



**TOPIC:  
TROJAN WAR**

**Committee: HSC**

## **HSC Position Paper**

Dear delegates, following is the complex guide to the topic of this year's Historical Security Council. We urge you to read everything that follows, even though it is rather extensive. That is because when you conduct your own research, and we fully expect that you will or that you already have done so, there are many versions of the myth of Trojan war and thus it would not be the best, if we all used different interpretations. What follows is, therefore, the "official" version of the myth for this conference. But please understand, it is not possible to list everything in this study guide. We thereby leave the details, which need not be unified to your own research. These details are equally as crucial, so be sure not to miss them out. We also decided to set the situation in which we meet later, meaning to the ninth/tenth year of the conflict.

### **Introduction**

It is the beginning of the 12th century B.C. and massive civilisational shifts are happening all across the Eurasian continent. The Late Bronze Age collapse has begun almost half a century ago and strife among nations which previously cooperated with one another, raids of the sea peoples and other disasters, droughts, famines, plagues, earthquakes and floods have stricken the world as it was known to the author of the greatest classical epic poem - the Iliad - Homer. We still do not know whether it was real events or the sequence of disasters that struck everything he knew around him, that inspired Homer to write his epic story of heroes and gods.

What we do know is that Troy was a real city of the Bronze Age which developed, in its original form, between the years 3.000 B.C. and 1.180 B.C. The city must have housed tens of thousands of inhabitants, had 9 metre tall 5 metre wide walls, numerous palaces, storage sites, temples and a large military garrison. Troy was also a major player in the diplomatic sphere, as according to legend it had many allies ranging from Crimea (the Amazons as per Homer's legend) all the way to Ethiopia (the black hero and king Memnon) and was also prominent in international trade and grew enormously rich thanks to it.

### **Bronze Age basics**

In the Bronze Age all the states were interdependent on each other, much as they are today, mostly because of the key material of the period - Bronze, which was used for weapons, armour, shipbuilding, jewellery, religious objects and many others. Bronze was tremendously important - without it a society would suffer would collapse - be it due to famine, foreign attack or bankruptcy. It was, however, also tremendously expensive. Mostly due to Copper and Tin, the components of Bronze, were ironically rather scarcely found and hardly accessible in the Bronze Age. Mines were primitive, deadly and inefficient, transport took a lot of time and the biggest supply of these materials came from far away - places like Afghanistan and Iran. Therefore, international stability and cooperation became key to stability of every state in the Bronze Age.

If a major and long lasting war broke out, the trade routes would be endangered, fewer caravans with copper and tin would pass through and a recession would hit not one state, but everyone. If one major player grew weak and thus was not able to guarantee protection of the trade routes, making them susceptible to raids by non-state actors (Elamites, Scythians, Sea peoples) on their territory, again such trade routes would collapse and drag along with everyone dependent on them. It was well-realised in the Bronze Age that mutual

cooperation with just a few, isolated and preferably small-scale conflicts benefits everyone. It was also revealed that large centralised states, or at least confederations (such as the Greek Mycenaean culture) offer the best guarantees of this status quo. That is why the Late Bronze Age sees a massive expansion of empires, state power, law and also the first international agreements began to be drafted back then - the Eternal peace treaty (also known as the Treaty of Kadesh) between pharaoh Ramesse II. of Egypt and king Hattusilis III. of the Hittite Empire being the only surviving example.

Thus, the times of the Bronze Age are indeed the closest in the history to our current times - global market, global cooperation, large importance of international relations and indeed scarcity of large-scale conflicts. Just like today, however, (if we discount the Z people) the biggest threat back then was posed by non-state actors. Mycenaean Greeks (or as they called themselves the Achaeans) began as one of these raider nations and even though gradually settled down in large cities like Mycenae, Sparta or Thebes and began profiting from the Bronze trade, they never really abandoned their ancient roots and kept warring among one another and raiding neighbouring city states. Yet for the large empires of those days, such raids were inconsequential and the Mycenaean warlike culture was absorbed as part of the status quo of the period. Basically, as long as they did not hurt anyone too badly, they were not worth the expense of resources and decline in stability that any major war with them would bring. In the end, the Mycenaeans were not interested in destabilising other empires - they benefited from the Bronze trade that came from them - they only sought to increase their riches and fame by, comparatively, small incursions.

The Mycenaeans unfortunately, were only raiders-amateurs when compared to what struck the Late Bronze Age people in the years 1.250 B.C. and 1.150 B.C. Firstly, we know from period records (mostly Egyptian, Hittite and Phoenician) that a long period of droughts and other disasters, mostly plagues, floods and earthquakes, struck the mediterranean region. This led to severe weakening of the large empires as well as everyone else - thanks to the large interdependence of the states. Thus came the first wave of violence - mostly internal strife with popular uprisings and also infighting among the nobility. This led to massive increases in fortifications of cities - as evidenced by the famous Lion gate in Mycenae. However, in the end, it was not enough.

If several Empires were weakened at the same time, everyone was weakened along with them. That is everyone apart from those, who were not affected by the decline of the Bronze trade. These were all the raiders-experts, who either decided to utilise the weakness of vampires for their benefit or were themselves in a desperate position, driven from their lands by the massive climate change which caused droughts in the mediterranean but also winters too long for primitive agriculture in the more northern parts of Europe. These raiders were the Elamites (who had direct access to some copper and tin mines and thus could exploit the weakening of the Assyrian Empire to their South and West) as well as the Scythians, the horse people of the Russo-Ukrainian steppes and the Caucasus, but most importantly the Sea peoples. They were independent of the Bronze trade for two reasons - they used more primitive weapons or they already used iron weapons. The discovery of iron smithing in some parts of Europe before the end of the Bronze age is still disputed, however it is quite likely that some of the Sea peoples in particular were civilizations originating from iron rich regions of Scandinavia and today's France and Germany, thus being able to discover the art of smithing earlier and developing way more advanced weapons than the mediterranean

empires and confederations. These weapons and their sheer numbers then enabled the tribes to quickly swipe the mediterranean region clean of a vast majority of centralised states, save basically only for Egypt which managed to defend itself thanks to its unique highly agriculturally oriented economy and geographical features. But mostly, no one was powerful or stable enough to stop the tribes at the end of the Late Bronze Age.

It is still a mystery who the Sea peoples were, but it is most likely they were a plethora of tribes that were on the run. First ones on the run from climate, in which they could not survive. As a result, they had to invade a territory of other tribes, which were driven out and attacked other tribes and those attacked more tribes and so on. Thus a wave of armed and highly motivated warlike refugees originated from northern Europe and eventually swept everything all the way to the Mediterranean sea. There the sacking and raiding of Bronze Age empires and city states began. The number of refugees must have been truly massive as it is archaeologically documented that ancient developed cities all the way from Greece to the Delta of Euphrates and Tigris were burned, sacked and destroyed at around the same time - 1.200 B.C. - 1.150 B.C. The migrating tribes thus managed to offset thousands of years of development within just 50 years.

#### The fate of Troy

It was between the years 1260 - 1240 B.C. that the large city of Troy was destroyed as well, the final archeological layer from this period shows massive scorch marks everywhere on the territory of the city, which probably brings us to a conclusion of a large-scale sack of the city. While rebuilt soon after, it never reached its former glory and was again completely destroyed by 1100 B.C. and all civilisation disappeared from the site for another 400 years. We can assume that whatever the event that led to its destruction was, it caused a disaster on a massive scale.

It is unclear who destroyed it, whether it was the Sea peoples or whether it was the last and probably the most massive raid of the Mycenaean culture before their own destruction. A possible set of events which would correspond with the story as preserved in the Greek tradition is the following. Due to the most likely date of the siege of Troy, as depicted by later Greek sources, being 1194 B.C. - 1184 B.C. and sometime between 1260 - 1240 B.C. by current sources, it is reasonable to assume, that the Mycenaean raiders could have indeed left en masse their home cities at the beginning of the crisis period, when massive droughts, famines and plagues first hit the mediterranean and climate began to change rapidly. They left in hopes of a crucial victory, which would ensure their survival in the swiftly collapsing world. In the end, Mycenaean (or Achaeans if you wish) originated themselves as raiders as we noted above. Therefore, they were probably the precursor to the later Sea peoples invasion in the region. By the end of the siege or indeed a series of massive raids, they gained a lot of resources, slaves, bronze and other crucial items and headed home. Yet there, they were greeted by the ramifications of the first wave of disasters.

That could be illustrated by the many tragic stories of the return of the Greeks from Troy. The murder of Agamemnon and the downfall of Mycenae that follows would correspond with the real-world first fall of Mycenae as it occurred. The long travels of Odysseus or Menelaus before they returned home could well illustrate military campaigns aimed at reclaiming the lost homeland, reclaiming their thrones, attempting to regain stability at home, where the crisis culminated without their presence. The killing of many other Greek heroes during their

return home by the gods, as per Homer's story, could be explained by large battles with the insurgent population, disease, famines or natural disasters. Thus the siege of Troy was probably a precursor in an already troubled time to the later invasion of migrating tribes that finished off the weakened mediterranean states. The stories of the end of Agammemnon's line (madness of Orestes) correspond with the increased fortifications of Mycenae in preparation for an invasion and finally their downfall when the fortifications proved not to be enough.

Homer's work and following legends may thus easily be metaphorical and slightly less depressing adaptations of the events that were freshly imprinted in the memory of all the Achaeans, Greeks, Mycenaean, however we wish to call them, at the time that Illias and later the Odyssey and other legends were written or otherwise circulated. Serving not as an accurate depiction of events, but rather as a morale boosting epic aimed at restoring the pride of the Greeks as well as, due to the collapse of communication in the wider world, explanation why so many have disappeared, why so many cities have been torched and why the world stopped making sense.

Since the story as depicted by Homer, Greek oral tradition and many other later authors are the best period sources we have and that are easily accessible, we shall stick with the events as depicted by these sources. It is of course true, that in reality gods and demigods probably did not exist and they are simply to represent fate and luck or chance and highly talented individuals. Yet where would be the fun if we did not adapt some of the Greek deus ex machina principles even to our modern HSC. Therefore, welcome to the world of gods, demigods and monsters, where ordinary humans always play second fiddle to the higher powers. Welcome to the beginning of the end of the siege of Troy.

Recommended further research:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B965f8AcNbw&ab\\_channel=FallofCivilizations](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B965f8AcNbw&ab_channel=FallofCivilizations) - Great video further developing the basics of the Bronze Age as written above. Basically mandatory! It is just one hour of a great podcast (also on Spotify).

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Troy-ancient-city-Turkey> - Basics on the historical Troy

## **The events leading up to the Trojan war**

### 1. The prophecy of Paris

The events of the Trojan war began to unfold years before any greek soldier stepped on the Trojan beaches. It all dated back to when Paris, son of Priam, the King of Troy, was born in Troy as a prince. On the day Paris was born, it was foretold that a royal child born on that day would bring destruction upon Troy. Priam's wife, Queen Hecuba, also had a dream of giving birth to a torch just the night before. As a pious man, king Priam believed his priests and as neither he nor the queen could bring themselves to kill the baby, they had Paris taken to the woods right after he was born by the king's chief herdsman, to be killed. King Priam's chief herdsman, however, could not bring himself to use a weapon against the child and therefore abandoned prince Paris in the woods on Mount Ida.

Nine days later, the herdsman decided to come back to check whether the prince died. To his surprise he found the prince being milk-fed by a female bear. He decided that he could not leave the prince to his fate anymore and took him back home as his own son. The

herdsman raised Paris and once he was a man, he took on some duties of his father. Thus when he was once herding cattle on some vast pastures, three goddesses - Hera, Athena and Venus - came to him to decide their argument. They all attended the wedding of Peleus (father of Achilles) and the goddess Thetis (she as a lesser god was given to Peleus by the olympian gods in reward for his piety), where the lesser goddess Eris (goddess of discord) was not allowed to enter on the command of Zeus. Furious, she threw a golden apple through the door, which was inscribed with the word Kallistei (to the fairest) and thus caused an argument when the golden apple was discovered by the three aforementioned olympian goddesses (Hera, Athena, Aphrodite).

Paris could not decide as a mere mortal which goddess was the most beautiful of the three, since as goddesses they were all perfect to him. Therefore, the goddesses resorted to bribe the prince-herdsman. If Paris was to give the golden apple to Hera, he was promised to be a powerful monarch, who shall rule over both Europe and Asia. Athena tried to bribe Paris with wisdom and power, which would grant him victory in every battle. Finally, Aphrodite offered him a marriage to the most beautiful woman on earth. After hearing all the offers, Paris decided to select Aphrodite as the fairest and awarded her the golden apple. Thus he gained the support of Aphrodite in all his future dealings, yet also infuriated the two other goddesses, who from then on always sought to punish Paris and supported his enemies.

Paris eventually came to the court of Priam with his "father" the herdsman. He took part in games there and competed against other sons of Priam. While portrayed in the Iliad as largely unskilled and cowardly, according to the myth during the games Paris defeated all his opponents in the contest, including all of Priam's adult sons (according to some myths he had 50 sons altogether). As a result, it is unclear why, but most likely when he was asked who his father was, the herdsman revealed that Paris is in reality not his son but the son of the king. Priam welcomed Paris back to the family, happy that his son survived and seemingly forgetting the prophecy that Paris would bring destruction to Troy.

## 2. The origins and marriage of Helen

The most beautiful woman in the world back then was undoubtedly Helen, the daughter of Zeus and Leda, the queen of Sparta and wife to Tyndareus, king of Sparta. Sources disagree, whether Leda was seduced or raped by Zeus, but either way Tyndareus took Helen as his own daughter, brought her up and sought suitors for her. Due to her beauty men from all over Greece came to Sparta to petition for Tyndareus to give Helen to them as a wife. They were however all outsmarted, as Tyndareus realised, that whoever won the contest for Helen's hand, would likely not live long in the jealous and prestige-oriented culture of Mycenaean Greece and an ensuing war would likely also mean his demise. Thus, he entered into an agreement with Odysseus, who may have also had a deal with the brothers Menelaus and Agamemnon, to trick the suitors into protecting Helen regardless of whether they become her husband or not.

Odysseus sought to marry Tyndaros' other daughter - Penelope - to which the Spartan king happily agreed when Odysseus presented his plan to the gathered suitors. They were to leave the choice to whom shall become Helen's husband (sources disagree) to either Tyndaros or Helen herself. In turn, whoever is chosen would gain protection, as all others would swear before the gods in a sacred ritual, that whoever is chosen, they shall protect him and Helen against all others. The suitors, all realising that it is the only way to ensure

survival in case that they are chosen as Helen's husband, reluctantly agreed to Odysseus' plan. After the religious ceremony was completed, Helen or Tyndareos chose Menelaus as the husband of the beautiful spartan princess. Thus when Tyndareus died, the kingdom of Sparta passed to Menelaus through his wife and he became the new king. Odysseus also gained the hand of Tyndareus' daughter Penelope and Agamemnon, Menelaus' brother married Tyndareus' third daughter, Clytemnestra.

### 3. The song of Achilles

Among those who swore at the ceremony, a representative of one king was remarkably missing. It was a representative of Peleus. It was widely expected that he would send his marvellous son, Achilles, of whom it was said, that he was at his childhood years already the most skilled warrior ever seen and that Troy would never fall without him at the battlefield. Yet, he did not come. Mostly due to his mother's protective intervention. Who was present however, was Patroclus, Achilles' future lover. While the original Homeric tradition does not imply any sexual relationship between Achilles and Patroclus, as it was inserted by later authors, their relationship is implied throughout the text to be way deeper than causal friendship. It is also further supported by the weight placed at the death of Patroclus, as if Achilles and Patroclus did not share a much deeper, highly likely romantic bond, then Achilles' rage after Hector kills Patroclus would not be justified. Additionally, homosexual relationships were mostly normalised throughout the Greek society and history. Patroclus was probably among those, who swore to protect Helen and her husband and thus was obliged to come to Troy later and as a result being part of the reasoning why Achilles is eventually swayed to come as well and fulfil the prophecy about him.

After the marriage of Helen and Menelaus, other events vital for the story occurred, before Helen's abduction by Paris. Patroclus was disowned by his father king Menoetius and sent to king Peleus, father of Achilles, to serve him as a "landless squire". It was during his service with Peleus, that he and Achilles became very close friends and eventually, as only implied between the lines by Homer and developed upon by later sources - namely Aeschylus and Phaedrus - lovers. Achilles' mother Thetis was obsessed with ensuring that her son lived forever. Thus, she bathed him in the river Styx when he was a baby, holding him by his heel. The water from the river Styx made him stronger and basically invulnerable anywhere, where water was near. However, notably since Achilles' heel was not washed by the river so often because of his mother's hand, it was where he was weak. Yet, Thetis opposed Achilles being involved in the Trojan war. She knew of another prophecy, according to which if Achilles went to Troy, he would be famous forever and his name would be immortal but he would die there. If he did not go, however, he would die very old, but forgotten. Thetis hoped that eventually, if Achilles survived after the war, did other important deeds and had good favours with the gods, he would be eventually brought among the gods thanks to his remarkable skills and half god nature.

Thus when Thetis knew the war was about to come, she hid Achilles on the island of Skyros, where traditionally noble girls went to be taught manners, dances and other skills. Achilles was disguised as a girl and promised to the daughter of the king of Skyros, Deidamia, with whom he also fathered a child - Neoptolemos. It is unclear whether this was of Achilles' free will or upon his mother's bidding (it is hard to refuse a goddess). Achilles, however, was discovered on Skyros by Odysseus and other Achaean leaders, who came looking for him due to the prophecy that Troy could not fall without him. Later sources say, that Achilles was

discovered when Odysseus presented gifts to the king of Skyros and while other girls marvelled at the jewellery, he could not take his eyes of the fine weapons. Others say that he was discovered when a military horn was blown outside and Achilles stole a spear and jumped outside ready to defend the others from any harm. In the end, Achilles was persuaded by Odysseus to go along with them to Troy, possibly also because of Patroclus' obligations but also because he likely decided, to go against his mother's wishes and achieve eternal fame and glory through his skill in battle and prophesied importance for the Greek victory.

#### 4. The abduction of Helen and the rally of Greeks

Jumping a bit back in the story, the reason why Odysseus came for Achilles is obviously that Helen was abducted by Paris from the palace in Sparta. More infuriatingly for the honourable Greeks under a disguise of a diplomatic visit of prince Paris to king Menelaus. Aphrodite instructed Paris to come to Sparta and promised to him, that Helen would fall in love with him. Yet, the Homeric tradition says, that she did not fall in love with Paris but rather was charmed (mind-tricked) by Aphrodite to do so and later not only stopped being in love with Paris, but wanted to go back home. When Paris arrived, however, Aphrodite's spell worked and in the middle of the night Paris took Helen from her chambers to his ship and sailed away. When king Menelaus realised in the morning, that his beautiful wife was gone, he first went to his brother, most powerful of the Greek kings, Agammemnon, the king of Mycenae. He promised his full support, since he was eyeing the wealth of Troy for years, and together they sent envoys to all of those who swore to protect Helen and her husband to fulfil their obligation.

As a result all the kings and heroes, who swore to protect Helen and her husband came to aid Menelaus and Agammemnon in their campaign against Troy. All eventually came, some willingly, like Ajax and Diomedes, and others unwillingly like Achilles (as mentioned above) and surprisingly Odysseus. Odysseus, while being the author of the obligation, did not devise it to destroy Troy. He wished to gain Penelope, whom he loved greatly, which he did and he led a happy married life with her, having an infant son just as Helen was abducted - Telemachus. He did not wish to leave them for what he knew would be a very long war. Therefore, he devised a trick, he pretended madness, sowing salt in his fields when the other kings sent by Agammemnon came for him. Odysseus was, however, outwitted by Palamedes, who decided to test Odysseus' madness by placing his infant son, Telemachus, ahead of the plough which Odysseus was driving. Odysseus stopped the plough and picked up his son, thus revealing himself and having to go with the other kings. Odysseus was, however, very bitter about this event, in the end he lost his wife and son and his life with them for what he knew would be at least 10 years. Later thus, he killed Palamedes in revenge for his trick.

Eventually, all the sworn kings and heroes mustered their men-at-arms at Aulis. There, they all witnessed a sacrifice to APollo, a patron of Troy, who they wished to please in the Greeks' favour, when after they sacrificed the animal, a snake climbed a tree and ate a mother bird and her nine chicks and then was turned to stone. The head priest of Mycenae, Calchas, correctly interpreted this sign, that the siege of Troy would last for ten years and then the city would fall. The Greeks gathered more than a thousand ships at Aulis. However, after all gathering there, the winds ceased and the Greeks could not leave. Calchas told Agammemnon that according to various signs, he had angered the goddess Artemis and



must bring her the ultimate sacrifice, to let her resume the winds. Agammemnon had to sacrifice his own daughter Ifigenia.

#### 5. The sacrifice of Iphigenia

Agammemnon was greatly saddened by the news. He loved his daughter but eventually decided that the campaign against Troy was dearer to him. He sent a messenger to Mycenae summoning his daughter to Aulis. A day later, he was terrified of his decision and sent another messenger cancelling the summons and urging his daughter not to come, whatever happens. It was unfortunately too late, as Menelaus had seen another messenger leaving Agammemnon's tent and killed him before he could leave the camp. Thus Ifigenia arrived at Aulis a few days later. It is unclear how she was brought to the sacrificial stone, however what we know is that when her throat was to be slit, Artemis clouded the whole place with fog and took Ifigenia away to save her. Artemis was, however, satisfied by the will of the Greeks to bring her the ultimate sacrifice, even though she saved Ifigenia, and let the winds flow again, allowing the Greeks to sail to Troy.

#### **The siege of Troy until our meeting**

Thousand Greek ships appeared at the Trojan coast, from which it was around 6 kilometres to the city, in a few days. The Trojans, according to legends, decided to prepare a fighting retreat to the city and the Greeks did not care, emboldened by the perceived favour of the gods after the sacrifice of Iphigenia as well as Agammemnon's propaganda saying of the weakness of Troy, to avoid a contested landing and thus landed in the teeth of the Trojan army. A prophecy only some Greeks knew, namely king Odysseus, said that the first Greek to step on Trojan soil would die soon after. Odysseus, therefore, decided to trick his fellow hero, Protesilaus, and they disembarked their ships at the same time. But Odysseus landed on his shield, which he threw under him, and Protesilaus was killed soon after by Hector.

When other Greek heroes started disembarking their ships, what first looked like a lost landing was turned around, namely by the skill of Achilles and his Myrmidons - highly skilled warriors gathered by Achilles' father Peleus. Trojans eventually lost a lot of their men and heroes, namely Cycnus, the son of Poseidon, and quickly retreated to their city. The massive Trojan walls, of which legends said were built by Apollo and Poseidon, served as an impassable barrier for the Greeks and thus most combat took place outside of the walls when the Trojans sallied out under Hector's leadership. Myths say that fighting happened almost daily, but was divided between fighting with the Trojans in front of the walls and Greek raids further inland against Troy's allies.

It is said that Achilles himself with his Myrmidons raided and conquered many cities and other Troy's allies, including Lesbos, Smyrna or Side. The Trojans also frequently attacked the Greek camp, mostly after getting reinforcements from their allies - among other Asian cities the Amazons, the Ethiopians under the black king Memnon, of whom it was said he was one of the most skilled warriors in the world. The war went for nine years back and forth, the majority of Gods favouring the Trojans for a while and for another the Greeks. For a few times, the Trojans managed to penetrate the Greek camp, most notably when Achilles and Ajax were stuck playing the game of petteia, the Trojans were only repulsed when Athena took the two heroes out of their game and alerted them to the incoming danger.

The luck of the Greek kings also shifted significantly, when Odysseus orchestrated the death of Palamedes. It is said that he forged a letter from Priam to Palamedes and filled his tent with gold, thus accusing him of treachery. Agamemnon, already paranoid, had Palamedes stoned. When the father of Palamedes came to Troy seeking justice, he was refused and went back to Greece to seek revenge and told the wives of the Greek kings who were away at Troy, that they were planning to replace them with Trojan concubines. Thus he recruited many wives to his cause, namely the wife of Agamemnon Clytemnestra. She later murdered her husband when he came back from Troy.

The Greek authors were mostly uninterested in the nine years of the Trojan war that preceded our events. Thus the information are scarce and after what was already said, we only know that at some point after the Trojan raids, the Greeks decided to build a large defensive wall around their camp. They built this wall partly from their ships, as many were not needed anymore as the men who crewed them were dead. Building of this big and beautiful wall also helped to delay the other major event of which we know, especially since the men were entertained by some activity when they were not fighting. This event was a mutiny. In the ninth year, the Greek soldiers were highly displeased that the siege was moving nowhere and that they were away for so long from their homes, wives and children. Many of them did not accumulate any riches yet and neither were they any closer to victory. Thus a mutiny against the leaders, especially king Agammemnon was orchestrated. The men demanded either a change in leadership or an end to the siege and return home. Agammemnon refused both and a rather one sided fight considering the amount of soldiers present was about to go down. Achilles, however, stepped in and calmed the men by a positive speech, promising his abilities to the fight, yet alienating even further king Agammemnon, who feared Achilles as his possible replacement and also envied him the support he had from the soldiers. It was not too long before that, when Achilles won over Agammemnon, thanks to popular support, a beautiful slave girl Briseis, which Agammemnon wished to gain for himself as a sex slave. Thus the king of Mycenae feared that Achilles' popular support, bravery, combat skill and kindness which he lacked might also lead to Achilles replacing him as the leader of the army.

Such was the beginning of strife among the Greeks which would lead to a much greater disaster. In the tenth year, Agammemnon finally gained what he wished for a new beautiful and this time prominent slave girl Chryseis, daughter of Chryses, high priest of Apollo in Troy. When the priest came to ask for the return of his daughter in exchange for gold and favours with the gods, Agammemnon despite appeals from the soldiers, his fellow kings and Achilles refused. Chryses, therefore, upon his return to Apollo's temple in Troy pleaded with the god to strike the Greeks with plague. Apollo, highly pro-Trojan already, received the pleas of his servant and the Greeks suffered from a horrible illness and died in their hundreds. The kings this time forced Agamemnon to return Chryseis to her father in return for the end of the plague. Achilles again being among the leaders of the initiative along with Odysseus or Diomedes.

Agammemnon hated Achilles even more for this act and decided to take his revenge upon Achilles by seizing his slave girl Briseis. It is unclear, what Achilles intended to do with Briseis as his servant (the title slave is used commonly, but women seized during sieges were commonly not slaves in the modern meaning of the word - ie. brutally used and abused for the gain of wealth of their owners - but were rather utilised to wash clothes, prepare food,

take care of animals, collect herbs, fruits or farm fields - work that men engaged daily in fighting could hardly sustain for long), but it is clear, that in the story she is not a symbol of love or sex for Achilles, but rather as a status symbol, indicating his elevation - both in morals and in skill - above even Agammemnon as a leader of the army. Therefore, when she was seized by Agammemnon and under threat of being abused and possibly even killed, Achilles reacted furiously. His status was severely hurt and he lost a trusted servant whom he held in esteem. Thus Achilles decided to go on a strike of sorts. He and his men - the highly skilled Myrmidons - would not fight, until Agammemnon returned Briseis to Achilles and apologised to him in front of all the Greeks. Achilles also asked his mother, Thetis to plead with Zeus to ensure that the Trojans have success in the absence of Achilles on the field, thus ensuring that Agammemnon would eventually have to do Achilles' bidding or die.

Initially, the Greeks were successful even after Achilles' withdrawal. Paris challenged Menelaus to single combat, in hopes of ending the war then and there. The foolishness of his action was obvious to all the Trojans, since Menelaus was a much better warrior than the young prince, but they could not discourage him from the challenge. Thus in front of both the armies, Paris and Menelaus fought each other in a duel. Paris was quickly wounded and lost to Menelaus, but was saved from the killing blow by his patron, Aphrodite. The truce, in which both armies entered before the duel, was thus broken, since Paris had cheated and the furious Greeks attacked the Trojans. First they had success, with Diomedes killing several Trojan heroes and even wounding Ares and Aphrodite with the help of Athena, after the two gods saved Aeneas from Diomedes who was about to kill him. Without Achilles and his men on the field, however, the Greeks slowly lost ground in the following days and eventually one day they drove the Greeks back from the by now traditional battlefield all the way to their wall around the camp and precious ships. There they were stopped by Poseidon for the night. But not even Poseidon can prevent Zeus from doing what he wishes. And Achilles still has not withdrawn his plea to him, via Thetis, to make sure the Greeks lose.

That is where we are now. The Trojans are on the verge of driving the Greeks from their lands. The Greeks, weakened by losses among both men and heroes, are stuck between the sea and Trojans at their wall. Achilles and Agammemnon are at each other's throats. And yet, the Greeks cannot save themselves without Achilles, let alone win the whole campaign. For that, they need much more help, very likely from those, who are yet to arrive to Troy.

**P.S.: The heroes and gods are not particularly known to wear suits. Greek clothing, makeup and general style is much more encouraged.**

### **Questions to solve**

1. How to end the Trojan war? Should the Greeks win or should the Trojans win?
2. If there are any changes to territory, what changes shall be made? Any reparations? Should the war end relatively peacefully or should Troy be sacked or the Greeks slaughtered to the last "invader"?
3. What to do with prisoners if there are any? How to divide spoils of war or return them as good favour?
4. How should the gods end their strife over the Trojan war?
5. Should any heroes be deified?

6. What should the Greek journey home be like if and when they leave Troy? (Odyssey?)
7. How should the souls of the fallen heroes and ordinary men be treated in the underworld?

### **Characters involved in our deliberations and their general positions**

Below, you can find a list of all the characters involved in this Great Council of Gods and Men. Attached are also their general positions. However, further research is necessary to really understand one's character.

#### **Aphrodite**

##### General Information:

Aphrodite is a Greek goddess of beauty, procreation, love and many more things mainly associated with romantic intimacy. In Iliad she is the daughter of Zeus and Dione, an oracular goddess. Aphrodite is married to Hephaestus, to whom she was unfaithful many times, one of her lovers being, for example, the god of war, Ares.

In Greek mythology, anyone who dared to compare their beauty to the beauty of Aphrodite or has been compared to the goddess of love by anyone else, was punished by one of Aphrodite's children or Aphrodite herself.

##### Involvement in the Trojan War:

Aphrodite plays a very important role in the war, as she is one of the three goddesses (other two being Hera and Athena) who asked Paris to decide who shall be the rightful owner of a golden apple, over which they had a feud.

Paris was supposed to give the apple to the goddess, who, according to him, was the fairest between the three of them. As Paris could not decide, since all three of them were incredibly beautiful, the goddesses resorted to bribes. If Paris was to give the golden apple to Hera, he was promised to be a powerful monarch, who shall rule over both Europe and Asia. Athena tried to bribe Paris with wisdom and power, which would grant him victory in every battle. Finally, Aphrodite offered him a marriage to the most beautiful woman on earth. After hearing all the offers, Paris decided to select Aphrodite as the fairest and awarded her the golden apple.

Now, it was Aphrodite's turn to fulfil her promise, which was to marry Paris and the most beautiful woman on earth. The most beautiful woman on earth was Helen, the wife of Menelaus, the King of Sparta. To get her, Paris sailed to Sparta and to make it easier for him, Aphrodite made sure the wind was favourable. When Paris got to Sparta, Aphrodite charmed Helen to fall in love with him. With Aphrodite's help, Paris and Helen quickly sail back to Troy.

By helping Paris kidnap Helen, Aphrodite directly started the conflict. As Paris was the Trojan Prince and also because the hero Aeneas, Aphrodite's son, was a Trojan citizen, naturally, Aphrodite sided with Troy. Her first active involvement in the war was her saving Paris, after he foolishly challenged Menelaus to a one-on-one duel. Later in the Iliad, she took the form of an old lady and tried to persuade Helen to sleep with Paris, however Helen managed to recognize Aphrodite by her beautiful appearance. She refused and dared to

insult Aphrodite, to which the goddess of love responded that her favour can turn to hate in a blink of an eye. Helen figured that it was probably in her own best interest to obey Aphrodite's command and decided to follow her.

Aphrodite is also indirectly involved in changing the development of the conflict, when she lends her *kestos himas* (a corset/belt, which allows her to seduce any god or human) to Hera, who then used it to seduce Zeus to distract him from the combat, so in the meantime, Poseidon can help the Greek forces. It is important to say that even though Aphrodite and Hera stood on opposite sides, Hera's intention to get rid of Zeus benefited Aphrodite as well, since from the beginning of the conflict, Zeus condemned the gods to interfere in any way.

## **Artemis**

### General Information:

Artemis is a Greek goddess of the hunt, wilderness, nature, chastity and many things associated with childbirth and children overall. Along with her twin Apollo, she is the child of Zeus and Leto. Artemis decided to remain a maiden and to never marry, thus she was one of the three virgin goddesses.

### Involvement in the Trojan War:

Since her twin brother Apollo is the patron god of Troy, Artemis sided with the Trojan people. Her first involvement in the conflict was her delaying the Greek fleet from departing from Aulis. She was furious because Agamemnon killed her sacred stag, so as a punishment, she calmed the winds, making it impossible for the boats to cast off. Agamemnon later asked a prophet, what should he do, to reason with Artemis. Shockingly enough, the prophet informs Agamemnon that the only way to lift Artemis' "curse", is to sacrifice his only daughter, Iphigenia. At the beginning, Agamemnon agreed. He sent a letter to Iphigenia, ordering her to come to Aulis. A moment later, he started to regret his decision and wrote another letter, asking Iphigenia not to come. Menelaus saw another messenger leaving Agamemnon's tent, he got worried that the fleet might never depart and prevented the messenger from leaving, resulting in Iphigenia arriving at the Aulis. Later, when Agamemnon's daughter was about to be sacrificed, Artemis stepped in, snatched Iphigenia from the altar and substituted a deer. The goddess of hunt then took Iphigenia to her temple in Tauros, where she later became Artemis' priestess.

Later during the conflict, Artemis took part in helping the hero Aeneas. She, along with Apollo and Leto, lifted the injured hero to heaven, where they secretly healed him.

As Artemis was on the side of Troy, she later found herself having an argument with Hera, which resulted in Artemis being beaten up. This fight was particularly dehonoring to Artemis, as Hera used Artemis' own bow to injure her.

## **Athena**

### General Information:

Athena is a Greek goddess of warfare, wisdom and handicraft. She is the daughter of Zeus, born from his forehead, without a mother. She is one of the three virgin goddesses who swore to never marry or have an offspring, however, Athena has a son, even though it is not

a biological one. She received the baby Erichthonius from the hand of Gaia (mother of all life). Gaia passed Erichthonius over to Athena to care for him.

#### Involvement in the Trojan war:

She was one of the three goddesses who asked Paris to decide, which one of them shall receive the golden apple, as the rightful owner of said apple, should be the fairest of the three goddesses.

All three of the goddesses were ideally beautiful, Paris could not decide, so the goddesses decided to bribe him. If he gave the apple to Hera, he was promised to be a powerful monarch, who shall rule over both Europe and Asia and Aphrodite promised a marriage to the most beautiful woman on earth. Athena tried to bribe Paris with wisdom and power, which would grant him victory in every battle. Between those options, Paris chose the most beautiful woman on earth, therefore he gave the golden apple to Aphrodite. Both Hera and Athena were enraged and as a result, when the war started, they sided with the Greeks.

Athena herself is very active during the war, mainly because she is the goddess of warfare and strategy, but also because she desires to see the Trojans fall. During the ongoing conflict, she is acting as a mentor to hero Achilles who is a very skilled warrior, however is hot-headed and has no discipline whatsoever, rushing to the battle without thinking first. Athena guides Achilles, reining his impulsivity and directing his strength and ability towards victories.

After the one-on-one duel between Paris and Menelaus, both sides agreed on a temporary truce. At some point, Zeus started to consider ending the war and saving Trojans, however he was swayed by Hera and sent Athena to start the fighting again. Athena agreed and was looking for a subtle way to restart the conflict again, as she refused to give the Trojans an advantage. She sought out a Trojan nobleman named Pandaros and convinced him to fire an arrow at Menelaus which would slightly injure him. Pandaros did so and forced Menelaus to retreat temporarily. By an attack on one of the Greek's most important and proud warriors, Pandaros, under Athena's influence, broke the truce and the fighting began once again.

Athena also aided Diomedes, the second best Greek warrior next to Achilles. Diomedes was given the gift of exceptional courage and strength. Because of said courage and also with Athena and Hera's aid, Diomedes attacked the god of war, Ares, with his spear. Furthermore, thanks to Athena, Diomedes ensured Greek victories in many important battles. Thanks to his skill and also thanks to Athena's gifts, he is feared by the Trojan people, to the point where many Trojan women went to Athena's temple on the Acropolis multiple times to pray for protection from Diomedes, however Athena completely ignored them.

After Diomedes attacked Ares, Athena and the god of war got into an argument. Ares blamed her for encouraging Diomedes to hurt him. Athena did not deny this accusation and they got into a duel. Ares struck Athena with his whole might, however she deflected his blow with her *aegis* (a shield that even Zeus' thunderbolt and lightning can't pierce). After deflecting his attack, Athena picked up a massive boulder and knocked Ares out.

As of right now, Athena is thinking of some sort of plan, which could help the Greeks to finally achieve victory. Although she has not come up with such a plan yet, she already carefully selected a mortal, who she would share her plan with, this mortal being the king of Ithaca, Odysseus.

## **Hector**

### General Information:

Hector is a Trojan Prince, son of king Priam and his wife Hecuba and an older brother to Paris. He is married to Andromache with whom he has a baby son named Astyanax. Hector is said to be a very good son, loving husband, trusty friend and overall quite courageous and generous person. He also happens to be a favourite of Apollo. Many refer to Hector as Apollo's son.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

Even though Hector does not approve of the war that had started between Troy and the Greeks, he is leading the Trojan army and is considered the most powerful Trojan warrior.

Hector himself was actually the first one to kill. At the beginning of the war, right before the Greeks were about to land in Troy, it was prophesied that the first Greek who would set foot on Trojan soil would die. The first ones who had to step out of the ships were Odysseus, the King of Ithaca, and the hero Protesilaus. Odysseus, a very smart and cunning man, was aware of the prophecy, so he threw his shield on the ground and landed on it, meaning he actually did not touch the Trojan soil. Protesilaus, however, landed directly on said soil and a moment later, he was killed by Hector.

After the one-on-one duel between Paris and Menelaus, Greeks were understandably quite angry, since Paris had fled from the fight. Despite their anger, Greeks agreed on a temporary truce between both sides, however some of the involved gods wanted the battle to start again. When a Trojan nobleman named Pandaros, influenced by Athena, shot Menelaus, the fighting began again. During this renewed battle, which was incredibly fierce, since the Greeks finally unleashed their anger, Hector, of course, led the Trojan army again.

This particular battle was so violent and exhausting for both sides. Aware of this fact, Hector proposed a solution. He challenged any one of the Greek heroes to a duel. To decide which hero has to face Hector, the Greeks drew lots. At the end, it was the great hero Ajax, who was chosen to participate in the duel. The rules were simple; If Hector wins, the Trojans are the winners of that day's battle, however if the winner of the duel is Ajax, the victory of the whole battle goes to the Greeks.

Both heroes fought long and hard, however neither one of them could get the upper hand. Because of that, Hector and Ajax were separated. They both exchanged gifts to show respect for one another and both armies called a truce and stopped fighting for the day,

The next day, Hector managed to force the Greeks to retreat to their camp and continued to do so in the next few days. At some point during those days, when Hector was leading the Trojan armies, fighting side by side with his soldiers, the hero Ajax picked up a large stone, threw it directly at Hector and knocked him out. Hector got seriously injured, however the

king of gods Zeus ordered Apollo to revive the Trojan prince. That same day, Hector came back, even stronger than before, pushed past the fortifications and started burning Greek camp, as well as their ships.

## **Hera**

### General Information:

Hera is a Greek goddess of marriage, women, family and is also the protector of women during childbirth. She is the queen of gods, meaning she is the wife of Zeus, however she is also his sister. Her and Zeus are both children of the Titans Cronus and Rhea. She has multiple children, some of them being for example Ares, Hebe or Hephaestus.

Hera is also well-known for her jealousy and vengeful nature against those who offended her, mainly towards Zeus and his lovers.

### Involvement in the Trojan war

Hera was one of the three goddesses who approached Paris and asked him to decide, which one of them is the fairest and therefore the rightful owner of the golden apple they were arguing about.

All three goddesses were incredibly beautiful and Paris could not decide, so the goddesses resorted to bribes. If he gave the apple to Athena, he was promised power and wisdom, which would grant victory in every battle. Aphrodite promised a marriage to the most beautiful woman on earth and Hera offered to turn Paris into a very powerful and rich monarch, which shall rule over both Europe and Asia. Finally, Paris chose Aphrodite over Hera and Athena and as a direct result of this decision, both said goddesses sided with Greeks.

Hera grew a passionate hatred for Trojan people and because of that she disobeyed her husband multiple times. At the beginning of the conflict, Zeus even threatens her that even gods won't be able to protect her if he gets angry. Nevertheless, Hera still continues with her efforts. She involved herself in the conflict both directly or indirectly and she called out Zeus for his unjust judgements several times.

One of her direct involvements is when she, along with Athena, plotted against her own son, Ares, who was a supporter of Trojans. She drew him away from the battlefield and then convinced the hero Diomedes to attack Ares with his spear. With Athena leading the spear towards the god of war, Diomedes managed to hurt him. Ares, who was now in pain, fled to Mount Olympus, resulting in Trojans losing his aid and being forced to fall back.

At the point where the Greeks started losing for some time, Hera tried to persuade Poseidon to help the Greek people in the battlefield. Poseidon refuses, as he does not want to go against Zeus, so Hera and Athena decide to join the Greek army themselves. Zeus however saw those two flee and sent Iris, the messenger of gods, to make them return and also make them aware that if they refuse, they will face brutal consequences. The two goddesses refuse to go back, however after a prolonged argument, Hera notices Poseidon aiding the Greek army and because Poseidon's help was her motive from the start, she gives up and returns back.



Hera's involvement, however, did not end with persuading Poseidon to join the Greeks. She was, and still is, determined to see Troy fall and for that, she devised a plan to deceive Zeus who commanded the gods not to interfere. As Zeus stood in her way and she needed to get rid of him somehow. For that, she borrowed Aphrodite's *kestos himas* (a belt that enables her to seduce any god/mortal she wishes to) and seduced Zeus. After that, with the help of Hypnos, the god of sleep, Hera tricked Zeus into a deep slumber. With Zeus out of the way, the gods could freely interfere as they wished to.

## **Menelaus**

### General Information:

Menelaus is the legendary king of Sparta. He is the son of the late king of Mycenae, Atreus. He is a brother to the current king of Mycenae, Agamemnon, and a husband to Helen of Troy, the most beautiful woman on earth. Menelaus had only one child with Helen, a daughter named Hermione. He also had an illegitimate son, Megapenthes. Even though he was the victim, he is considered to be one of the main reasons the Trojan war happened.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

After Paris chose Aphrodite as the fairest and gave her the golden apple, it was Aphrodite's turn to fulfil her promise and allow Paris to marry the most beautiful woman on earth, Helen, who also happened to be Menelaus' wife.

At the time, when Menelaus was not in Sparta, since he was attending the funeral of his grandfather Catreus, Paris decided to visit Sparta and claim Helen as his own. When Paris arrived, Aphrodite charmed Helen so she would fall in love with the Trojan prince and took her to his ship. Paris then sailed back to Troy, practically kidnapping Helen.

When Menelaus found out that his wife had been kidnapped and taken to Troy, he was furious. He instantly decided that he had to get her back at all costs and he was even prepared to fight for her. Menelaus contacted his brother Agamemnon and explained the situation. Agamemnon agreed to help and the Greeks started to prepare themselves for a war.

The Greek fleet was staying on Aulis, prepared to depart, however the winds were calm, making it impossible for the boats to leave. All that was because the goddess Artemis was mad at Agamemnon because he killed his sacred stag. Hindering the Greek fleet was her form of punishment for him. Menelaus and Agamemnon were both eager to leave and attack Troy, so they asked a prophet what they should do to break Artemis' curse. The answer was shocking. Agamemnon was instructed to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, so he sent a letter, asking her to come to Aulis. A moment later, he panicked and sent another letter, forbidding her to come. Menelaus saw the second messenger leaving Agamemnon's tent. Scared that they will never depart, Menelaus stopped the messenger, resulting in Iphigenia actually coming. Thanks to Menelaus, the Greek fleet left Aulis the next day.

*\*see "Artemis" for the story about the sacrifice of Iphigenia\**

Several days after arriving in Troy, Menelaus challenged Paris to an one-on-one duel for Helen's return. Paris is foolish enough to agree, overestimating his own abilities, and they start fighting. Menelaus is clearly a lot more skilled warrior than Paris is, so it did not take

long for him to beat the Trojan prince. Menelaus was about to claim victory and kill Paris, however Aphrodite swept Paris away and hid him behind the walls of Troy. Even though the Greeks are furious, both sides manage to agree on a temporary truce, mainly because they are still arguing about the winner of said duel. Meanwhile, Athena devises a plan. She wants both sides to fight again, so she persuades a Trojan nobleman Pandarus to shoot Menelaus with a bow. Athena never intended Menelaus to die, she just needed to create a reason for Greeks to start fighting again. Hurting one of the most powerful and treasured Greek heroes, like Menelaus, definitely worked and in fury, Greeks attacked again. As Athena never wanted Menelaus to die, she protected him from the arrow and Menelaus only ended up with light abdomen injury. Despite the injury not being serious, Menelaus was forced to leave the battlefield.

## **Odysseus**

### General Information

Odysseus is the legendary king of Ithaca. He is the son of the late king of Ithaca, Laertes, and Anticlea. He is married to Penelope, whom he loves very much. He has two sons, Telemachus and Acusilaus. Odysseus is very well known mainly for his intelligence. His logical thinking, guile and versatility helped him multiple times. Those qualities won him several wars as well.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

Before the conflict started, the Agamemnon and Menelaus knew they'd need an advisor. Someone intelligent, someone who is able to devise a strategy, however is also a skilled warrior. Who else could come to mind than the king of Ithaca, Odysseus, who, himself, was a suitor of Helen's hand once and who has sworn to protect her.

Odysseus did not want to fight. He was more than happy where he was, alongside his wife and new-born son, Telemachus. Furthermore, a prophecy has said that if he went to war, he would be away for 20 years. Nevertheless, Odysseus was needed and had no right to refuse, so Agamemnon and Menelaus sent two messengers to get him. When they arrived, Odysseus pretended to be insane by sowing his fields with salt instead of seeds. After a while, however, one of the messengers saw through his lie and put his baby son Telemachus in front of the carriage Odysseus used to sow the field. If he was actually mad, he would've killed his son but as it was only an act, Odysseus stopped the carriage, revealing it was all a lie. He then had no choice but to join the Greek forces.

After joining the Greeks, Odysseus quickly became a very trusted and beloved advisor. He was also very influential when it came to the Greek army. Even though he was only an advisor, the Greeks, including Agamemnon and Menelaus, respected him. If someone doubts Agamemnon's commands or if the morale among the soldiers is low, Odysseus always manages to calm the troops down and persuade them to trust Agamemnon. Also, he often has to mediate disagreements between Achilles and Agamemnon.

The first time Odysseus showed his amazing logical ability was when the Greek fleet arrived in Troy. Before departing, the Greeks were told a prophecy which said that the first one to set foot on Trojan soil will die immediately. Unfortunately, Odysseus and the hero Protesilaus were the first ones to get out of the boats. Aware of the prophecy, Odysseus threw his shield

on the ground and landed on it, meaning he did not actually touch the Trojan soil with his feet. Protesilaus, on the other hand, landed directly in the sand on Trojan shore and was almost immediately killed by Hector.

Odysseus also played a major role in finding and recruiting Achilles. It has been prophesied that Greeks had no chance to win, if Achilles did not join the forces, so Odysseus and the others had to look for him. They succeeded and Achilles joined the Greek army.

*\*see "Achilles" for further information about his recruitment\**

When Hector proposed an one-on-one duel, which would end that day's bloody battle, Odysseus was one of the heroes who volunteered to fight him, however Ajax was the one chosen, so instead of duelling Hector, Odysseus, along with Diomedes, went on a mission to kill Rhesus, the Thracian king, and stole his horses, which were said to be finest in the land. It was foretold that if the horses drank from the Scamander River, they could not be taken from Rhesus anymore. Odysseus and Diomedes snuck to Trojan camp and killed Rhesus in his own tent. Then, they claimed his horses for the Greek army.

## **Achilles**

### General Information:

Achilles is the son of king Peleus and a sea nymph named Thetis. Unlike Thetis, Achilles was born mortal. She tried to make Achilles immortal by dipping him in the River Styx, while holding him by his heel. The water from Styx made Achilles invulnerable, except for his heel, which became his only weakness.

When he was still a child, Thetis abandoned her son to return to the sea nymphs. Needing some help raising Achilles, his father Peleus sends young Achilles to a centaur named Chiron, who taught him how to fight and also fed him a specific diet, which made him unusually strong.

Achilles does not have a legitimate wife, however he had a brief relationship with Trojan princess Briseis. Given the fact, that Briseis was a prisoner of war, a slave, their relationship was definitely not voluntary from her side.

Achilles also has a dear friend, whose name is Patroclus. He also is a mentee of the goddess Athena, who teaches him to tame his hot-headedness and impulsivity.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

When the war began, a prophecy foretold that if Achilles joined the expedition for retrieving Helen, he would die on the battlefield in Troy. Scared for him, Achilles' parents tried to prevent him from joining the Greek forces. They sent him to the island of Skyros, where he lived on the court of King Lycomedes. Disguised as a girl, he has lived among Lycomedes' multiple daughters.

Meanwhile, another prophecy was told to the Greeks. They could only win the war with Achilles' help. Odysseus and Diomedes discovered Achilles' whereabouts and decided to travel to Skyros to recruit Achilles. They disguised themselves as merchants selling jewellery, however they also placed weapons among these goods. Then, they visited

Lycomedes' court. Naturally, his daughter wanted to take a look at the jewellery, however Achilles, still disguised as a girl, instinctively grabs the weapons and is found out. He is then recruited and joins the Greek army.

To the battlefield, Achilles arrived with 50 ships, which were filled with his men, the Myrmidons. Achilles immediately joined the fight, immediately claiming his title as the best warrior on the side of Greeks.

Achilles has had multiple arguments with Agamemnon, however what finally completely drifted them apart, was an argument regarding a spoils of war, in this case two female slaves, Briseis and Chryseis.

Agamemnon took Chryseis as his slave, Achilles did the same with Briseis. Unfortunately for Agamemnon, Chryseis was the daughter of Chryses, a priest of Apollo, who begged Agamemnon to return his Chryseis back to him. Agamemnon refused, which endangered Apollo, who then sent a plague on the Greek camp, resulting in many deaths amongst Greek soldiers. Finally, Agamemnon decided to return Chryseis, however he claimed Achilles' Briseis as a replacement. Achilles was furious. He complained to his mother, asking her to convince Zeus to help the Trojans against the Greek army. Thetis talked to Zeus and the Greeks started losing. Achilles, angered that Agamemnon dishonoured him, refused to fight.

As of right now, Achilles is still not fighting. The Greek army is being pushed back and is losing.

## **Menestheus**

### General Information:

Menestheus was the son of Peteus and therefore a great-grandson of one of the earliest kings of Athens, Erechtheus. Menestheus however became the king at the time, when Theseus was and should've been the king. Theseus once decided that he and his friend shall marry the daughters of Zeus. Theseus chose Helen to be his wife, when she was of age. He travelled to Sparta and abducted poor Helen, taking her to Attica. Theseus' friend decided that the wife of Hades, Persephone, is going to be his wife. The two friends then went to the Underworld to claim Persephone, however they got trapped there.

Meanwhile, Helen's abduction from Sparta was revealed. Helen's brothers, Castor and Pollux, came to Athens to retrieve her. As Theseus was absent, the Spartan army did not come to any resistance whatsoever and Helen was brought back to Sparta. Castor and Pollux then decided that during Theseus' absence, Menestheus should be the king of Athens.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

As Menestheus was once a suitor of Helen, he made the oath to protect her and her husband, therefore he had to join the war as well. He led "50 black ships" who joined the Greek fleet on its way to Troy.

Menestheus is a very valued member of the Greek army, since no-one, aside from Nestor, is able to arrange the troops into battle order better than can. Menestheus is also gifted with impressive logical and strategic ability.

Unfortunately, when it comes to practicalities, such as fighting, it is safe to say that Menestheus is not the best. When Agamemnon was reviewing his troops, he found Menestheus in the back, avoiding any action whatsoever. When a part of a Greek wall, which was under Menestheus' command, Menestheus got scared and had to call for help.

## **Zeus**

### General Information:

Zeus is the Greek god of sky and thunder, as known as the king of gods. He is the son of Cronus and Rhea and is also a brother to Hades, Hestia, Hera and Poseidon. In fact, he is married to his sister, Hera, with whom he has multiple children, including Hephaestus, Ares and Hebe. Zeus is infamous for his romantic escapades, which resulted in him having a humongous amount of children, the most well-known being Apollo, Artemis, Heracles, Perseus or Helen of Troy.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

From the beginning of the conflict, Zeus tries to remain neutral, which, however does not mean, he did not involve himself in any way. As the king of the gods, it is his duty to oversee the conflict, so the prophecies, which were already said, come true, and to not really take any side, however throughout the conflict, it became obvious that, in his heart, he favours the Trojans.

Zeus himself was the one, who was supposed to decide, which one of the three goddesses is the rightful owner of the golden apple, however, as mentioned before, he should stay neutral in almost every case, which doesn't involve him directly, he refused to make his decision. After Paris gave the apple to Aphrodite, Hera, who was furious, came to Zeus and made him promise that at the end of the war, he will ultimately destroy the City of Troy, nevertheless, no-one can be sure if he's going to keep his promise or not.

After Achilles' argument with Agamemnon, Achilles urged his mother Thetis to convince Zeus to help the Trojans. After a while of Thetis begging him, Zeus agreed and the Greeks averted to lose.

Not long after his involvement, Zeus prohibited the gods to involve themselves in any way. Unfortunately, the gods did not really care, because those, who have already taken sides, often hate the opposing side with passion and want to see it destroyed. Many deities then disobeyed Zeus multiple times. Zeus promised them all a harsh punishment, if they disobeyed him again, which many of them did not like, because they wanted to help their favourites. Then, Hera devised a plan. Using Aphrodite's *kestos himas* (a belt which allows her to seduce any mortal/god), she seduced Zeus and with the help of Hypnos, she lulled him to sleep.

As of right now, Zeus has finally awoken from his sleep, realising that multiple gods disobeyed him and involved themselves, not so subtly as before. Those gods also include his brother Poseidon, who, at first, did not want to disobey Zeus, however is now fighting with the Greeks.

## **Poseidon**

### General Information:

Poseidon is the Greek god of the sea, storms, earthquakes and horses. He is the son of Cronus and Rhea and is a brother to Zeus, Hestia, Hera and Hades. Poseidon has had many lovers of both sexes, but his long-term consort was a nymph named Amphitrite. Some of his children are Theseus, Atlas, Orion and Pegasus.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

Prior to the war, Poseidon and Apollo were punished by Zeus, because they were helping Hera in her revolt against him. They were sent to king Laomedon, king of Troy, and were instructed to serve him. Poseidon was tasked with building the walls around Troy. Laomedon promised that after they finish their tasks and their year-long servitude will end, he will reward them. When the tasks were completed and Apollo and Poseidon wanted to claim their reward, Laomedon refused to give them what he promised. Since that day, Poseidon holds a grudge against Laomedon and therefore against Troy itself.

Because of those events, Poseidon later sided with the Greeks, however, at the beginning of the conflict, he tried to stay neutral and follow the will of Zeus. Not so long after Poseidon enters the war, Zeus bans the deities from interfering so Poseidon is forced to stop his influence again. Then he decides to stay out of the conflict until it ends. Nevertheless, a while later, even though he refused at first, because he did not want to anger Zeus, he is convinced by Hera to help the Greek army.

Since Hera tricked Zeus into a deep sleep, Poseidon doesn't have to fear his brother anymore and is now fully involved in the war, helping the Greeks to achieve victory.

## **Hades**

### General information:

Hades is the Greek god of the dead and the king of the underworld. He is the oldest son of Cronus and Rhea. His siblings are Hera, Hestia, Zeus and Poseidon. He is married to Persephone, goddess of Spring, who is also his niece.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

Hades is a truly neutral god. Since the war does not really affect him, except for the souls of the dead coming regularly, he didn't really care to join the conflict. He is not favouring any side and seems to not involve himself in any way. Nevertheless, there is a possibility, Hades is secretly influencing the war and no-one knows about it.

## **Ares**

### General Information:

Ares is the Greek god of war and courage. His sister Athena is the goddess of war as well, however the main difference between them is that Athena embodies mainly martial functions like military strategy or generalship, however Ares is the god of bloodlust and sheer brutality.

He is the son of Zeus and Hera. He is the father of the famous god of love, Eros, who is a result of a love affair with Aphrodite.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

When the conflict began, Ares promised to his mother, Hera, and sister, Athena, that he would help them defeat Troy, therefore for a moment, he was helping the Greeks. However, later, when Troy needed help, Aphrodite asked him to help Troy. Since she was Ares' lover and he was clearly in love, he agreed and changed sides.

Hera and Athena did not know that Ares fights for Trojans, until the hero Diomedes saw him fight against the Greeks. Athena and Hera were furious. They asked Zeus for permission to draw Ares away from the battlefield. As Ares was directly disregarding Zeus' command about deities not involving themselves in this conflict, he agrees. Athena has taken Ares aside and then, together with Hera, encouraged Diomedes to attack Ares with his spear. With the help of both goddesses, Diomedes managed to hurt Ares, who then fled to Mount Olympus to take care of his injury.

When his injury is taken care of, Ares overheard that the Trojans had killed his son Ascalaphus. He wanted to change sides again and join the Greek army for vengeance, however Athena stops him.

Finally, Ares confronted Athena about Diomedes attacking him. He blamed her for supporting Diomedes and convincing him to hurt his beautiful flesh. They got into an argument, which resulted in Ares attacking her with his all might. Athena, however, was able to easily defend herself with her shields, which can withstand even Zeus' bolts. She then picked up a boulder, threw it at Ares and managed to knock him out.

As of right now, Ares has awakened from his coma and is now planning which side to join now and how to punish Athena for hurting him.

## **Priam**

### General Information:

Priam is the current king of Troy. He succeeded the throne after his father Laomedon. During his reign, he achieved multiple admirable things. He extended Greek control over the Hellespont, rebuilt the city walls and improved the Trojan military. Thanks to him, Troy was considered an amazingly rich city, because during the beginnings of his reign, Priam made multiple new trading partners and before the war began, money was quite literally flowing to Troy.

His first wife was named Arisbe. His current wife is Hecuba. During his life, he had had multiple wives and concubines. He is said to have fathered 50 sons, including his two favourites, Hector and Paris, and many daughters.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

Priam's relationship with his son Paris is a very important aspect of the war itself, as it all started because Paris lived.

During Hecuba's pregnancy with Paris, right before she was due, she and Priam had received a prophecy. Their new baby son would bring a downfall of Troy if he was left to live. Afraid for Troy's destiny, Priam commanded his servant, Agelaus, to take baby Paris to the mountains and leave him there to die. Priam's servant obeyed the command and left the

baby in the mountains. Paris, however, did not die. He was found by a bear, who took care of him until Agelaus found him again and rescued him.

After some time, Paris went from the mountains to the city of Troy, where he met Priam. Priam recognized his son and because he was happy to have him back, he forgot about the prophecy.

When Paris came back from Sparta, with Helen by his side, Priam again remembered the prophecy, however blinded by the love for his long-lost son, he did not avert the danger, when the Greek representatives came to demand Helen's return. He refused to send her back, because he had sided with Paris' wish to let Helen stay in Troy.

As of right now, no-one has seen Priam for a long time. Even though he is old, he is still the skilled person he has been before and most importantly, he still is the king of Troy. Even though he was not seen for quite a long period of time, he is still alive and it is possible he is somehow influencing the war, possibly giving commands to the leaders of his military forces, however he might also be secretly influencing the war to his own benefits.

## **Agamemnon**

### General Information:

Agamemnon is the king of Mycenae and the main commander who is leading the Greek forces. He is a great warrior, however he can be described as very ignorant and egoistic, making him not so good of a king. Even though his decisions often hurt his family, he did not hesitate to defend his brother Menelaus' honour. He is a husband to Clytemnestra with whom he has 5 kids - Orestes, Iphigenia, Electra, Laodike and Chrysothemis.

### Involvement in the Trojan war:

After Agamemnon found out about the dishonour which happened to his brother, he almost immediately gathered a strong army. Heroes all over Greece have come together to fight for Menelaus. However there also were those, who did not intend to fight, for example the king of Ithaca, Odysseus. Nevertheless, Agamemnon was determined to get Odysseus to join the army, as he was a very intelligent man and Agamemnon needed a counsellor. He sent two messengers to get him and even though Odysseus tried to outsmart them, they managed to recruit him.

*\*see "Odysseus" for the full story of the recruitment of Odysseus\**

After gathering all the heroes he needed, Agamemnon decided it was time to leave for Troy. The Greek fleet was prepared in Aulis, however as much as they tried, they couldn't depart. The winds were completely calm. Agamemnon called for a prophet who informed him that the calm winds are a punishment, which was bestowed on Agamemnon by Artemis, the goddess of hunt. She was furious because Agamemnon killed her sacred stag. As the Greek fleet was still waiting, Agamemnon asked the prophet what he should do to make peace with the angered goddess. The answer was simple, yet shocking. To satisfy Artemis, Agamemnon was instructed to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia. Eager to finally leave for Troy, Agamemnon sends a messenger, commanding Iphigenia to come to Aulis. A moment later, he started regretting his decision and sent another messenger with a letter, asking Iphigenia not to come after all. Menelaus saw the second messenger leave Agamemnon's



tent and stopped him, resulting in Iphigenia arriving at Aulis a few days later. Since she was already there, Agamemnon decided to sacrifice her after all. After the deed was done, the winds started to be favourable again and the Greek fleet could finally leave Aulis and sail to Troy.

*\*see "Artemis" for the full story about Iphigenia's destiny\**

Later during the conflict, Agamemnon had an argument with the hero Achilles, regarding two female slaves they have captured. Their names were Chryseis and Briseis.

Agamemnon took Chryseis as his slave, Achilles did the same with Briseis. Unfortunately for Agamemnon, Chryseis was the daughter of Chryses, a priest of Apollo, who begged Agamemnon to return his Chryseis back to him. Agamemnon refused, which endangered Apollo, who then sent a plague on the Greek camp, resulting in many deaths amongst Greek soldiers. Finally, Agamemnon decided to return Chryseis, however he claimed Achilles' Briseis as a replacement. Achilles was furious. He complained to his mother, asking her to convince Zeus to help the Trojans against the Greek army. Thetis talked to Zeus and the Greeks started losing. Achilles, angered that Agamemnon dishonoured him, refused to fight.

After several days of fighting without Achilles, Agamemnon realised that they need the hero on their side, if they want to win. He sent ambassadors to beg Achilles for a return, promising him a reward, however Achilles refused.

As of right now, Achilles is still not fighting and the Greek army is losing. Agamemnon has to think about other ways to get Achilles to fight again or the Greeks are done for good.

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