

# The battle of troy history essay



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The Trojan War, what little do we remember about it. I think most remember the infamous Trojan horse, or of the hero Achilles and Odysseus, the infamous stealing of Helen of Troy. Regardless this paper will delve into the inner workings of the war and further explain the reasoning behind the war.

As the Greeks told it; the battle started up in heaven (or wherever Greek gods reside), with the marriage of a human and god (some sources say it was two gods). During this marriage all the gods where invited to the large feast, all except the goddess of Discord, Eris, she was furious that she was not invited so put down the Apple of Discord coyly saying that it belonged to fairest goddess. Hera, Athena, Aphrodite, and Artemis all made a grab for the apple but could not decide for who it belonged. Zeus purposed bringing a mortal into the mix and he summoned Paris of Troy for he was the fairest in the land. Upon arrival each of the goddesses promised him something, Paris went with Aphrodite: her reward was the most beautiful woman on the planet: Helen of Troy.

This is where things start to get a bit hectic; Paris goes to Menelaus' palace and manages to woo Helen. There are a few different versions of this story: Menelaus left to attend a funeral on Crete and his wife went away with Paris, another Helen left at night with Paris in his chariot. Upon receiving this bitter news, Menelaus and his brother (brother-in-law in some myths) rallied the men of Greece to restore his lost honor and destroy Troy. Evidently some men where under oath from Helen's father to protect her (her former suitors) so they too joined the fight. Thus, the fleet gathered itself in the harbor of Aulis.

Ironically enough, despite Troy being a sea-fearing port they did not have any navy. Instead, they allowed sailors to seek refuge during the storms. The Trojan's assumed that their land army would be enough to halt the Greeks and they would not have to fight in the sea. During their travels towards Troy, the Greeks infamously sacked several islands most to note is: Scyros where Achilles was hiding out in girl's clothing. Because of the navigation of that time, the Greeks actually landed near Lemnos, on the wrong side of the Aegean land, seventy-six miles away from Troy, they mistook these people for the Trojans and attacked them. After settling their mistakes, King Telephus (apparently healed by Achilles spear) told the Greeks the way to Troy.

Troy had many noticeable allies, here are a few, Thrace and Macedon but most came from Anatolian. The Trojans where able to gather up these allies (at heavy cost to Priam's purse) while the Greeks set up a foothold in Lemnos. When the Greeks finally left Lemnos, they traveled along the beachheads of Troy desperately trying to find a place to make camp for the war. After some searching, they were able to find a suitable beachhead and land. A man by the name of Priteslaus was the first Greek to touch the land and die. It is said that the Greeks won this battle and where able to set up their beachhead camp, which would be their main headquarters for the rest of this war.

With the first skirmish behind them, Odysseus and Menelaus where sent out to hopefully strike a truce with the Trojan's getting Helen back and some treasure within the city. The offer was denied by the council, meaning that Odysseus and Menelaus had to go back to the Greek encampment. It was

strange, that Menelaus was not killed during this exchange seeing as he was a primary target. Now began the long campaign to try and breach the walls. The book 'The Trojan War': it gives some prime examples of the state behind the wall, small narrow alley ways with walls that could contain various soldiers. The main hero's: Idonenus, Ajax, Little Ajax and Diomedes tried to take the walls or at least scale them. However Troy did not give up its walls easily, around the Pergamos, the walls easily reached about thirty feet high and where six feet thick. Despite Greek's best efforts they could not break the walls.

During the long years (Homer states the war lasted 10 years) the Greeks started to raid smaller cities seeing as they could not scare the Trojan's out of their city (and they had plenty of supplies within to wade out a siege). Achilles was famous during this time, it has been stated that he destroyed twenty-three cities, and took on the raids (in some editions, he does this by himself in others he is accompanied by a platoon of men). No books state that the Trojan's actually tried to defend the smaller cities that were destroyed. During this time, the Greeks attacked the city of Thebes over Plakos, where Achilles killed the king but showed great respect, the queen was ransomed back to Troy, but died of a heart attack (or 'Artemis' Arrow'). Next was the town of Lyrnessus, women were raped on sight and later sold to the victor's that destroyed their very lives. Briseis, a noblewoman was given to Achilles as his mistress. She had watched her brothers and husband are killed in front of her eyes by the very man who was now her master.

Disease had taken the camp, likely malaria, bodies rotted and the smell of decaying human flesh filled the air. A prophet of Apollo said that the cause

was his god and appeasing him would be the only way. A girl was captured during their raids and despite her father's begging Agamemnon refused to give her back, until the prophet told him to bring her back to her father. A ritual was held and Apollo was seemingly pleased. During the night, Agamemnon fought with Achilles in a heated debate, which leads to the later leaving the Greeks on their own. To boost his troop's morale he began to say that the war was lost; he had had a dream from Zeus that the battle would be won, and that they should pack up and go home. The troops actually started to leave and were stirred up by Thersites, but were stopped by Odysseus before a mutiny could occur.

Hector, one of Priam's multiple sons and leader of the allied armies, calls a parlay between the Trojan's and Greeks purposing two champions fight. It was Paris and Menelaus that fought, before any real damage could be done Apollo whisked Paris away back to Troy and Menelaus was shot with an arrow. The battle suddenly surges back to life with Diomedes slashing through his opponents, as he was noted to be a killing machine in Homer, he pushes the Trojan's back away, until they push back. Another duel is set, seeing as it was nearly night, and both sides needed rest. Hector and Ajax ends with a draw because night was upon them. The battle ends with both sides meeting for a truce to burn their dead.

The day continues again with a new battle, the battle is pretty even on both sides until the Trojan's push the Greeks back to their camp. Hera gives Agamemnon a boost and he rallies his men to continue fighting. Despite all the death that was going on around him and including his own charioteer, Hector could not be killed. Night fell once again and both sides returned to

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their camps. The Greeks attempt to win Achilles back with extravagant gifts but he is not moved and would only attack if Hector attacked his own ships. Odysseus and Diomedes set out to spy upon the Troy encampment when they happen upon a Trojan spy, they take him back and he squeals like a pig. They killed him after hearing of an extravagant king, the two heroes head into the king's camp and quickly kill him and twelve Trojan's, steal his horses and took the king's clothing. The Trojan's could have done a lot more to dismantle the Greeks but did not, the war was wearing on them as well. Their money was running low as was their food supplies since they were spending money to keep the favor of the allies.

The next battle that is shown takes up nearly half the Iliad to tell about. The battle continued on even footing with the Greeks gaining ground and then losing it just as quickly. They had fallen back and many of the Greek champions were injured, Agamemnon, Odysseus, Diomedes, Eurypylos, and Machaon. When they fell back to the walls, the Trojans were able to break through and by divine intervention, Hector is able to break the walls with a simple stone throw. Poseidon decides to help the Greeks out and gives them a boost of courage allowing them to push Troy back once more, it was during a phalanx exchange that Troy lost some of its leaders, while the two sons of Priam, Helenus and Deiphobus were spared. Hector ignores his brothers warnings that there was something lurking beside the ships that wouldn't be able to stay out of battle long. He was knocked unconscious by a rock, while his men once again pushed the Greeks back. The battle was long and bloody, the Trojan's seemed likely of winning since they were fighting for their homes, the tides turned when Achilles sent Patroclus, his right hand man and

in later version his lover, to battle when he saw the burning ships. The battle shifted for the Greek's favor and they were able to push away the Trojans, Patroclus disobeyed Achilles' wishes and continued to chase Hector's army to the gates and charged the walls three times. It was during this time that Patroclus was hit by a javelin and killed. Achilles becomes angered and joins the war, given new armor from the gods (he had given his armor to Patroclus who was acting as him on the field, and the armor was taken by Hector). Achilles was a killing machine, slaughtering anyone in his path, no longer showing mercy. The book states that he was a new man, the old Achilles had been left. He knew he had to make up for just sitting around doing nothing. Achilles chased Hector around the city three times (some texts say that he chased him around the plains three times, a total of thirty-six miles). It was then that Achilles was able to kill Hector and then began to drag his body along behind his chariot.

Priam came out to the Greeks in order to get his son's body back, which had been dragged around plenty by Achilles. While assaulting the walls (a few days later, since Hector's funeral took another peace treaty) Achilles had chased Priam's men to far and went right through the gates where he was killed by Paris, with Apollo's aide, a large skirmish rose up for Achilles' corpse. Ajax and Odysseus where able to get his body out, and the two argued over who should get the armor. When the Trojan women (the Greeks sent out spies to see who was the more fair man, and intended to hear the warriors of Troy but instead heard two women.) chose Odysseus, Ajax killed himself after killing the cattle of the Greeks.

With this, Odysseus was given tasks to do in order to get intelligence and find a way to win the war. First he captured, Helenus, Priam's seer son, and was told how to win the war. They would need to get Philocetes, whom they left on Scyros due to him having been bitten by a snake. Philocetes also had Hercules' bow that would also help end Troy. Thanks to advancements in medical technology, Philocetes was healed and returned with Odysseus to the Greek encampment, Philocetes was able to kill Paris and Menelaus took the corpse and beat it with complete contempt. In order to gain more allies, Priam went and healed Eurypylus (may be a different one the Greek Champion). He was later killed by Neoptolemus, Achilles' son whom Odysseus went and found on the island of Scyros.

Odysseus later walked into Troy, having beaten his face so that no one would recognize him and traded his armor for rags, to get information where he was spotted by Helen. In return for her services she made him tell what the Greek's plans were. With everything that had happened, Troy just wanted the war to end.

Finally came the moment that we all remember: the Trojan horse. A few Greek spies were placed inside the walls when the Greeks left the Trojan shores. Troy thought it was odd but celebrated anyway.

Here is where things start to get a little murky. No one can deny that there was a Troy since its discovery in 1870, but no one is positive with the Trojan horse. Scholars speculate that the horse itself was just a myth fabricated by the Greeks to make their history more flavorful. It would be more possible for the Greeks to have snuck in spies and once the Trojan's had been lulled into



security pounce on them. The Trojan horse could've been there, but what was the point? Odysseus himself snuck into the city twice without being caught, there was no reason to sneak soldiers into the city in a giant horse.

In some versions, Helen has already left the city (possibly before the Greeks burn it to the ground) and on her way to Menelaus. It can be said that Menelaus wanted to kill his wife but when she took off her clothes and showed her breasts, he did not try to harm her

To make this work, the Greeks had sailed to the island of Tenedos, which was about six nautical miles from Troy. It was there they tucked themselves away until the signal fires blared. The Greek spies opened the gates and the army charged into the city surprising the Trojan soldiers and burning the city to the ground.

When the city was discovered, obvious signs of fire littered the city, so there was no doubt that the city was burnt to the ground. The question that scholars still debate is if the Greek's had burnt it down or was it someone else?

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