

## The Eco-Traveller Notes for Teachers – Turkey



Every Athenian child knew the story of the Siege of Troy and considered it to be an accurate description of historical events. Some Greek scholars were a bit doubtful about Homer's famous account of the ten year siege, but the main points were well known and formed a rich source for stories, poems and plays by other Greek writers as well as authors stretching right to the present day.

The Trojans were clearly guilty of kidnapping Helen from her husband Menelaus, King of Sparta, so all the leading heroes of the time including Agamemnon, Odysseus, Ajax and Achilles, were quite justified in going to rescue her.

Paris, prince of Troy, his brother Hector, King Priam and the other Trojans were just as determined to hold out against the Greeks.

The Romans were unwilling to believe that the Trojans were so gullible that they might drag the wooden horse inside their walls without first checking it for King Agamemnon's warriors, so they assumed the famous horse was in fact some sort of siege engine or battering ram.

Modern archeologists usually view the whole story as a myth with little historical basis; probably a war between Troy, their Hittite allies and the Achaeans (Greeks), but some recent finds have stirred up new ideas. In one remarkable stone carving, priests of Ilium or Troy appear to be leading a wooden bull in a religious procession. Pulled by oxen, the bull has a huge jar of wine set in its back, so that all the worshippers can have a drink. There would be just enough room around the jar for a few very uncomfortable Greeks to huddle inside the base! We must wait for the results of future research.

### Heinrich Schliemann

Schliemann was not the first person to identify the site of Troy but he was the first to start digging at the site, cutting down through centuries of historical evidence to find the city of Priam. It is important to teach respect for archeological sites because modern scientists have found these early efforts very destructive. Over several years, Schliemann managed to remove lots of valuables and even claimed to find Priam's lost treasure; his wife posed for photographs wearing the precious jewellery!

### Modern research

Troy is a wonderful site to visit in modern Turkey, close to the Aegean Sea. There are many walls and buildings excavated by historians such as Prof. Manfred Korfmann of the University of Tübingen. [www.archaeology.org/0405/etc/troy.html/](http://www.archaeology.org/0405/etc/troy.html/)

Modern computer generated images use Virtual Reality (VR) to show the city as it would have appeared in about 1250 BC about the time of the Trojan War.

Visit [http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/troia/vr/vr0208\\_en.html](http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/troia/vr/vr0208_en.html)

Here is one example of a reconstruction from the site. The lower walls of Trojan houses were made from limestone, but the upper walls were often mud brick and fell down long ago. This was probably a kitchen.



On the worksheet, pupils are given a few clues about the ruined building in the picture. The lower walls are still quite solid but the upper walls and roof have crumbled away. There are some pieces of pottery, a jar, some roof tiles and clay pipes. The ivory comb might mean some sort of dressing room, or perhaps something dropped by mistake by someone in a hurry.

- Walls are not very strong so they have to be extra thick.
- Wooden objects have all rotted away.
- Iron rusts very quickly but bronze (copper & tin) lasts much longer.

There is no right or wrong answer in this exercise but children should learn that we discover a lot from the context of an object, which is why it's so important not to disturb things at a World Heritage Site like Troy.

Encourage your pupils to do some research either from books or the internet. As a bonus, your pupils can go into their local First Choice store and request more information to complete the activity sheets. Your First Choice store will have some fact sheets and any brochures available on the various destinations for your pupils to cut out pictures if need be. If your pupils go into the stores with their families they can expect to walk away with an Eco-Traveller certificate just for asking for more information.