

BOOK REVIEWS

Joachim Latacz, *Troy and Homer: Towards a Solution of an Old Mystery*, Translated from the German by Kevin Windle and Rosh Ireland, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. xix + 342 pages, map + 24 figures. ISBN 0-19-926308-6.

Joachim Latacz's spellbinding book, translated by Kevin Windle and Rosh Ireland, offers an up-to-date answer to the old question: is the Homeric Troy fictional or historical? At the heart of *Troy and Homer* lies Hisarlik, the mound in northwestern Turkey that Heinrich Schliemann (1870-90) and Wilhelm Dörpfeld (1893-94) memorialized as the site of Homer's Troy. Should Denys Page's scholarly *History and the Homeric Iliad* (1959) or Michael Wood's television series *In Search of the Trojan War* (1985) leap to mind, Latacz would reply that only in the past decade or so has the historicity of Homer's Troy been subject to 'proof' (18-19).¹ *Troy and Homer* argues that Homer's *Iliad* (c.750 BCE) contains memories of thirteenth-century Troy. Paradoxically, the evidence supporting this claim also offers a Late Bronze Age Anatolian perspective on Troy that counterbalances the later viewpoint of the Greek victor found in the *Iliad*.

Initially, Schliemann believed that the 'Homeric' Troy was the wealthy town now called Troy II, the second oldest of the nine ancient settlement levels currently known to archaeologists. When Troy II turned out to predate the height of Mycenaean culture by a millennium, however, the phase ending Troy VI and beginning Troy VII came to be regarded as 'the Homeric city' (c.1250-1150 BCE). But, confined to its citadel, Troy VI/VIIa seemed too small. Even Carl Blegen's excavation (1932-38) found only a cemetery beyond the walls. Then Manfred Korfmann, the archaeologist and prehistorian from the University of Tübingen, became Troy's fourth excavator (1988-2002) after a fifty-year gap. While others questioned whether the site could reveal more, Korfmann assembled a large international team whose diverse disciplines and specialties — along with advanced techniques in dating, remote sensing and materials analysis — are remapping Troy as a large Bronze Age city. Korfmann shared his momentous findings with other specialists, particularly in the yearbook *Studia Troica* published by Project Troia (1991-present).

In *Troy and Homer*, Latacz successfully conveys to a 'broad readership' the excitement of interdisciplinary research (2). Like its title, the book has two well-linked parts: 'Troy' (Part I, 15-140) and 'Homer' (Part II, 141-287). Each attempts to answer two questions. Part I discusses whether Hisarlik is indeed Troy and, if so, what Late Bronze Age Troy looked like around 1200 BCE. Part II investigates how Homer, over four centuries later, came to have knowledge of Troy and to what extent, if any, the *Iliad* provides information about the Bronze Age. Each question poses enormous challenges, as evidence comes not only from Homer, but from archaeology, history, cultural studies, linguistics, and Hittite and Anatolian studies. Yet, throughout, Latacz demonstrates his scholarly range and familiarity with discoveries made through 2003.² A prolific Homerist and Professor Emeritus at the University of Basel, Latacz shines in Part II when explaining to non-specialists why anomalies in numerous hexameters indicate that Homer's prosody not only predates the loss of digamma, the 'w' sound in (*W*)*ilios*, but perhaps derives from the fifteenth century BCE or earlier (160-166). To tackle Part I, Latacz has followed the excavations since 1988 and served with Korfmann as an editor for *Studia Troica* since 1991 (x). More recently, he joined Korfmann and others in organizing 'Troy — Dream and Reality', a major exhibit

¹ Page numbers derive from *Troy and Homer*, the English edition of Latacz's *Troia und Homer: Der Weg zur Lösung eines alten Rätsels* (Munich and Stuttgart: Koehler & Amelang, 2001), already in its fifth updated edition. Reviews include those of the German edition by W. Kullmann in *Gnomon* 73.8, 2001, 657-61, and by J. Eingartner in *Gymnasium* 109.6, 2002, 526-33; and of the English edition by R. Janko in *TLS*, 15 April 2005.

² For earlier work in English, see Deborah Boedeker (ed.), *The World of Homer: Homer, Schliemann, and the Treasures of Priam*, Washington, DC: Society for the Preservation of the Greek Heritage, 1997; reproduced as *The World of Troy*, a special issue of *Classical World* (91.5 May/June 1998).

viewed by 850,000 people in Germany from March 2001 to April 2002.³ *Troy and Homer* pays tribute to Korfmann, who died at 63 in August 2005.

Regarding the appearance of Late Bronze Age Troy, Korfmann's contribution was his discovery of its Lower Town. Latacz summarizes both the evidence and Korfmann's interpretations (21-72). A long ditch, punctuated by a gate and palisade, was found 400 meters south of the citadel; a smaller one lies 100 meters to south of the Troy VI ditch and may represent a later expansion during Troy VIIa. Korfmann argued that the ditches were defensive, a typically Anatolian precaution against chariots and battering rams. He theorized, moreover, that the ditches once ringed the Lower Town in concert with mudbrick fortress walls, long since disintegrated, an arrow's flight nearer the citadel walls. Korfmann's Lower City of Troy VI/VIIa, in other words, extended 170,000 square meters beyond the citadel's attested 23,000 square meters; possessed over 5,000 inhabitants; and resembled contemporary Anatolian towns rather than Mycenaean ones (21-38, figs.7-8). Excavations also unearthed an Anatolian reversible seal whose hieroglyphic inscription reveals that Luwian, a cousin to Hittite, may have been the diplomatic language of Troy before the destruction of Troy VIIa around 1200 BCE (49-72, 113-119). Finally, Korfmann argued that Troy was far more significant both economically and politically than previously believed. The town's position on the Dardanelles between three seas (Aegean, Marmora, Black) — combined with her multiple defenses, horse bones, and evidence of metal-working shops and dyeing works — suggest that Troy became both powerful and envied as a regional capital and center of an extensive commercial trade network in a Mediterranean world dominated until c.1200 BCE by the Hittites, Egyptians, and Mycenaean (40-49, 73-75, 101-103).

Latacz shows how Hittite documents, many newly discovered or reappraised, supplement the excavations at Troy by providing a 'map' of the Hittite Empire during the Late Bronze Age (73-140). In 1996, Latacz argues, the eminent Hittite scholar Frank Starke 'proved' that the ruins at Hisarlik, known by Homer as 'Troy' and '(W)ilios' / 'Ilios', was the power center that Hittite imperial correspondence called *Wilusa*; and that, by the thirteenth century BCE, *Wilusa* had been a vassal state of the Hittites for centuries (75-85). Another Hittite expert, John Hawkins, came to the same conclusion while re-examining the key document for Hittite geography: the Karabel monument, located near modern-day Izmir and inscribed with hieroglyphic Luwian. Although the underlying form of Troy's prehistoric, non-Indo-European name is lost, its memory survives in Greek *Wilios* and Hittite *Wilusa*, forms dating to the Late Bronze Age. The same is argued for Homer's other name *Troia*, arguably synonymous with Hittite *Taruswisa* / *Tru(w)isa*, a place originally within, rather than identical to, *Wilusa* / *Wilios*. Moreover, Bronze Age documents collaborate two of Homer's three names for the Greek besiegers: *Danaioi* ('Danaans') appears around 1500 BCE in Egyptian sources; and *Achai(w)oi* ('Achaians') refers to the inhabitants of Hittite *Ahhijawa*, a name in thirteenth-century Hittite documents. Since the 1990s, new evidence offers 'definite confirmation' that *Ahhijawa* extended from mainland Greece, through the southern Aegean islands, to Miletos/Millawa(n)da (125). For Latacz, current research outside the Greek area suggests that Homer's geographical and ethnographic framework is historical to 1500-1200 BCE.

In Part II, Latacz shows where the *Iliad* corresponds with Bronze Age documents. First, he emphasizes that Homer neither invented the Trojan framework into which he embedded his 51-day 'Achilles story' nor the poetic form of his epics (204, 265). The metrically distinct names for Troy (*(W)ilios*, *Troia*) and her enemies (*Argeioi*, *Danaoi*, *Achaioi*), for instance, accord with the formulaic structure of Greek hexameter verse, the medium through which narratives passed orally since at least the sixteenth century BCE in Greece and, after 1100 or 1050 BCE, in the colonies settled by Greek mainlanders on the west coast of Asia Minor (260-277). Latacz proposes that the Trojan framework — 'key data' (265) about Troy's setting and characters that lie scattered

³ Latacz and Korfmann helped organize the lushly illustrated companion volume, *Troia — Traum und Wirklichkeit* (Stuttgart: K. Theiss, 2001), and contributed several of the fifty-five essays.

throughout the Homeric epics and elsewhere (fig. 21 and 206-214) — originated around 1200/1150 BCE, the time when the Mycenaean empire collapsed. Consider the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2.494-759 (219-249). The Catalogue — a list of 29 contingents, 1,186 ships, 100,000 men, and 178 geographical names — Latacz asserts, can now be dated to the thirteenth century on the basis of settlement patterns. Not only does the Catalogue resemble Linear B lists, but the locations of a quarter of its toponyms were unknown to the Greeks in historical times. Thirteenth-century Linear B tablets discovered in the 1990s at Thebes, however, group some of these toponyms beside names whose locations are known. The reason why the Catalogue begins with Thebes and focuses upon her harbor at Aulis, may be understood if Thebes was the central power of Ahhijawa. Thebes' claim may be supported by the Theban tablets and the Hittite 'Kadmos' tablet, the first known cuneiform letter in Hittite sent to the Great King by a king of Ahhijawa, a self-described descendant of 'Kadmos'. Furthermore, the Catalogue names no Greek town settled in coastal Asia Minor after 1100, except Miletos, a conspicuous absence considering Homer's traditional association with Ionia. Latacz believes that conscious 'suppression' by Homer of Dark Age migration is improbable, since the Catalogue's 'map of Achaia' accords with the geography of *Ahhijawa* revealed in thirteenth-century Hittite documents and with recent archaeology in the eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, Latacz cites Trevor Bryce's 1998 and 2002 books on the Hittites, which confirm not only that *Ahhijawa* raided parts of Asia Minor for slaves, but that hostility between the Hittite Great King and the Great King of Ahhijawa existed around 1220 BCE (282; see 123-127). Latacz ends with the hope that future research will verify the *Iliad*'s memory, however imperfect, of a large-scale Achaian campaign against *Wilusa*.

The strengths of *Troy and Homer* far outweigh its defects. Latacz has created a seamless whole by weaving together brief, self-contained units, each identified by descriptive titles and linked by questions to be addressed in the following unit(s). Translations of Hittite and Homer are provided by Starke and Lattimore, respectively. Excellent notes (288-317) and bibliography (318-329) reveal the quantity and quality of up-to-date, largely Continental scholarship that Latacz is making accessible to an international audience (x). His figures help us visualize the material, although the untitled map (xviii-xix) offers too much detail and no explanation of 'Arzawan League'; and twice (36, 49) Latacz refers us to maps in Korfmann and Mannsperger's 1998 and 2003 *Guide to Troy*. Latacz has updated some material in his English version (e.g., 244, 311 n.60). Only in his Preface (ix-xi) and scattered notes (292 n.56, 295-97 n.121), however, does he mention the controversy that erupted over Korfmann's theories during the 2001-2002 exhibit. Latacz dismisses counter-arguments by Frank Kolb and other critics⁴ for having 'less than fully assimilated' the conclusions that Latacz tends to champion (xi).⁵ Some readers may question whether Latacz's 'provisional appraisal of the facts and theories now to hand' is as even-handed as it appears (x). Others may protest that Latacz underplays the dynamic flexibility and adaptability of oral poetry. But if his enthusiasm causes him to overuse words like 'proof', 'science' and 'definite confirmations', Latacz's *Troy and Homer* offers undergraduates, graduates, and professors a compelling synthesis that whets our desire to learn more.

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⁴ For the 'Kolbian' counter-arguments, see C. Ulf (ed.), *Der neue Streit um Troia: Eine Bilanz*, Munich, C.H. Beck, 2003; and more recently, F. Kolb, 'Troy VI: A Trading Center and Commercial City?', *AJA* 108 (2004), 577-613.

⁵ E.g., D.F. Easton, J.D. Hawkins, A.G. Sherratt and E.S. Sherratt, 'Troy in Recent Perspective', *Anatolian Studies* 52 (2002), 75-109; and more recently, P. Jablonka and C.B. Rose, 'Late Bronze Age Troy, A Response to Frank Kolb', *AJA* 108 (2004), 615-30.