burning Troy was imaginary.

**'Father,' retorted I, 'if such walls once existed, they cannot possibly have been completely destroyed: vast ruins of them must still remain' ...at last we both agreed that I should one day excavate Troy.**

Heinrich Schliemann, **Ilios**, 1880

Oil on canvas

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,

Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Image caption:

Illustration from Georg Ludwig Jerrer's **Universal History for Children**, first published 1819

First case:

**'The owl-faced tutelary goddess of Ilium'**

Schliemann found numerous pottery 'face pots' at Troy. He saw these pots with modelled features as representations of the Trojan cult statue of Athena, whom Homer described as '**glaukopsis**', a term that Schliemann translated as 'owl-faced'. On the basis of this association he concluded that he had found the legendary city.

Pottery 'face pots', about 2550–1750 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey

1-3 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

4 British Museum

## Schliemann's view of Troy

### **'Idols of the Ilian Athena'**

Small stone figurines schematically representing the human body were common in Troy between 3000 and 2000 BC. Schliemann thought they were an early version of the cult statue of Athena, the Palladium.

He reasoned: 'According to legend, the feet of this Palladium were joined together, and they could not possibly be more joined than on these idols.' He suggested that these primitive images evolved into the owl that accompanied Athena on later representations.

Stone figurines, about 2550–1750 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Second case:

**'Goblets with two handles...**

**the Homeric *depas amphikypellon*'**

In the **Iliad**, a ***depas amphikypellon*** is the hero's drinking goblet. The Greek words mean some sort of double cup, and Schliemann identified them with the two-handled vessels that he found at Troy. Cups of this shape may have been high-status objects, but we now know them to be earlier than any feasible date for Homer's Troy.

Pottery two-handled vessels, about 2550–1750 BC,

Hisarlık, Turkey

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,

Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

**'Most of the Trojan vases are tripods'**

Schliemann found many three-footed pottery vessels at Troy. He liked to think that they were an echo of the Homeric world, where valuable bronze tripods were given as gifts between princes or as prizes at funeral games. In spite of this imaginative link to the world of the heroes, these vessels had everyday household functions.

1-3 Pottery tripod vessels, about 2550–2300 BC,  
Hisarlık, Turkey

4 Pottery brazier (portable coal heater), about 2550–2300 BC,  
Hisarlık, Turkey

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Object on open display:

### **Food storage**

Trojans used large storage jars to preserve a variety of agricultural produce, from grain to oil and wine. A jar like this possibly contained enough grain to support a small family for a year. Wealthy Trojans probably had storage capacity for a number of dependants as well as their own families.

Pottery storage jar (**pithos**), about 2550–2300 BC,  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Schliemann's view of Troy

Next case:

**'I also meet with very curious vases,  
in the shape of animals, with three feet'**

Schliemann found a variety of animal-shaped vessels in the Burnt City. They are typical of the pottery of Troy II, which was sometimes thrown on a wheel, but often handmade and carefully burnished.

Pottery animal-shaped vessels, about 2550–2300 BC,  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

**'A written language was not wanting':  
the search for writing at Troy**

Schliemann and other scholars of his time thought that they saw inscriptions on some Trojan pottery. He thought that the smaller of these two jars bore an early form of writing. The marks are now recognised as decoration.

Two pottery jars, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Schliemann's view of Troy

**'This is the very city destroyed  
by the Greeks': the Burnt City**

Schliemann believed that the level he called the Burnt City was the setting for the Trojan War. These lids from the Burnt City are an example of a type of object also found by later archaeologists at Troy. Objects like these helped them relate Schliemann's discoveries to the modern understanding of the site. For example, the Burnt City in part corresponds to what is now called Troy II (2550–2300 BC).

Pottery lids, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Next case:

### **Silver and bronze dress pins**

Schliemann used precious metal finds to support the claim that he was discovering objects that were fit for King Priam of Troy and his royal family. These long pins were used by ancient Trojans to fasten garments, probably at the shoulder.

- 1 Two silver pins, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte
- 2 Two bronze pins, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
British Museum

## **Stone mould for bronze tools**

Schliemann was particularly interested in the bronze objects from the Burnt City. For him they were proof that this was Homer's Troy, because the weapons described in the **Iliad** are made of bronze. He found bronze tools and weapons, and also the stone moulds used to cast them. It is because of the predominant use of bronze (copper alloy) for tools and weapons that this early period is called the 'Bronze Age'.

- 3 Stone mould, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## **Early Bronze Age elegance**

The range of jugs that Schliemann found in the Burnt City is varied. The wider-necked jug has incised and punctuated decoration, while the two with narrower necks have elegantly elongated spouts. These shapes are found in both Anatolia and Greece.

- 4 Pottery spouted vessels, about 2550–2300 BC,  
Hisarlik, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## **Shallow bowl and lidded boxes**

Shallow bowls and pottery boxes with well-fitting lids were common finds in the Burnt City.

The inhabitants of Early Bronze Age Troy (3000–2000 BC) used them as everyday tableware and to store cosmetics or jewellery.

5 Pottery bowl, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey

6 Pottery boxes (pyxides), about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

# Priam's Treasure

In 1873, Schliemann discovered in the Burnt City a hoard of precious objects that he called 'Priam's Treasure'. The find confirmed his claims that Troy had been a wealthy and important place.

The Treasure has had a controversial history. In his haste to smuggle it to Athens, Schliemann gave a confused account of its discovery and doubts were raised about its authenticity.

He later gave it to Berlin and, at the end of the Second World War, most of it was taken to Russia. It is now dated to about 2550 to 2300 BC.

## Priam's Treasure

First case:

### **Silver bowl with central boss**

Schliemann published this remarkably well-preserved bowl as part of Priam's Treasure, but his notebooks reveal that it actually came to light several days later. Perhaps he simply made a mistake, but critics at the time suggested that he grouped together objects from different locations to make his find more impressive.

Silver bowl, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Caption for image at the back of the case:

### **Priam's Treasure**

Photograph of Priam's Treasure from Heinrich Schliemann's **Atlas of Trojan Antiquities: Photographic Reports on the Excavations in Troy, 1874**

## **Two silver vessels from Priam's Treasure**

Schliemann was keen to show that Priam's Treasure was part of the dramatic story of the sack of Troy. He claimed that it came from a building he called Priam's Palace. It may in fact have been a hoard hidden or stored for safe-keeping in a small, rectangular enclosure. Schliemann found much of the gold jewellery, including the pieces he called 'Helen's Jewels', in the one-handled silver vessel.

Silver vessels, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## Priam's Treasure

Next case:

### **Silver two-handled cup**

Two-handled pottery cups of the **depas amphikypellon** type were common finds in Schliemann's excavations. This luxury silver version is unusual. It is possible that it came from the region of Troy because of its similarities with the treasures found by Schliemann in Troy II, but this cannot now be proved.

Silver cup, about 2550–2300 BC,  
said to be from the Troad, Turkey  
British Museum

## **Sixteen gold ornaments from Treasure F**

Schliemann found several groups of precious objects in the Burnt City. One included these discs. Their decorative pattern is made with tiny spheres of gold, a sophisticated technique called granulation. They were possibly originally attached to clothing. The gold treasures from Troy were taken from Berlin to Russia at the end of the Second World War, but these small ornaments were left behind.

Gold ornaments, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## **Bronze spearhead from Priam's Treasure**

Weapons feature prominently in the story of the Trojan War, so Schliemann was delighted to find examples during his excavations. This spearhead has been squashed out of shape and had perhaps become scrap metal, although weapons were also sometimes bent to 'kill' them on the death of their owner.

Bronze spearhead, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

### **Three bronze axes from Priam's Treasure**

The gold and silver objects from Priam's Treasure particularly caught the world's attention, but there were also a number of copper and bronze objects. Some, like these bronze axes, were both functional and valuable.

Bronze axes, about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

On panel outside the circle:

## **Mycenae and London**

Excavating at Mycenae on the Greek mainland in 1876, Schliemann found rich burials that he thought were the graves of King Agamemnon and his entourage.

The following year he arranged an exhibition of his Trojan finds in London: the last time they were shown in the UK. At the British Museum he saw pottery resembling his finds from Mycenae, which helped him and others understand Mycenaean civilisation.

Following his later discoveries at Troy, Schliemann eventually realised that the time when Troy was in contact with Mycenae, perhaps 'Homeric' Troy, was much later than he had thought.

Wall quote:

**But is there not a danger... [that we] may awaken from a pleasant dream to find that we have destroyed with the pickaxe the work of the pen?**

**The Pall Mall Gazette, 17 May 1873**

## **Excavations at Hissarlik 1877**

William Simpson (1823–1899)

Artist William Simpson visited Troy in 1877 and painted this watercolour of Schliemann escorting two visitors to the site. Simpson was sceptical about Schliemann's claim to have found Priam's Palace, saying 'If I had been told it was the palace of Priam's pig I could have believed it.'

- 1 Watercolour  
British Museum

## **Discovering the Greek Bronze Age**

When Schliemann visited London in 1877, British Museum curator Charles Newton showed him pottery from Rhodes, Cyprus and Egypt similar to that discovered in Mycenae. These were the first steps towards understanding a previously unknown early stage in Greek history.

The term 'Mycenaean' later came to be used for the culture of Late Bronze Age Greece, from about 1600 to 1150 BC. Schliemann recognised the same pottery at Troy just before his death in 1890.

- 2-5 Mycenaean sherds from a stirrup jar (2), jar (3), kylix (4) and bowl (5), 1400–1200 BC, Mycenae, Greece  
Pottery  
British Museum

## **The sphere of Mycenaean influence**

Known as 'stirrup jars', these vessels are characteristic Mycenaean products. Probably containing perfumed oils, they were exported across the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean. Some also reached Troy.

- 6 Mycenaean stirrup jar, 1375–1300 BC  
Ialysos, Rhodes, Greece  
Pottery  
British Museum
- 7 Mycenaean stirrup jar, 1400–1200 BC  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
Pottery  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

### **Egyptian chronology: dating the Mycenaeans**

In 1870 this Egyptian scarab was excavated in a tomb on Rhodes that also contained Mycenaean pottery. It is inscribed with the name of pharaoh Amenhotep III. The dates of his reign (about 1390–1352 BC) were known from Egyptian texts, so the scarab became one of the earliest pieces of evidence for dating the Mycenaean civilisation to around 1600 to 1100 BC.

- 8 Egyptian 18th Dynasty Scarab, 1390–1352 BC  
Ialysos, Rhodes, Greece  
Faience  
British Museum

## **Between Mycenae and Anatolia**

Animal figurines and animal-shaped vessels were used in religious rituals in both the Mycenaean and Anatolian worlds. Some, like this bull-headed vessel (9), are rhytons – vessels with one opening for filling and another for pouring. Finds of Mycenaean rhytons and figures in Troy and the Eastern Aegean show close contact between Mycenaeans and their neighbours.

9 Mycenaean rhyton, 1325–1200 BC  
Karpathos, Greece  
Pottery  
British Museum

10 Mycenaean pig figure, 1400–1200 BC  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
Terracotta  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## **Mycenaean drinking goblets**

The drinking goblet (kylix) is one of the most characteristic types of Mycenaean pottery.

Large numbers of such goblets were used in the Mycenaean palaces, probably at feasts.

Examples have also been found in Troy.

- 11 Mycenaean goblet (kylix), 1375–1300 BC  
Karpathos, Greece  
Pottery  
British Museum
- 12 Mycenaean goblet (kylix), 1400–1200 BC  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
Pottery  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin

## **Wine drinking at Troy?**

Pottery from Mycenae was exported across the Mediterranean. Especially popular were large mixing bowls, often painted with human figures and animals, including the characteristically Aegean motif of the octopus. In the Greek world these bowls probably held wine at feasts. At Troy their use may have been the same, or adapted to local customs.

Mycenaeans mixing bowls (kraters), about 1400–1300 BC  
Pottery

- 13 Ialysos, Rhodes, Greece  
British Museum
- 14 Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Troy today

Returning into the circle:

## Troy today

Archaeologists continue to investigate Troy. We now know the city was much larger than Schliemann had recognised. It was founded about 3000 BC and repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt. Nine major settlements, now called Troy I to IX, existed over the course of about 3600 years.

Strategically located in a fertile plain at the entrance to the Black Sea, Troy traded with neighbouring kingdoms and the wider Aegean. Troy II, including Schliemann's Burnt City, and Troy VI–VIIa were times of particular wealth. Troy VI–VIIa, with massive fortifications, is the only phase that provides a feasible background for the Trojan War.

## Stratigraphy labelling:

### **Troy IX**

#### **(85 BC – AD 600)**

Troy prospered under Roman rule from 85 BC. Theatres and baths were built. Life was similar to that in other Roman towns. Soon after AD 600 Troy was largely abandoned, though there is evidence for some Byzantine activity in the area.

- 1 Roman glass beaker and bottle, AD 100–300, Hisarlık, Turkey
- 2 Roman pottery unguent bottle, AD 100–300, Hisarlık, Turkey
- 3 Roman pottery bowl, about AD 75–225, Hisarlık, Turkey
- 4 Roman pottery oil lamp, AD 100–300, Hisarlık, Turkey
- 5 Byzantine pottery plate fragment with sgraffito decoration, Zeuxippus ware, AD 1200–1250, Hisarlık, Turkey

British Museum

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Troy today

## **Troy VIII**

**(about 900–85 BC)**

Once again Troy expanded and flourished.

Now known as Ilion, it was part of the wider Greek world. People adopted the Greek language. Goods in Greek styles, including oil lamps and ointment bottles, were imported and made locally.

1 East Greek pottery stemmed dish with painted lotus frieze, about 590–570 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
British Museum

2 Greek pottery drinking cup (kylix) with painted palmettes, 450–400 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey

3 Greek black-glazed pottery bowl, 300–200 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey

4 Hellenistic pottery unguent bottle, about 300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

5 Hellenistic pottery oil lamp, 300–250 BC, probably Hisarlık, Turkey  
British Museum

## **Troy VIIb**

**(about 1180–900 BC)**

Around 1180 BC Troy was destroyed and rebuilt on a smaller scale, with evidence of burning and finds of weapons suggesting destruction in war. New pottery wares that are neither Greek nor local, such as this cooking jar, are found alongside traditional shapes. They suggest the arrival of new people, perhaps from southeastern Europe. This was a time of great upheaval and migration across the Mediterranean world, for reasons still not fully understood.

Pottery cups and jar, about 1180–900 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Troy today

## **Troy VI–VIIa (about 1750–1180 BC)**

Troy VI–VIIa was a large city in contact with the Anatolian and Mediterranean worlds, with a citadel protected by huge stone walls. Mycenaean pottery was both imported and copied locally. Around 1300 BC the town was destroyed by an earthquake and was rebuilt.

The time between about 1400 BC and the collapse of the Mycenaean states in about 1200 BC is the only period that could provide a feasible background for a major conflict between Greeks and Trojans.

1, 2 Mycenaean flask and stirrup jar, 1400–1180 BC,  
Hisarlık, Turkey

3-7 Pottery cups, jars and jug, 1750–1180 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## **Troy V** **(about 2000–1750 BC)**

Troy V saw prosperity and expansion, with larger houses and resettlement of the lower city. Some new pottery styles were introduced, such as the black burnished cup with a ridged neck.

Pottery cup, bowl and jar, about 2000–1750 BC,  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## **Troy IV** **(about 2200–2000 BC)**

Troy IV was a period of change. Overland trade became more important, and Trojan people adopted Anatolian styles of housing and cooking. A range of new pottery types included elegantly burnished wares, vessels with high handles and jugs and cups with tripod feet.

Pottery cups, jug, bowl and pourer (**askos**),  
about 2200–1750 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Troy today

## **Troy III (about 2300–2200 BC)**

Troy II was destroyed in a great fire. Troy III was rebuilt more modestly, with small, densely crowded houses. The burnished bottle was a new pottery shape, but overall Troy's craft traditions continued, as did its maritime links.

- 1 Pottery bottle, about 2300–2200 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey
- 2 Pottery cup, about 2550–2200 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## **Troy II (about 2550–2300 BC)**

Troy II was a large, prosperous and well-connected city. Trade flourished. Wealthy Trojans used elaborate vessels, weapons and jewellery. New technologies, including the potter's wheel, were introduced, and polished reddish pottery imitated metalware. Priam's Treasure dates from this period.

Pottery cup, '**depas** cup', bowl, jug and two jars,  
about 2550–2300 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Troy today

## **Troy I (about 3000–2550 BC)**

Troy I was a small but wealthy and powerful settlement. Its stone and mudbrick houses were surrounded by a thick fortification wall. Trojans used handmade pottery, sometimes with incised or punctuated decoration. They traded with the Mediterranean world, importing metals and other goods.

Pottery bowl, jug and two decorated fragments,  
about 3000–2550 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## **The temple of Athena at Troy**

The temple of Athena was one of the most impressive buildings in Troy during the Hellenistic period (323–31 BC). It was decorated with scenes of fighting from the Trojan War and other mythical battles.

Here a goddess, perhaps Troy's patron deity Athena, fights one of the giants who threaten to overthrow the gods.

Carved marble metope, 300–100 BC  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

Looking for the Trojan War

On the panel outside the circle:

## Looking for the Trojan War

Troy was an ally of the mighty Hittite empire of Anatolia. Hittite records from about 1290 to 1250 BC give tantalising indications of clashes between Troy and the Mycenaean Greeks, whose influence extended across the eastern Mediterranean at this time. A Trojan War could certainly have happened in this world of conflict and revolt. Homer's poems reflect many aspects of real ancient war, but there is no clear evidence that the war described by Homer actually took place.

## Searching for writing at Troy

Schliemann believed the incisions on these spindle whorls (1) were writing, but today they are seen as decoration. The only writing known from Bronze Age Troy so far is a seal discovered in 1995, inscribed in the Luwian language of Western Anatolia. Seals with Luwian and Hittite writing have been found as far afield as Rhodes (2), as well as in the Hittite capital Hattusa (3).

- 1 6 terracotta spindle whorls, 2550–1750 BC, Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte
- 2 Red jasper seal, from Ialysos, Rhodes, Greece,  
about 1300–1200 BC
- 3 Hematite seal, from Hattusa (Boğazkale), Turkey,  
about 1400 BC  
British Museum

## Looking for the Trojan War

### **Alaksandu of Wilusa**

Hittite documents mention several kingdoms in western Turkey, including Mira, whose king Tarkasnawa is shown on this seal (4).

Wilusa is now generally accepted as being Troy, its name reminiscent of Ilios, Troy's Homeric name. One of Wilusa's kings was Alaksandu, whose alliance with the Hittite king Muwatalli II (ruled about 1295–1272 BC) is recorded on this clay tablet (5). His name is strikingly similar to Alexandros, Paris' other name in the **Iliad**.

- 4 Replica seal, electrotype, made in or soon after 1861.  
Copy of a silver seal, around 1225–1200 BC,  
in Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore
- 5 Baked clay tablet with Hittite cuneiform inscription,  
about 1280 BC  
Hattusa (Boğazkale), Turkey  
British Museum

## **Hittites and Trojans at the battle of Kadesh**

In 1274 BC, a great battle took place between the Egyptians and the Hittite empire (1600 – 1180 BC) at Kadesh, Syria. Described on this papyrus, it was one of the largest battles ever fought from chariots. The Egyptians claimed victory. Texts list the Dardani amongst the Hittite allies, probably referring to Trojans. In Homer's **Iliad** the Dardanians were one branch of the Trojan royal family.

- 6 Egyptian papyrus with text in Hieratic script (Sallier III papyrus),  
19th Dynasty, 1270–1190 BC  
British Museum

## **Mycenaean mercenaries in Egypt?**

Found at El-Amarna, capital of the pharaoh Akhenaten (ruled about 1352–1335 BC), this Egyptian papyrus is painted with a battle-scene. The warriors wearing boar's tusk helmets may be Mycenaean mercenaries in the pharaoh's army. In Homer's **Iliad** the boar's tusk helmet worn by Odysseus places elements of the story in the earlier Mycenaean world.

- 7 Egyptian painted papyrus, 18th Dynasty, 1350–1300 BC  
El-Amarna, Egypt  
British Museum

## **The power of the Mycenaean palaces**

From the palace of Knossos in Crete, these clay tablets are written in the Linear B script, an early form of Greek used in the Mycenaean world.

They list chariots and weapons of war. Between about 1600 and 1200 BC Mycenaean palaces dominated large areas of modern Greece.

As powerful administrative centres they would have been capable of mobilising a large army like that described by Homer.

8 Late Minoan III clay tablet listing swords, about 1375 BC

9 Late Minoan III clay tablet listing chariots, about 1375 BC

Knossos, Crete, Greece

The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

### **Warlike Mycenaeans**

War was part of life for people in Mycenaean Greece, and prowess in battle was important to the Mycenaean elite. These seals show a warrior in a battle chariot pulled by two horses (10) and another grasping an enemy's head (11). Homer's warriors dismount to fight, probably reflecting the fact that the epic stories were partly formed after this period.

- 10 Late Minoan carnelian sealstone showing a chariot,  
1450–1375 BC  
Knossos, Crete, Greece
- 11 Late Minoan carnelian sealstone showing warriors,  
1600–1450 BC  
Crete, Greece  
British Museum

## **A Trojan War in 1180 BC?**

Around 1180 BC, the city of Troy (Troy VIIa) was destroyed by fire. In the 1930s, archaeologist Carl Blegen found Mycenaean-style arrows and spearheads like these alongside burnt remains and took this as evidence for the Trojan War. However, we now know that the Mycenaean palace civilisation collapsed around 1200 BC. After this, a large Greek expedition as described by Homer is unlikely.

- 12 Mycenaean spearhead and arrowhead, 1600–1200 BC  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte
- 13 Mycenaean sword-pommel, 1600–1200 BC  
Hisarlık, Turkey  
British Museum



Large print exhibition text



# Troy myth and reality

Please do not remove from the exhibition

**This two-part guide provides all the exhibition text in large print.**

There are further resources available for blind and partially sighted people:

Audio described tours for blind and partially sighted visitors, led by the exhibition curator and a trained audio describer will explore highlight objects from the exhibition.

Tours are accompanied by a handling session. Booking is essential (£7.50 members and access companions go free) please contact:

Email: [access@britishmuseum.org](mailto:access@britishmuseum.org)

Telephone: 020 7323 8971

Thursday 12 December 2019 14.00–17.00  
and Saturday 11 January 2020 14.00–17.00

There is also an object handling desk at the exhibition entrance that is open daily from 11.00 to 16.00.

**For any queries about access at the British Museum please email [access@britishmuseum.org](mailto:access@britishmuseum.org)**

# Troy — enduring stories

**The story of Troy speaks to us through its characters. As we look at them, we look at ourselves.**

The story of the Trojan War remained popular in medieval Europe (AD 500 to 1500) as royal houses traced their ancestry back to Trojan refugees. The Christian world found moral examples in characters such as Hector and Aeneas.

From the late 1300s, the rediscovery of ancient Greek art and literature sparked new interest in the story. Romantic poets admired the humanity of the Greek heroes. Today the story continues to resonate. We see our own struggles in Odysseus' journey. We recognise the brutality of war on the battlefield of Troy and give new voice to the women of the myth.

Troy — enduring stories

## **Romulus and Remus**

Romulus and Remus are suckled by the she-wolf. Romans believed that Romulus, mythical founder of Rome, was a direct descendant of the Trojan hero Aeneas. Roman emperors visited Troy to celebrate their legendary ancestry, financing games, festivals and fine civic buildings.

This roundel decorated one of Troy's theatres.

Roundel, about AD 150–250

Troy Theatre A, Hisarlık, Turkey

Stone

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,

Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

# **New stories for new ages**

The story of Troy was fundamentally transformed with the end of the ancient world and the rise of Christianity. Until about 1350, the story was only known through Latin texts in the European west. Trojans, not Greeks, took centre stage. Britons traced their ancestry back to Brutus, grandson of Aeneas.

In later centuries, literature and the visual arts increasingly popularised the myth. Archaeological discoveries also began to shape the way the story was represented.

New stories for new ages

In first case:

### **Aeneas and Christian piety**

Virgil's **Aeneid** was an important text in medieval Western Europe as it seemed to anticipate Christian ideas of piety and highlighted Rome's importance. This manuscript was copied in Rome between 1483 and 1485 for a church official. The miniatures on these pages depict the Trojan Horse, and Aeneas and his family fleeing Troy.

Virgil, **Opera, viz. Bucolica**, 1483–5  
Manuscript  
On loan from the British Library

## **Troy in romance poetry**

Courtly romances were hugely popular in medieval Europe. One of the most influential was **The Romance of Troy** written by French cleric and poet Benoît de St Maure between 1155 and 1160. Benoît's poem forms the basis for the long retelling of the Trojan War in this manuscript, a 'universal history' created in Paris.

Here the Greeks attack a very medieval-looking Troy, watched by King Priam and Queen Hecuba.

**Ancient History until Caesar, 1400–1425**

Manuscript

On loan from the British Library

New stories for new ages

## **John Lydgate's Troy Book**

In medieval tales, the story of Troy reflects the contemporary world of chivalric kings, knights and ladies. The monk John Lydgate wrote his **Troy Book** between 1412 and 1420. Commissioned by the future king Henry V, it raises questions such as how best to rule. This page contains a brutal depiction of Hector killing Patroclus.

John Lydgate, **Troy Book**, copy created around 1457–60, with some later illuminations

Manuscript

On loan from the British Library

Wall quote:

**For noble Britons sprang  
from Trojans bold,  
And Troynovant was built  
of old Troy's ashes cold.**

Edmund Spenser, **The Faerie Queene**, 1590

In the second case:

### **The first book printed in English**

The first book printed in English told the story of Troy. A translation by William Caxton of a French work composed some 10 years earlier by Raoul Lefèvre, it marked the beginning of the popularisation of the story.

- 1 William Caxton, **Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye**, 1473  
Book  
On loan from the British Library

New stories for new ages

## **London as New Troy**

Medieval European aristocracies and cities were keen to trace their ancestry back to Trojan refugees. The founding figure for Britons was a supposed grandson of Aeneas named Brutus (or Brut).

According to Geoffrey of Monmouth's **History of the Kings of Britain**, written in the 1100s, 'Brutus...coming to the river Thames...built a city, which he called New Troy'. The association with 'Troynovant' is underlined by the sketch of London's skyline in this copy.

- 2 Geoffrey of Monmouth, **Historia Regum Britanniae**, 1300–1325  
Manuscript  
On loan from the British Library

## **Everyone wants to be Trojan**

Europeans invented new mythical characters to link their origins back to Troy. Hartmann Schedel's world history features Franco, a son of Hector, and Turcus, a son of Troilus, as founders of France and Turkey. Both are portrayed as medieval dignitaries, while Troy is a medieval town with Turkish touches.

Many European cities such as Paris, Venice and Padua are also described as foundations by Trojan refugees.

Hartmann Schedel, **Book of Chronicles**, 1493

Book

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

New stories for new ages

## **Dryden's Virgil**

John Dryden's 1697 translation of the **Aeneid** and other works by Virgil into English was a great success. Dryden (1631–1700), a celebrated poet, expanded on Virgil's original. He said of his additions 'They will seem (at least I have the vanity to think so), not stuck into him, but growing out of him.'

John Dryden, **The Works of Virgil: Containing his Pastorals, Georgics and Æneis**, 1697

Book

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

## **Extract from Queens of Syria, 2016**

Developing Artists, Refuge Productions  
and Young Vic production

Duration: about 3 minutes

Euripides' **Trojan Women**, first performed in Athens in 415 BC, dramatises the plight of the women awaiting their fate after the Greek annihilation of their city.

In 2013 a group of refugees from war-torn Syria performed an adaptation of Euripides' tragedy in Jordan. It later toured the UK as **Queens of Syria**. Through the play the women, who had never acted before, voice the pain of those who suffer the brutal effects of conflict.

**Troy's story is very similar to Syria's story, its women, its children, the country that was destroyed...we all lived the real experience.**

Maha, cast member

New stories for new ages

Behind the case:

## **Britannia between Scylla and Charybdis 1793**

James Gillray (1756–1815)

Satirical printmaker Gillray transforms Odysseus' encounter with the monster Scylla and deadly whirlpool Charybdis into political criticism.

The myth would have been well-known to the political elite targeted by his mockery. It becomes shorthand for being trapped between two equally unappealing options, here the 'rock of democracy' and 'whirlpool of arbitrary power'.

- 1 Hand-coloured etching  
British Museum

In the first case:

### **Shakespeare's Trojan love-story**

Shakespeare's play **Troilus and Cressida** is based on a story invented as part of medieval retellings of the Trojan War. Trojan hero Troilus' heartbreak at his betrayal by Cressida is interwoven with the plot of the **Iliad**. This rare first edition dates from 1609.

- 2 William Shakespeare,  
**The Historie of Troilus and Cresseida**, 1609  
Book  
On loan from the British Library

Wall quote:

**In Troy, there lies the scene.**

William Shakespeare, **Troilus and Cressida**,  
about 1602

New stories for new ages

In the second case:

### **The lighter side of the Troy story**

Jacques Offenbach's comic opera **La Belle Hélène** opened in Paris in 1864 to great acclaim. A 1932 English production at the Adelphi Theatre, **Helen!**, was equally successful, not least because of Oliver Messel's groundbreaking designs. The opera, set in an improbable ancient Greece, is full of frivolous humour.

- 3 Oliver Messel, set model, 1932  
Wood, fabric, paint, paper  
V&A Theatre and Performance. Given by the Artist.

In the third case:

### **Echoes of Schliemann's Troy**

Schliemann's excavations and the London exhibition of his finds soon shaped how the story of Troy was portrayed. In 1883, a group of eminent

artists, musicians and scholars, including the British Museum's Charles Newton, staged an amateur production of **The Tale of Troy** in London.

The set was modelled on the surroundings of Hisarlık and Helen wore a copy of the diadem found by Schliemann. This illustrated book commemorates the performance.

#### 4 **The Tale of Troy** in George C. Warr, **Echoes of Hellas**, 1887

Printed book with lithographic illustrations by Walter Crane  
British Museum

New stories for new ages

Above the third case:

### **Troy in popular entertainment**

In 1833 Astley's Circus in London staged an act called **The Siege of Troy or the Giant Horse of Sinon**, featuring acrobatic horse-riding.

The poster, showing an improbably large horse, was one of the earliest to include an image with the text.

5 Poster for **The Siege of Troy or The Giant Horse of Sinon**, 1833

Woodcut and letterpress print made by Thomas Romney  
V&A Theatre and Performance

In the fourth case:

### **The Trojan War for children**

Heinrich Schliemann claimed that he was inspired to search for Troy after reading this children's book in 1829, aged seven.

- 6 Georg Ludwig Jerrer, **Universal History for Children**  
1840 edition (first published 1819)  
Book  
British Museum

New stories for new ages

## **Troy in manga**

Drawing on diverse historical sources, Japanese manga artists create distinctive new versions of the Trojan story. The book cover depicts Helen against a backdrop of Bronze Age and classical Greek buildings and beside the wooden horse that today greets visitors to Hisarlık. The episode of Odysseus caught between Scylla and Charybdis draws on traditional Japanese ways of depicting fantastic creatures.

- 7 Satonaka Machiko, **Trojan Horse: The Greek Myths 7** and **Voyage of Odysseus: The Greek Myths 8**, 2004  
Books  
British Museum

## **Troy in the cinema**

Films about Troy go back to the earliest days of cinema. Like its predecessors, Wolfgang Petersen's 2004 film **Troy** was influenced by contemporary ideas of heroism. The buildings of Troy were inspired by the architecture of Minoan Crete around 1700 to 1350 BC. The wooden horse was cleverly designed to look as though the Greeks had made it from parts of ships.

8 Small-scale reproduction of the Wooden Horse from the film **Troy**, 2004

9 Poster for the DVD release of **Troy**, 2004

Private Collection

# Journeys

**The travels of Odysseus and Aeneas have become metaphors for difficult journeys.**

After the fall of Troy, both Greek victors and Trojan refugees endured long, dangerous sea journeys.

Aeneas' flight from Troy with his family made him a powerful symbol of duty and virtue for medieval and Renaissance Europeans. His arrival in Italy represented Rome's glorious future.

Odysseus' determination to reach home and Penelope's long wait stood for marital faithfulness. For modern viewers Odysseus especially strikes a chord as a restless traveller, a displaced person looking for home, or someone who battles with monsters representing their fears or desires.

Wall quote:

**That sail which leans on light, tired of islands,  
a schooner beating up the Caribbean  
for home, could be Odysseus,  
home-bound on the Aegean...**

Derek Walcott, **Sea Grapes**, 1976

Next to the panel:

**The Sirens' Song**  
**1977**

Romare Bearden (1911–1988)

**The Sirens' Song** belongs to a series of collages in which African-American artist Romare Bearden transforms Odysseus' travels into an odyssey through Caribbean islands and along African shores. The Sirens are accompanied by a musician playing an African harp.

Collage

The collection of Alan  
and Pat Davidson

Journeys

Wall quote:

**All these monsters so strange they make us forget that he, Odysseus, was a man like us.**

George Seferis, **Reflections on a foreign line of verse**, 1932

On the opposite wall:

**Ulysses and the Sirens**

**1909**

Herbert Draper (1863–1920)

Draper gives the story of Odysseus (Roman Ulysses) outwitting the dangerous Sirens a new dimension. The female-headed birds found on ancient Greek pots are transformed into alluring mermaids embodying sexual temptation. What truly torments the hero are his own desires and fears.

Oil on canvas

On loan from Ferens Art Gallery:

Hull Museums

**He's feeling guilt, shame, remorse, rage, panic, a deep amount of sadness. One hundred per cent he feels ripped in half.**

Odysseus's difficult voyage home could be a metaphor for him being in a dark space, a psychological journey. Tied to the mast, his face radiates turmoil. Deep anguish pours out of him.

Tortured by what they have seen during conflict, many soldiers today encounter darkness and mental ill-health on returning home. Many succumb to unhealthy temptations in an attempt to cope. Feeling stigma and shame, soldiers often feel they have to fight this last battle alone, suffering from an invisible injury that no one can help with.

Written by members of Waterloo Uncovered, a charity that combines archaeology with veteran care and recovery.

Image caption:

It's OK to not be OK, it's OK to ask for help. This image was recently used in a British Army mental health campaign.

Image credit:

Image by WO2 Paul Morrison, Army Photographer.  
MOD/Crown Copyright

## Journeys

**Calypso** (left)

**Cyclops** (right)

**1973–4**

Elisabeth Frink (1930–1993)

Frink's images look at Odysseus through modern eyes. Odysseus has escaped the island of the nymph Calypso and swims next to his shipwrecked boat. He seems aged by his adventures, but his sinuous body is still that of the perfect Greek hero.

Odysseus' companions escaping under the sheep are beautiful youths who contrast starkly with ungainly Polyphemus. But it is the helpless blinded monster who seems to attract our sympathy.

Lithographs on paper

Tate. Presented by Curwen Studio through the Institute of Contemporary Prints 1975

## **An ideal couple**

Odysseus and Penelope were portrayed as an exemplary couple in medieval and Renaissance art. Their images were popular on Italian wedding chests (**cassoni**), serving as models for newly-weds.

Here the couple appear as gilded relief figures. In the painted panel, Penelope sits at her loom. Odysseus leads a horse onto his ship bound for Troy.

**Cassone** panel, style of Liberale da Verona, about 1475  
Tempera on poplar panel  
Victoria and Albert Museum

Journeys

Wall quote:

**It takes a long time to mentally get over the loss. Think of the effect on Aeneas' son of losing his mother.**

Member of **Crisis**, 2019

## **Aeneas and his Family Fleeing Burning Troy 1654**

Henry Gibbs (1631–1713)

Aeneas escapes Troy carrying his father Anchises, who clutches the household gods, while his son carries the hero's sword.

The Trojan Horse stands in the burning city.

Unusually, Gibbs includes Aeneas' wife Creusa being seized by a Greek soldier. She is fated to die at Troy. For Gibbs and his audience this harrowing scene may have evoked the recent English Civil War (1642–51).

Oil on canvas

Tate: Purchased 1994

**What would you take with you if you were forced to leave your home? Once you lose things they become important.**

War has a disastrous effect on families. You get separated, lost and you forcibly, unwillingly have to leave people behind. In this painting Aeneas tries to take what matters most to him – his family and the gods from his old home. Many displaced people are forced to leave their homes with only what they can carry, and this trauma follows them from their old life to their new one. It takes a long time to get over the loss emotionally.

Written by members of Crisis,  
a national charity for homeless people

## Journeys

On opposite wall:

### **Landscape with the Arrival of Aeneas at Pallanteum**

**1675**

Claude Lorrain (1604/5 – 1682)

After an eventful voyage Aeneas lands in Italy, but soon finds himself at war with the people of Latium. He rows up the river Tiber to seek an ally in King Evander of Arcadia. Standing at the prow of his ship, Aeneas holds out an olive branch to Evander's son, Pallas. The simple settlement of Pallanteum is the future site of Rome, and Claude hints at future glories with the buildings in the background. The view is based on the Aventine Hill in Rome.

Oil on canvas

National Trust, Anglesey Abbey (The Fairhaven Collection)

**Home is not the same as a house or an unfurnished flat. Home is somewhere special, with love, safety, friends, job and family.**

This tranquil scene shows the refugee Aeneas being greeted at Pallanteum. Not always made to feel welcome, millions of people have been forced to leave their homes and find refuge in faraway places. The challenges they face go beyond language barriers and a lack of money. They include cultural differences, fear and not knowing who to trust. Creating a new home takes a long time and a lot of courage. Change needs to come from both sides – the newcomer and the local – then the blending of cultures can have positive outcomes.

Written by members of Crisis,  
a national charity for homeless people

## **Aeneas escapes from Troy**

The image of Aeneas fleeing Troy on this maiolica plate was based on Raphael's **Fire in the Borgo**. On the underside a quotation from **Triumph of Love** by the Italian poet Petrarch refers to Aeneas mourning his wife Creusa.

Maiolica plate, made in Urbino, Italy,  
by Francesco Xanto Avelli, 1531  
Tin-glazed earthenware  
British Museum

**The Fall of Troy as the Greeks Rush in,  
While Aeneas, Protected by Venus,  
Escapes with Anchises and Ascanius  
1540–50**

Giorgio Ghisi (1520–1582)

after Giovanni Battista Scultori (1503–1575)

Aeneas escapes from Troy, helped by the goddess Venus, who floats above with Cupid. One of the foremost Italian engravers of his day, Giorgio Ghisi departs from the usual image of Aeneas escaping with his father on his back and his son at his side. Old Anchises descends from the wall and Ascanius is an infant. The dramatic, crowded composition was influenced by Roman sarcophagi.

Engraving

British Museum

## **Aeneas Saving his Father Anchises from the Burning Troy 1620–40**

Ludolph Businck (1599/1602–1669)

after Georges Lallemant (about 1575–1636)

Aeneas' flight from Troy gained renewed popularity when Renaissance artist Raphael (1483–1520) included it in a fresco at the Vatican. The work influenced artists for centuries. In this print, made in Paris, Aeneas struggles as he carries his father, while his son charges ahead.

Colour woodcut  
British Museum

Image caption:

Raphael's **Fire in the Borgo** (1514–1517) shows Pope Leo IV miraculously quenching a fire at St Peter's in AD 847. Among the fleeing figures, Raphael includes a man carrying an old man on his shoulders and accompanied by a young boy. Just as Aeneas saved his family and ancestral gods, the image implies, so the Pope protects the Church of Rome.

Image credit:

Vatican Library, Vatican City / Bridgeman Images

# Heroes

**The stories of Achilles and Hector raise questions about the nature of heroism and the cost of war.**

Achilles is the greatest Greek warrior. He is the son of the goddess Thetis, but even she cannot make him immortal. Hector, the dutiful son of King Priam, is Troy's fiercest defender.

Both heroes live short but glorious lives, achieving eternal fame. They become role models for soldiers in later wars. But Hector leaves behind a young wife and son, while Achilles displays great brutality and suffers immense grief. They represent both the glory and the dark side of heroism.

Heroes

On the opposite side:

**Thetis Dipping Achilles into the River Styx  
1789**

Thomas Banks (1735–1805)

When Achilles' mother Thetis immersed him in the River Styx to make him invulnerable, his undipped heel became his only weak point.

Thomas Banks made this sculpture for Thomas and Jane Johnes, modelling Thetis on Jane and Achilles on their young daughter Mariamne. It was perhaps especially meaningful since Thomas and Jane lost an infant son in 1786.

White Sicilian marble  
Victoria and Albert Museum

Wall quote:

**Well let me die –  
but not without struggle, not without glory, no,  
in some great clash of arms  
that even men to come  
will hear of down the years!**

Hector in Homer, **Iliad**, about 700 BC

## **Dead Hector**

**1892**

Briton Rivière (1840–1920)

Hector lies face down in the sand. Although the vengeful Achilles has dragged Hector's perfect body through the dust, the gods have kept it undamaged.

Rivière is best known as a painter of animals. Here the dogs circling Hector's body seem more mournful than threatening, kept at bay by the gods.

Oil on canvas

Manchester Art Gallery

The sculpture in the middle of the gallery:

## **The Wounded Achilles**

**1825**

Filippo Albacini (1777–1858)

Achilles knew from a prophecy that he must choose between a long, uneventful life without glory, and a short life with eternal fame.

Here Achilles is dying. An arrow has pierced his heel, his only vulnerable point. The statue, inspired by Greek sculpture, was commissioned by the sixth Duke of Devonshire for Chatsworth House. Ancient Greek sculpture was much admired and copied in 19th-century Europe.

Marble with restored gilded wooden arrow  
The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth

Heroes

## **Thetis and Achilles**

**1622–3**

Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665)

Thetis tries to protect Achilles with new armour forged by the god Hephaestus. Mother and son tenderly embrace. Thetis' demeanour is that of a mother concerned for her grown-up child. Poussin's drawing is one of a series of emotional scenes from classical mythology and history, most of which were probably intended to illustrate Ovid's **Metamorphoses**.

Pen and wash

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

Wall quote:

**Achilles is the ultimate warrior but he has feelings. Soldiers can kill but they can also grieve as well.**

Member of **Waterloo Uncovered**, 2019

## **Achilles Lamenting for Patroclus**

**1770**

Henry Fuseli (1741–1825)

after Johan Tobias Sergel (1740–1814)

Achilles collapses over Patroclus' body, consumed with grief. Ancient authors describe Achilles and Patroclus as sharing a deep bond, whether as comrades or lovers. Poets and artists in Fuseli's time greatly admired the heroes of ancient Greece for expressing authentic emotion.

Pen and brown ink with grey wash over graphite

British Museum

## Heroes

**This picture is an exact impression of how someone would be feeling on the inside.**

The warrior Achilles is shown here at his most human. Devastated by anger, guilt and sorrow, he laments his beloved Patroclus. He is furious with himself, feels he has failed in his duty to protect his brother and comrade. He shows his turmoil openly, something many soldiers today feel they can't do. It's not always accepted to be seen as overly emotional. Soldiers are not trained to grieve. They just carry on.

Written by members of Waterloo Uncovered,  
a charity supporting veterans with archaeology

A member of Waterloo Uncovered, army veteran Robert Cummings talks about his experience of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and responds to Henry Fuseli's drawing **Achilles Lamenting for Patroclus**.

Duration: about 3 minutes

A transcript is available in the large-print text holder at the end of the Troy – the archaeology section.

For anyone seeking support following similar experiences, the charity Combat Stress helps former servicemen and women deal with PTSD, anxiety and depression.

Heroes

## **Priam Begging for Hector's Body about 1788–1800**

Josiah Wedgwood & Sons  
(designed by Camillo Pacetti)

King Priam begs Achilles to return his son's body, offering a cart piled with gifts. Achilles is deeply moved by Priam's grief and regains his compassion and humanity.

Wedgwood's designs were often based on classical art, in this case a Roman sarcophagus. The relief is one of six showing scenes from Achilles' life.

Ceramic  
British Museum

## **Andromache Weeping over the Ashes of Hector**

**about 1775–85**

Derby Porcelain Factory

The figure of Andromache from Angelica Kauffman's **Andromache Weeping over the Ashes of Hector** (displayed nearby) was copied in porcelain. Figures and prints allowed the Trojan story to reach wider audiences.

Porcelain  
British Museum

Heroes

**Andromache Weeping  
Over the Ashes of Hector  
1771**

Thomas Burke (1749–1815)

after Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807)

Andromache mourns Hector's death. His mother Hecuba is comforted by her grandson Astyanax. The scene is set around the funerary urn, as often in pictures of mourning in the late 1700s. Kauffman's scenes of loss and longing capture the sentimental, melancholic view of love and friendship of the period.

Mezzotint

British Museum

## War

**1887**

Harry Bates (1850–1899)

Bates chose this quiet family scene of Hector parting from Andromache to represent the theme of war. Below, Hector's body is dragged behind Achilles' chariot, a poignant reminder of the hero's fate. Trojan myths were popular with the Victorians, many of whom were steeped in classical literature.

Bronze

Manchester Art Gallery

Heroes

On the opposite side of the room:

## **Florentine Picture Chronicle**

**1470–75**

Circle of Baccio Baldini (about 1436–1487)  
and Maso Finiguerra (1426–1464)

Andromache pleads with Hector not to rejoin the battle, but he must do his duty. Hector was considered one of the medieval 'Nine Worthies', role models selected from the classical world, the Bible and more recent history. This world history seems to follow medieval romances in showing the couple with two children rather than the single child of Homer's version.

Pen and brown ink and brown wash over black chalk  
British Museum

## **Hector Taking Leave of Andromache 1768**

Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807)

Hector tenderly parts from his wife Andromache and son *Astyanax*, as described in Homer.

The couple are filled with foreboding, but do not know that this will be their last farewell.

The painting by Angelica Kauffman belongs to a set of four images that contrast love and war, passion and judgement, and male and female roles. Hector's duty as a hero is to fight, even if that means leaving his family.

Oil on canvas

National Trust, Saltram

(The Morley Collection, accepted in lieu of tax by H. M. Treasury, and transferred to The National Trust in 1957)

**Say goodbye at the front door.**

**It's part of your duty – do it right and do it well. Don't make too much of it. Push them away, distance yourself, prepare yourself.**

This romanticised goodbye between Hector and Andromache seems at odds with the 'stiff upper lip' goodbyes expected of soldiers and their families today. Families are the essential support system. They try to make leaving easier and keep things going at home while the soldiers are away. The emotion in this painting is perhaps what someone might feel on the inside, but can't express outwardly.

Written by members of Waterloo Uncovered, a charity that combines archaeology with veteran care and recovery

## Wrath of Achilles

1630–35

Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)

Rubens designed a series of eight tapestries with scenes from Achilles' life. This study (**modello**) shows Achilles and Agamemnon quarrelling. Achilles starts to draw his sword, but Athena restrains him by his hair. Rubens' European patrons were decorating their homes with images of Achilles' life, just as Roman elites once chose them for their sarcophagi.

Oil on panel

On loan from the Samuel Courtauld Trust,  
The Courtauld Gallery, London

Heroes

**The Siege of Troy – The Death of Hector  
and The Wooden Horse  
1490–95**

Biagio d'Antonio (1446–1516)

Italian painter Biagio d'Antonio painted these panels for a marriage chest (**cassone**) for the Albizzi family of Florence. One panel shows Achilles and Hector fighting on horseback, the other the sack of Troy. Buildings and dress evoke contemporary Renaissance Italy. Ancient heroes and heroines were meant to serve as models for the newly-weds.

Tempera on panel

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,  
University of Cambridge

On the opposite side of the room:

**Great Achilles. Brilliant Achilles,  
shining Achilles, godlike Achilles...**

**How the epithets pile up.**

**We never called him any of those things;  
we called him ‘the butcher’.**

Pat Barker, **The Silence of the Girls**, 2018

## **Achilles Dragging the Body of Hector about 1648–50**

Pietro Testa (1612–1650)

Victory flies above Achilles as he brutally drags Hector's body. In the background Hector's wife Andromache faints on the wall of Troy. The image highlights Achilles' triumph but also hints at his downfall. Like many Baroque artists, Pietro Testa in his **Life of Achilles** series drew inspiration from Roman reliefs and mythology.

Etching  
British Museum

Heroes

**The Trojans Bring the Wooden Horse  
into Their City  
about 1544**

Jean Mignon (active 1537–1552),  
after Luca Penni (after 1504–1557)

Troy falls not through the bravery that traditionally defines a hero, but thanks to cunning Odysseus and his Trojan horse. Here King Priam kneels to welcome the treacherous gift, while the city walls are being dismantled to allow it in. Mignon engraved a set of six works representing Trojan War episodes.

Etching  
British Museum

## **Triumph of Achilles**

**1906**

Max Slevogt (1868–1932)

Max Slevogt's images of Achilles and Hector emphasise the brutal side of war. The figure who hands vengeful Achilles the reins seems unable to look him in the eyes.

Lithograph  
British Museum

## **Achilles Frightens the Trojans**

**1905**

Max Slevogt (1868–1932)

In another of Slevogt's prints, Achilles is transformed into a monster screaming his terrifying battle cry. Created at a time of political tension in Europe, the violence and anger of these prints made them particularly relevant. They were re-published in 1915 after the start of the First World War.

Lithograph  
British Museum

## **Battle and glory**

The Trojan War was often used to glorify the battles of later periods. This dish celebrates the capture of Arzila in Morocco by the Portuguese in 1471. Conflating the two conflicts, the artist shows a town that is both Arzila and Troy. Hector and Achilles are seen fighting on horseback to the right of the city walls.

Dish, probably made in Portugal (perhaps Oporto), 1500–20  
Silver  
Victoria and Albert Museum

Wall quote:

**Stand in the trench, Achilles,  
Flame-capped, and shout for me.**

Patrick Shaw-Stewart,  
'I saw a man this morning', 1915

**Troops Landing on C Beach, Suvla Bay,  
Later in the Day, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1915  
1915**

Norman Wilkinson (1878–1971)

During the Gallipoli campaign of the First World War, Homer's visceral descriptions of the heroes' gory deaths became all too real for soldiers fighting so close to the legendary battlefield. This painting shows a destroyer off shore, soldiers landing on the beach and one man lying dead on the sand.

Oil on canvas  
IWM (Imperial War Museums)

## War heroes

First World War poets looked to the heroes of the Trojan War for solace and to justify their sacrifice. Patrick Shaw-Stewart (1888–1917) found himself near Troy as a British soldier in the Dardanelles campaign. Classically-educated, he re-read Homer's **Iliad** on the way to Gallipoli. This biography of him was written by his Eton contemporary and friend, Ronald Knox.

Ronald Knox, **Patrick Shaw-Stewart**, 1920  
Lent by the Provost and Fellows of Eton College

## Patrick Shaw-Stewart's

### 'I saw a man this morning'

Patrick Shaw-Stewart probably wrote 'I saw a man this morning' on 13 July 1915 during leave on Imbros, the island overlooking Troy. It was his only war poem. This is the original manuscript, written in his copy of Housman's **A Shropshire Lad**. The poem refers to Achilles' battle-cry after Patroclus' death, when Athena set a flame on his head to terrify the Trojans.

A.E. Housman, **A Shropshire Lad**

Book, with poem handwritten by Patrick Shaw-Stewart

Lent by the Provost and Fellows of Eton College

**Achilles came to Troyland  
And I to Chersonese:  
He turned from wrath to battle  
And I from three days' peace.**

**Was it so hard, Achilles,  
So very hard to die?  
Thou knewest and I know not,  
So much the happier I.**

**I will go back this morning  
From Imbros over the sea:  
Stand in the trench, Achilles,  
Flame-capped, and shout for me.**

Extract from 'I saw a man this morning'  
Patrick Shaw-Stewart, 1915

Heroes

## **Homeric Combat and Hector, Dead Trojan 1946**

Eduardo Paolozzi (1924–2005)

Heroes become killing machines in Paolozzi's collage, which superimposes images of modern machinery onto ancient scenes of Greeks and Trojans fighting. Born in Scotland to Italian immigrant parents, Paolozzi was interned in 1940. His father and grandfather were killed on a boat sunk by a German U-boat.

Collage of printed material  
British Museum

## **Te Whiti and Titokowaru Discuss the Question, 'What is Peace?'**

**2010–11**

Marian Maguire (born 1962)

Marian Maguire relocates the Greek heroes Ajax and Achilles playing a board game to Parihaka, a village in New Zealand. Combining ancient Greek, Maori and colonial European imagery, the print is part of a series, **Titokowaru's Dilemma**. It features a Maori leader who fought against settlers in the 1860s before trying to find a peaceful solution. Here he discusses strategy and philosophy with another leader, Te Whiti o Rongomai. In 1881 Parihaka was invaded and destroyed by British colonial forces.

Lithograph, British Museum

## Women of the Trojan War

The panel on the opposite wall:

# Women of the Trojan War

**Helen and other women play central roles in the story of Troy.**

Helen is a pawn in a divine quarrel. Iphigenia is sacrificed for a fair wind to Troy. Cassandra and the other surviving Trojan women are enslaved when Troy falls. Queen Clytemnestra acts fearlessly in taking revenge on Agamemnon, but pays for it with her life.

Unusual in having a happier ending, Helen has fascinated artists through the ages. Many have attempted to capture her irresistible beauty, while questioning whether she is an innocent victim or knowing seductress. Even the powerful goddesses are subject to male judgement.

## **Helen of Troy**

**about 1812**

Antonio Canova (1757–1822)

Antonio Canova tried to capture Helen's perfect beauty in this imaginary portrait. Embodying classical ideals, Helen is serene and even-featured, with elaborate curls.

Marble

Victoria and Albert Museum

On the opposite wall:

Wall quote:

**Was this the face  
that launched a thousand ships  
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?**

Christopher Marlowe, **Doctor Faustus**,  
about 1592

## Women of the Trojan War

**Helen** (Flamma Troiae)

**about 1860**

William Morris (1834–1896)

Helen holds the '**Flamma Troiae**' (Flame of Troy), which symbolises both her part in the burning of Troy and the passion she ignites. This watercolour was a design for an embroidered panel, one of twelve depicting legendary queens, goddesses, saints and heroines. They probably represented different facets of love, including carnal desire, romantic love and religious worship.

Pencil and watercolour

Victoria and Albert Museum

## **Helen of Troy and Cassandra**

**1898**

Evelyn De Morgan (1855–1919)

Helen gazes into a mirror decorated with an image of Aphrodite, absorbed in her own beauty. Troy is still peaceful in the background, with no sign of the destruction that her abduction will cause.

In a paired portrait, Cassandra, standing on blood-red roses, tears at her hair in anguish as Troy burns. The devastation she foretold but was unable to prevent has come to pass, and she is doomed to enslavement and death.

Oil on canvas

On loan from the De Morgan Collection,  
courtesy of the De Morgan Foundation

## Women of the Trojan War

**Women are often used by men.  
Men come to rescue you  
but they have their own agenda.**

Helen and Cassandra are beautiful and well-dressed, but they represent how women are often the pawns of men and suffer hugely in times of war. Like many women in these situations today, they have no say in their own fate. Taken advantage of by men, they are not part of the conversation. They have no voice and little power. Helen is not given any choices, while Cassandra speaks the truth but the gods make sure that no-one will believe her. Look beyond your first impressions of these paintings – the hardship behind the beauty, the suffering behind the mask of beautiful faces.

Written by members of Crisis,  
a national charity for homeless people

A member of Crisis, T. S. Bernard talks about her own life in relation to the stories of Cassandra and Helen.

Duration: about 4 minutes

A transcript is available in the large-print text holder at the end of the Troy – the archaeology section.

For anyone seeking support following similar experiences, charities include Migrant Help, Hibiscus and Hope for Justice.

## Women of the Trojan War

### **Helen's Tears**

**1882–98**

Edward Burne-Jones (1833–1898)

Consumed by sorrow and guilt, Helen holds her hands to her face in horror as Troy burns. Part of a series of watercolours based on the names of flowers, this small roundel was inspired by **elecampane helenium**, which according to folklore sprung where Helen's tears fell.

Watercolour and bodycolour touched with gold  
British Museum

Wall quote:

**I wanted to humanise this woman,  
to find her beneath the covering of stories  
that obscures her to us.**

Eleanor Antin, 2008

## **Judgement of Paris (after Rubens)**

**2007**

Eleanor Antin (born 1935)

In her photographic series **Helen's Odyssey** Eleanor Antin uses two models for Helen: a blonde 'flirtatious, light Helen' and a dark-haired 'brooding, angry Helen'. Here the dark Helen looks thoroughly annoyed at being treated like an object. Antin gives the spheres of the three goddesses – war, sex and marriage – a humorous spin. The composition is based on a painting by Rubens.

Chromogenic print, edition 4/5

Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York

Image caption:

Peter Paul Rubens, **Judgement of Paris**, 1638–9

Image credit:

© Museo Nacional del Prado

## **Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses**

**1569**

Hans Eworth (active 1540–1574)

In an intriguing gender reversal, Queen Elizabeth I plays the role of Paris in this judgement scene. She decides to keep the ‘apple’, a golden orb of power, for herself. She has no need of the goddesses’ gifts because she already combines them all as a beautiful, wise and powerful monarch.

Oil on panel

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

On the other side of the gallery:

## **The Judgement of Paris**

**1530–35**

Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553)

and workshop

Here Paris is a knight wearing the armour of Cranach's time. He dreams that Hermes brings three goddesses to him. He must choose between the life of the senses (Aphrodite), the political life (Hera) and the contemplative life (Athena), all equally desirable. Eros points his arrow at Aphrodite, and Paris is smitten. As he gazes at her, she smiles knowingly at the viewer.

Oil on panel

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

## Women of the Trojan War

Wall quote:

**This was never the story of one woman, or two. It was the story of all of them. A war does not ignore half the people whose lives it touches. So why do we?**

Natalie Haynes, **A Thousand Ships**, 2019

### **The Judgement of Paris**

**1806–17**

William Blake (1757–1827)

William Blake imagines the moment when Paris hands the golden apple to Aphrodite, much to the dismay of Athena (**right**) and Hera (**left**).

A demonic figure wields flaming torches, an omen of the destruction to follow.

Blake combines classically-inspired imagery with products of his own imagination.

Pen, grey ink and watercolour over graphite  
British Museum

## **The story of Paris on a wedding casket**

Scenes from the life of Paris were popular on medieval caskets given as wedding gifts.

The panels here show Paris' infancy and upbringing by a herdsman, the Judgement of Paris and Paris carrying off Helen.

The lid shows the seven Virtues.

Casket made by the workshop of Baldassare Ubriachi,  
about 1390–1410

Florence or Venice, Italy

Bone, horn, wood

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by Dr. W. L. Hildburgh

## Women of the Trojan War

### **Helena and Iphigenia**

**1859**

Edward Henry Corbould (1815–1905)

Unusually, this painting shows Helen with Iphigenia, Agamemnon's daughter sacrificed to enable the expedition to Troy. It is based on Alfred Tennyson's poem 'A Dream of Fair Women' (1833), in which Helen expresses deep regret to Iphigenia, who is immovable:

**But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
To her full height her stately stature draws;  
'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with a curse;  
This woman was the cause...'**

Watercolour and bodycolour with gum arabic  
Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

Wall quote:

**We have no chance against a time  
that needs heroes.**

Christa Wolf, **Cassandra**, 1983

### **Lady Hamilton as Cassandra 1785–6**

George Romney (1734–1802)

The Trojan princess Cassandra had a great power – true prophecy – but was fated never to be believed. In this oil sketch made for a now-lost painting, Romney shows her clawing wildly at her hair, possessed by the god Apollo. His model was Emma Hart, later Lady Hamilton and Lord Nelson's lover.

Oil on canvas

Tate: Bequeathed by Maj.-Gen. John Julius Johnstone 1898

## Women of the Trojan War

### **Clytemnestra**

**1882**

John Collier (1850–1934)

In revenge for Agamemnon's sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia, Clytemnestra murdered her husband upon his return from Troy. Here her androgynous figure is appropriate for a woman acting with the violence usually reserved for male warriors.

Influenced by archaeology, Collier depicted Clytemnestra wearing a diadem closely based on the jewellery found by Schliemann at Troy, while the architecture includes decorative motifs from Mycenaean Greece.

Oil on canvas

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

In case:

## **Sophia Schliemann wearing Helen's Jewels**

Image caption:

This photograph of Schliemann's wife in about 1874 wearing the so-called 'Jewels of Helen' is a famous image from the early days of archaeology.

Image credit:

© Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## **Helen's Jewels**

High-quality replicas of archaeological objects were made for museums and exhibitions from the 19th century. These copies of Schliemann's famous finds at Troy, part of Priam's Treasure, were made more recently, the earrings for an exhibition in 1990 and the diadem in 2006 as a television movie prop.

Replica of the 'great diadem'  
from Priam's Treasure,  
made in Germany, 2006  
Original, 2550–2300 BC

Replica of earrings from Priam's Treasure,  
made by Wolfgang Kuckenburg, 1980s  
Original, 2550–2300 BC

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte

## **Helen**

**1887**

Edward Poynter (1836–1919)

Poynter's model for this portrait seems to have been the actress Lillie Langtry, who was famed for her beauty. She was hailed as **The New Helen** in a poem by Oscar Wilde, who said she was 'formerly of Troy, now London.' Poynter originally painted her in oils in 1881 and later made this watercolour version. He based her elaborate necklace not on the Trojan finds, but on Indian jewellery.

Watercolour and bodycolour on paper  
Lent by Her Majesty The Queen

## Women of the Trojan War

### **New jewels for Helen**

London jeweller Carlo Giuliano was famous for 'archaeological jewellery' based on ancient objects. Schliemann invited him to study his finds from Troy. But when Giuliano created his 'Helen of Troy' jewellery, he did not base it on Schliemann's finds. Instead he took inspiration from the jewels worn by Helen in Poynter's portrait, which were largely based on Indian models.

- 1 Carlo Giuliano, necklace, Helen of Troy jewellery, silver-gilt and bowenite, 1881
- 2 Carlo Giuliano, necklace and earrings, gold, mottled jasper, chalcedony, bloodstone, 1881

Victoria and Albert Museum. Given by the American Friends of the V&A through the generosity of Judith H. Siegel

# The Shield of Achilles

In Homer's *Iliad*, the god Hephaestus makes Achilles a new shield of gold, silver, bronze and tin. On it he crafts the whole earth, the skies and a city – perhaps Troy – in peacetime and at war.

Artists through the ages have been inspired by this shield and its symbolism. Like the story of Troy itself, it is a microcosm of human existence. Peace predominates, but war is ever present. Troy now lies in ruins, yet its story is eternal, like the light that dawns each day over the mythical battlefield.

## The Shield of Achilles

Wall quote:

**And first Hephaestus makes  
a great and massive shield,  
blazoning well-wrought emblems  
all across its surface ...  
and across its vast expanse  
with all his craft and cunning  
the god creates a world  
of gorgeous immortal work.**

Homer, **Iliad**, about 700 BC

## **The Shield of Achilles**

**1822**

Rundell, Bridge and Rundell,  
from a design by John Flaxman (1755–1826)

Since Roman times people have attempted to give physical form to Achilles' shield as described in Homer. For his reconstruction, artist John Flaxman created delicate drawings, taking inspiration from ancient works of art. He modelled the shield from clay, cast it in plaster and reworked it. Several shields were made in gilded silver and bronze.

Gilded silver

National Trust, Anglesey Abbey (The Fairhaven Collection)

## The Shield of Achilles

### **The Shield of Achilles (Dawn, Troy, 10/27/02) 2019**

Spencer Finch (born 1962)

Finch created this light installation after visiting Troy. Moved by seeing what Achilles might have seen over 3,000 years ago, he took light readings on the plain of Troy at dawn, capturing the light as the only thing unchanged by the passing of time. He recreates its exact quality with fluorescent lamps with coloured filters. The tubes are arranged in a radiating circle, like the sun's rays and Achilles' legendary shield.

Fluorescent lights, fixtures and filters  
Courtesy the artist

Wall quote:

**Dawn rose up in her golden robe  
from Ocean's tides,  
Bringing light to immortal gods  
and mortal men...**

Homer, **Iliad**, about 700 BC

Find out more

## **Find out more**

### **Events**

Discover more about Troy at related events including a storytelling evening, talks by leading experts, short courses and family workshops.

### **Related displays and galleries**

The Department of Greece and Rome galleries

Rooms 6, 12–23, 69–73

### **Shopping**

Explore the wide range of products inspired by the exhibition, including the accompanying book, published by Thames & Hudson in collaboration with the British Museum, in paperback (£25) and hardback (£40).

Find out more

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of Troy on the British Museum blog  
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