

Paper prepared for
The Fourth Euroacademia International Conference
Identities and Identifications: Politicized Uses of Collective Identities

Venice, Italy
4 – 5 March 2016

This paper is a draft
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Progenies of Priam: The Trojan War and the Propaganda of Identity and Belonging

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Abstract

Characterized in ancient literature as a defining moment at the inception of modern history, the Trojan War introduced players and leaders from all over the Mediterranean, uniting east and west, north and south, in a ten-year battle of epic proportions. Since then, stories of the war have resonated with societies all over the western and eastern worlds, and played a significant role in early modern nation-building and genealogical legitimacy, despite the unsubstantiated history. From Caesar Augustus/Octavian to the Norse dynasty to the Ottoman Empire, leaders' fabricated ancestral ties to the powerful Trojan War kings and heroes have formed often-contested alliances or identities, uniting countries in a shared past, and connecting the Mediterranean through a complicated web of related visual culture. Frequently, these falsified genealogies must be accommodated alongside documented history or other religious traditions in order to make leaders as powerful and individual as possible, or keep rivals from claiming validity through their own ancestral histories.

Told through visual culture and artifacts scattered throughout the world, this paper explores the quest for legitimacy and belonging in nation-building and propaganda as related to the Trojan War and its participants, and how the myth-historical event continues to resonate with a modern artists and leaders.

Keywords: Trojan War, Ottoman Empire, Trojan Dynasty, Ancient Troy, Trojan Genealogy

Introduction

The Trojan War myth-history remains one of the most captivating stories in popular world media, for millennia drawing conquerors and tourists to the so-called Archaeological Site of Ancient Troy in Turkey, and other locations of supposed connection to the epic tales. Encouraged by Homer's and other author's stories, the epic became a defining moment, the transition from myth to history, for many ancient authors, and its cast of characters and architecture to later be viewed as the archetypal kingdoms or cities from which the rest of the world would emerge. Encouraging this sought ancestral connection was the belief of later leaders that connecting themselves to one of the best-known stories and sites in the world would help to strengthen their own right to rule or conquer, eventually expanding the diaspora of Trojan War culture and cosmology all over the world. Although it has become one of the most famous locations in the world, the site identified as the location of the Trojan War, Hisarlik, lacks any identifiable evidence to link it to the epic tales, making the later fashioned connections to the place and its supposed former inhabitants even more eccentric. Culminating in ancient pilgrimages, Medieval genealogies, and modern proclamations, for millennia leaders have propagated evidence of connected identities, manipulating heritages to further their personal agendas, as inheritors of the Trojan dynasty and its associations.

Troy as Inheritance

Despite its modern identification as the Archaeological Site of Ancient Troy, Hisarlik's once strong settlement was abandoned following the accepted date of the Trojan War in the 12th century BCE, and not resettled until the 8th century BCE, when colonists relocating from mainland Greece chose the Troad as their new home, citing genealogical claims of assisting Menelaus in the war, and identifying the region as their ancestral claim¹. The colonists based their choice on their assumptions that the site was the location of the famous war, extrapolating Homer's descriptions of the geographic region in his iconic *Iliad*². Though many researchers believe that the place-memory of Hisarlik as Ilium or Troy existed with the regional population through the course of generations, it was then perpetuated by the arrival of Greek colonists, who renamed the city New Ilium in reference to Homer's Ilios from the epic poems³.

After the colonists' so-called rediscovery of the city, even more travelers began arriving in the area with the specific belief that it held the remains of the destroyed battleground. In his *Histories*, Herodotus, describes a visit by Xerxes I of Persia, who traveled to the site in 480 BCE along his conquest through Asia Minor and into Greece. Herodotus writes:

Then when the army had come to the river Scamander...when I say Xerxes had come to this river, he went up to the Citadel of Priam, having a desire to see it all; and having seen it and learnt by inquiry of all the events of the Trojan War, he sacrificed a hecatomb to Athene of Ilium, and the Magian poured libations in honour of the heroes⁴.

Xerxes military visit to the site and the sacrifice of 1,000 oxen points significantly to his belief in its ancient origins under the patronage of Athena, and the remains of the city may have also perpetuated this belief. In his description, Herodotus mentions little about the city itself, beyond its geographical location and the interest of Xerxes as a visitor, but Charles Brian Rose reconstructs through archaeological evidence what Xerxes may have actually experienced. According to Rose, there would have been very little to see that would have actually related to the Trojan War, but Xerxes would have encountered a “small temple to Athena” with Trojan War relics, and a city which had recently experienced an earthquake, leaving many of the buildings in disrepair, leaving the site to conspicuously resemble a former warzone⁵. In his visit to the site, Xerxes illustrates the reach the famous stories, and potentially their lasting impression in his campaign. His trip would initiate a long tradition of leaders visiting the site both as tourists, and as a way of propagating their military campaigns.

Following Xerxes’ pilgrimage to the site, New Ilium invented itself as a tourism destination, though as Rose identified, the site itself did not hold much visual association with the war, suggesting that the site may have failed to meet expectations upon arrival. This problem was rectified with the construction of several large tumuli situated in the landscape surrounding the city, each of which was dedicated to a Trojan War hero⁶. It appears that by the Late Classical, Early Hellenistic Period, the inhabitants of the city developed these as a way to profit from the continuing tourism and provide a place for important individuals to make sacrifices⁷. The most prominent, identified as the Tomb of Achilles was initially constructed atop a former Neolithic mound, and designed to appear as if it has been built in the Bronze Age to be contemporary with the war⁸, leaving visitors with the impression that they were the actual tombs for the heroes who had died on the battlefield. The tumuli became a lucrative enterprise, as tourists were encouraged to leave talismans or votive offerings at the tombs, after which the locals would surely collect them for resale. Additionally, as a recently-established cult tradition surrounding Homer grew⁹, this may have also impacted the popularity of the area, promoting the creation of additional visual propaganda.

Alexander the Great was the next leader to purposefully shift his campaign in order to see the remains for himself. He famously visited the site in 334 BCE, where Plutarch describes him making sacrifices at an identifiable architectural feature dedicated to Achilles. He writes:

Then, going up to Ilium, he sacrificed to Athena and poured libations to the heroes. Furthermore, the gravestone of Achilles he anointed with oil, ran a race by it with his companions, naked, as is the custom, and then crowned it with garlands, pronouncing the hero happy in having, while he lived, a faithful friend, and after death, a great herald of his fame. As he was going about and viewing the sights of the city, someone asked him if he wished to see the lyre of Paris. ‘For that lyre,’ said Alexander, ‘I care very little; but I would gladly see that of Achilles, to which he used to sing the glorious deeds of brave men’¹⁰.

Arrian elaborates on Alexander’s military campaign in the region, adding that Alexander “he traveled inland to Troy and offered sacrifice to Athena, patron goddess of the city; here he made a gift of his armour to the temple and took in exchange, from where they hung on the temple walls, some weapons which were still preserved from the Trojan war”¹¹. According to Arrian, Alexander then took the armor/weapons with him into war. As well as the gravestone or tomb for Achilles, the descriptions also mention multiple artifacts, such as a ‘lyre of Paris,’ and the relics left in the temple, which the inhabitants of the city may have been using for tourism promotion. As there is no archaeological proof that the family of Priam as described by Homer ever existed at the site, the idea of a lyre surviving for a thousand years and being attributed to a member of the Trojan royal family is suspect enough, but it is very clear that despite the lack of authenticity of the object, the local people may have been using these types of ‘artifacts’ as a way to further the connection. Plutarch’s account in particular is illustrative, but must be read with a number of caveats: mainly that he was writing several centuries after Alexander’s visit, so there is a strong possibility that he padded the story with these types of details as a rhetorical exercise to accentuate good or noble personality traits of Alexander. Certainly Achilles is seen as a hero in the Homeric stories, whereas Paris is often interpreted as a coward, so Alexander’s casual attitude toward Paris could be read as promoting the hero worship of Achilles and dismissing Paris as less relevant. As Arrian was writing slightly after Plutarch, he also may have adapted earlier histories to flesh out his account. Alexander the Great was remembered as having vowed to rebuild Troy after his military campaigns, and founded Alexandria Troas, a new settlement in the region, making each story plausible, but difficult to substantiate. By taking the requisite pilgrimage to the ancient battleground, however, both Alexander and Xerxes were attempting to legitimize their own campaigns and status as history makers—both were undertaking extreme conquests, and seem to have felt that by sacrificing to the heroes who fought at Troy and the gods who protected them, the leaders may also be successful in their respective campaigns and achieve infamy.

Roman historians and Plutarch in particular had a distinct reason for furthering the Trojan War connection through Alexander the Great, who was revered as a great military leader. Less than a century before Plutarch’s description of Alexander, Roman consul Octavian was also attempting to construct a connection with the Trojan War that would solidify his position as rightful successor to the Julius Caesar dynasty. Julius Caesar had developed a powerful narrative for himself in connection with the goddess Venus, from whom he and his family line claimed to have been descended. At

Julius' death, his adopted son Octavian chose to continue this narrative, which claimed that Aeneas, a Trojan prince and son of Venus, was influential in the Trojans' defense of the city, and eventually escaped as the city was burning, travelled to Italy and founded the precursor settlements to Rome. A mass colonization from Greek in the 8th century (the same in fact which had led Greek colonists to Troy), helped to legitimize the claim that cities founded around the date of the Homeric epics were related to the Trojan War stories, yet this was merely a historical tradition and the archaeological evidence uncooperative¹². By Julius Caesar's time, Rome was attempting to set itself apart from Greece, which many Romans viewed as the embodiment of art and culture, as well as much older in tradition than the emerging world power. The Aeneas myth-history provided a way for the Romans to connect with the same history as the Greeks; if the Trojan War was considered the beginning of the modern world, now the Romans could consider themselves among the founding families, heightening the animosity toward neighboring Greece, and solidifying Rome's place in the modern world.

Although Julius Caesar promoted the Venus connection¹³, Octavian was the first to really propagate the family line through imagery, in a bid to legitimize his right as one of the most important citizens in Rome. As the Roman cosmology of Romulus and Remus remained a popular origin of the city, with Augustus described by Livy in a similar manner to Romulus the founder¹⁴, Julius Caesar's Aeneas account introduced a potential discrepancy with Octavian's right to rule over the Roman people. He was therefore faced with a potential conflict—acknowledge the Aeneas founding story, and expect any other prominent leader to challenge him with a greater connection to Romulus, or attempt to combine the stories, and legitimize his own genealogy. Octavian chose the latter, in an attempt to quash any challengers who might claim to be descendants of Romulus and therefore attempt to take control of Rome. But Octavian's decision to combine the myth-histories within his own lineage required proof, which the *princeps*, then having declared himself Augustus, provided by appointing Virgil to craft the *Aeneid*, a story which incorporated the hero's escape from Troy and journey to Italy. The story made purposeful comparisons between the western Greeks and eastern Trojans and Augustus' defeat of Pompey for control of Rome, thus reinforcing western-based Augustus as once again being successful over a representation of the luxurious east¹⁵. According to Virgil, after escaping Troy, Aeneas became the patriarch of the Alban Kings, the ancestors of Rhea Silvia, mother of Romulus and Remus¹⁶. Not only did the *Aeneid* tidy up the Augustus' pedigree, but also included several effusive assertions regarding his ability to lead and benefit the Roman people as an ancestor of the great hero.

With the introduction of the *Aeneid* into Roman society tying the foundations of Rome back to Troy under Augustus, scenes of the war became popular for coins distributed by Augustus and paintings in households of the Roman elite. As Julius Caesar and Augustus were generally popular with the public, patricians sought to also connect themselves with the important family, leading to a boom in Trojan War decorative themes. Although the *Aeneid* provided the ability for Augustus' accomplishments to be widely distributed throughout the empire, he still felt a need to visually make the connection for people of Rome. Having established his own forum tangentially placed next to his adopted father's Augustus' architectural design visually described his familial connections and great deeds. Known for symbolic artistic and architectural themes, Augustus' forum provide visual culture for the purpose of legitimizing his importance as a prominent citizen of Rome—evidence of his connections to Africa, Egypt, Greece, and of course, Troy. The forum is described by Ovid, and was designed with two semi-circular wings flanking a central temple to Mars. Augustus filled each of the wings with sculptures of important figures in his genealogy, with one side dedicated to Romulus, and the other to Aeneas¹⁷, providing a visual representation of the stories to connect him to the archetypal city of the modern world, and therefore the first real royal family. The adoption of such an ancestry also may have provided reasoning for reinstating ties to the Near East, a lucrative political move at the time, which justified the continued expansion of the empire east as ground that had once belonged to Rome's ancestors¹⁸.

Troy as the Right to Rule

Following the decline of the Roman Empire, Thomas McMaster lists the first mention of Trojans ancestors in the Merovingian *Chronicle* of Fredegar (ca. 660 CE), where he links the Franks, Turks, and Macedonians, as each is considered a refugee from the Fall of Troy. One group was thought go travel to Macedonia, where they became Macedonian, while the Franks traveled extensively before choosing a king (Francio), and entering Europe to settle between the Rhine/Danube and the sea. Fredegar then introduces the Torci [Turks], (named for king Toquotus), and eventually the last group of Trojan refugees, the Latins, who become the Romans based on the Aeneas tradition¹⁹. Like Fredegar's account, historical memory of the Trojan War continued into the Middle Ages, perpetuated by copying histories of classical authors, and by royal families who sought to connect themselves with the first ruling class. As the archetype kingdom, Troy remained the beginning of history, meaning that any monarchy seeking to historically legitimize its rule would have to tie itself back to the mother of all monarchies. These "blood lineages"²⁰ provided evidence for the right to rule. Beginning as early as the 10th century individual European kingdoms, as well as the Holy Roman Empire, created elaborate personal histories, tying back their lineage back to antiquity in an effort to claim power as an 'original' monarchy. During the Middle Ages, the Trojan War was repeatedly reintroduced not only as a historical account to be preserved, but also as a genealogical lineage, and metaphor for contemporary conflicts, catalyzing its use as an excuse for

military campaigns and imperial rights to rule. As a conflict that was seen as metaphorically continuing with the constant struggle between east and west, writers could ascribe contemporary warring factions to the Trojan or Greek sides as a convenient rhetorical device, prompting several regenerations of the historic conflict. Homer's stories of the Trojan War provided common heritage and a myth-historical framework where characters could be easily recast with modern identities, helping to supplement propaganda objectives.

While the Trojan War remained a popular theme in the later Near East, in the west, kingdoms attempting to tie their genealogy back to the war had the added difficulty of accommodating popular local traditions with which the new stories must compete. In the 9th century, the British monarchy sought to legitimize its rule in Western Europe, leading to a constructed British lineage tying the first kings of Britain back to the war through the character Brutus., first mentioned in the 9th century CE, in *Historia Brittonum*, attributed to Nennius. This Britain-specific account most likely used the *Aeneid* as a reference to construct a historical timeline leading to modern Britain, an argument bolstered in part because of the heroic treatment of the Trojans in the story. Nennius lists Romulus and Remus as descendants of Aeneas, and suggests a number of different histories related to a Brutus, the eponymous founder of Britain. In one story Brutus is a direct descendant of Aeneas through the Alban Kings and even back through Noah and god himself, which allows Nennius to relate Brutus to other European monarchies with divine right to rule, and accommodate the growth of Christianity, which provided a different founding narrative²¹.

Following Nennius' account, other significant British historians sought to elaborate on the tale, hoping to provide additional cultural or visual evidence to solidify the claim. The co-called Brutus Stone is one such artifact, nestled in London, but thought to have been connected to "New Troy," another name for a portion of London described by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his 12th century *Historia Regum Britanniae*. The story is a pseudo-history of Britain, which claims that after Brutus arrived from Troy, he dedicated himself to the formation of a new city, "and coming to the river Thames, he walked along the shore, and at last pitched upon a place very fit for his purpose"²², which would be called New Troy. The name (New Troie) is later reintroduced in the late fourteenth century poem *Saint Erkenwald*, to "describe the city's current status as a center of moral virtue and economic success," in contrast to the earlier "seat of Satan" when under Saxon rule²³. Although Geoffrey himself never mentioned a specific stone, local folklore lists the artifact as the site as Brutus' landing point in Totnes, though Theo Brown postures that the stone could have actually been the 'bruiiter' or location where the town crier delivered news, or even a medieval boundary stone referred to as 'le Brodestone'²⁴. This claim is bolstered by John Clark's assertion that Stone of Brutus tradition can only be traced to 1862 CE when Môr Meirion cited supposed proverb "So long as the Stone of Brutus is safe, so long shall London Flourish"²⁵. The stone may also have been confused with the so-called London stone, also protected and addressed as a monument, and first mentioned in 11th century CE, as a property or location, but later popularized as an artifact in Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part 2*. By the late 1550s, the stone was drawn as a square object on the so-called Copperplate Map, leading to an identifiable stone that was eventually in a small caged opening for display in October 1962. Though the stone's origin and purpose has been the subject of extensive speculation, Shakespeare's mention of the importance of the stone, as well as its comparison to the Palladium of Troy by Thomas Pennant, connected it to both the founding of the city, and by extension Brutus of Troy²⁶.

Around the time that the Brutus myth-history was being popularized in Britain, Icelandic historian and poet Snorri Sturluson is credited for compiling the Prose Edda, a similar source of foundational myth-history for Scandinavia. As with Britain, the Norse/Icelandic aristocracy faced similar issues with competing mythologies, in this case the convergence of the Trojan War, Norse, and biblical cosmologies, which Sturluson's wove together in his supposed history. As Christianity had been growing in the region since the mid-tenth century, Peter Orton suggests that the local populations were hesitant to "abandon" the previous folk traditions, making the adoption of completely new traditions difficult, and the integration of traditions more successful²⁷. The Edda begins with a prologue, which, like the Bible, establishes the beginning of humankind with Adam and Eve and the destruction of civilization with the great flood. Sturluson then goes on to list the known parts of the world, describing Africa, Europe or Enea, and Asia, along with all of their characteristics, in typical medieval history tradition. Where Sturluson breaks away from the tradition, however, it in the third part of the prologue, where he begins to unite the biblical, Trojan, and Norse mythology. He writes:

Near the earth's centre was made that goodliest of home and haunts that ever have been, which is called Troy, even that which we call Turkland... There were twelve kingdoms and one High King... One king among them was called Múnón or Menón; and he was wedded to the daughter of the High King Priam, her who was called Tróán; they had a child name Trór, whom we call Thor...²⁸

Sturluson then goes on to discuss Thor's physicality and strength, suggesting that he was "Goodly to look upon," before listing the further descendants of the family and ending with the birth of Odin, who he describes as a mighty king and patriarch of the Norse dynasty. The prologue served the significant purpose of helping to "explain away" popular pagan mythologies in middle Christianity, while at the same time using them for the benefit of legitimacy. Snorri again introduces Troy in the *Gylfaginning* ("The Tricking of Gylfi"), where three members of the Æsir tribe arrive in Scandinavia from their home of Troy, and eventually build a new home called Ásgardor, which is built to resemble their

former home, Old Ásgarðor, also referred to as Troy. In the story, Gylfi must prove to be wiser than the three strangers in order to leave their home, leaving the story to resemble a cross between the Odysseus and Brutus²⁹.

By the 12th century, other European powers were seeking to legitimize their ancestry through important historical connections, and also struggling to accommodate this desire with the widespread popularity of Christianity. Marie Tanner suggests that by the end of the Middle Ages, there were so many European Trojan Dynasties that the “ancestry may have seemed a stale premise...so traditional was the posture to imperial claims,” yet the claims remained, with the Hapsburg dynasty going so far as a fashion a family tree to visualize the connection³⁰. In contrast, ‘historians’ working with the Hohenstaufen patronage adopted the less-known Babylonian history of Berossus the Chaldean, who pre-dated Alexander the Great as a way of legitimizing their rule³¹. The difficulty remained that any Christian nation, particularly those under the rule of the Holy Roman Empire struggled to accommodate popular regional stories with the greater Trojan genealogies and importance of upholding good Christian ancestry.

Troy as Homeland

By the late Middle Ages, influential members of the Vatican were also cognizant of the power and importance of the Trojan dynasty, going so far at times as to claim retaking the geographic area around the site a Christian duty. As a part of his crusade to recapture important Christian cities, Pope Pius II came into conflict with the Turks, who had recently taken western Turkey and therefore controlled both Constantinople and Troy. The regaining of “heritage lands” was integral to his papacy, leading Pius II to lament the fact that the Turks might be seen the sympathetic entity in his crusade campaign. Contemporary writers referred to the Turks as “*Teuceri*,” Italian for Trojans, and derived from “*Teucer*” as referenced by Virgil³², leading many to identify the Turks as the object of outside military aggression³³. The problem was further perpetuated by the fact that the two warring factions both claimed to be descended from the same Trojan family, each believing the retaking of their homeland paramount in the struggle. This connection was supposedly brought to light in a letter from Sultan Mehmed II to a previous Pope, Nicolas V, and the King of France in which the Sultan is said to suggest that both populations “draw their origin from the blood of Troy” and that the Turks are “avenging the blood of Hector”³⁴ by “punishing the heirs of the evil men who destroyed Troy”³⁵. The Sultan was referring to the Greek church previously controlling the city, and suggests that as Romans and Franks, the former Turkish refugees should all band together to retake the region³⁶. Runciman cites the provenance of the letter as actually being written by a French enemy of the Italian crusade, in an effort to establish ties with the Turks, but the letter helps to reinforce the complicated global family tree carried over from the Middle Ages. Despite this problematic origin of the letter, an account by Kritovoulus, a Byzantine Greek scholar working for the Ottoman court, writes that Sultan Mehmed II visited the ancient site of Troy, commenting on the “tombs” of Ajax and Achilles, and making connections between the Ottoman Turks and the Trojans, both of which he tied to Asiatic origins³⁷.

During the First World War, the idea of a foreign western army invading the eastern population again gave a significant opportunity for the Ottoman Empire to propagate for the defense of the area as an important homeland. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was said to have visited Troy several times during the nearby Gallipoli campaign, discussed the Trojan War with visiting German politicians, and even written the Trojan War into the initial history books written after Turkish Independence³⁸. For both historians and Atatürk, the Gallipoli and Çannakale defense or WWI, followed quickly by Turkey’s War of Independence against the Greeks, were reimagined as the Trojans defending again invading populations, again on the soil of the Troad. According to Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, Atatürk is credited as crying “We avenged the Trojans”³⁹ after securing Istanbul from the Greeks and their western Allies⁴⁰. Although the Ottoman Empire propagated the Trojan War analogy to further or justify modern campaigns, Greek scholars also exploited the connection for their political and patriotic advantage during the centuries of battle of control of the area. Nineteenth-century Greek cleric-teacher and revolutionary, Konstantinos Oikonomos also endeavored to connect the Ottomans with the Trojans and Persians through his teaching of Greek theater, literature, and history, to represent the Ottoman Empire as a domineering but ultimately ineffective power from the East, with the emphasis on the righteous West. Like Herodotus, who also compared the Trojan and Persian Wars as part of a political directive, Oikonomos planned to use classical dramas describing the Trojan War to further his “patriotic agenda,” while remaining relatively unchecked by the Ottoman authorities⁴¹.

This association and side-taking helped to further the mutual Turkish and Greek animosity, culminating in the late 20th century, with the Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus. Although seemingly unrelated, the Trojan War association was brought to the forefront again with the construction of a Trojan Horse sculpture by Turkish architect İzzet Senemoglu at the archaeological site of ancient Troy. The horse was designed as part of the annual Troia Festivali, or Troy peace festival, and constructed by carpenter Ahmet Karadeniz within 9 months of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. The sculpture was erected as a centerpiece for the festival, which celebrates thousands of years of peace in the Çannakale region, and Senemoglu is said to have conceived it as an homage to the original in a bid to increase tourism potential as the site⁴². perhaps as a reminder of ancient aggressions at the site and the heritage still represented there.

Troy in the Future

The concepts of Ancient Troy and the Trojan War have remained popular sources of myth-historical legitimization throughout the world, with extensive populations claiming the archetypal city and its population as their homeland or ancestry, often leading to competing claims and confused genealogies. Troy's continued position as the center of the earth, and the inception of a modern royal family line has sustained nearly 3500 years, with many royal genealogies still including Priam in their list of forefathers. The continued popularity of the stories, particularly recently with the Wolfgang Petersen film *Troy* (2004), seems to solidify the staying power and influence of the Trojan War cosmology in modern society, sustaining belief systems far longer than many other popular origin stories, and having more influence on lineage ties than even biblical history. When combined with countless existing additional stories of the influence on the family of Priam, the Trojan War is not a defining moment in history, but *the* defining moment, shepherding in the modern or human age and continuing to propagate the visual culture of legitimacy.

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Biography

Kristin Barry holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University and a professional Master of Architecture from the University of Cincinnati. She is currently an assistant professor of Architecture at Ball State University where she teaches architecture history/theory, and studio. She has also been employed since 2006 as an archaeological architect, documenting and interpreting archaeological sites in Greece, France, Turkey, Israel, and Egypt. She was a member of the 2008 Site Management Masterplan Team at Ancient Troy with Elizabeth Riorden, and has become a specialist in Trojan War visual culture and iconography. She has also contributed publications on the interpretation of ancient artistic media, archaeological tourism, and architectural design for several peer-reviewed international journals and books.

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