



THE SIEGE OF TROY

MOMUN 2026
BACKGROUND GUIDE

The Siege of Troy:
Achaean War Assembly

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Committee Overview

For 10 years, the greatest army Greece has ever assembled has been stymied on the shores of Troy, unable to break through the mighty walls of Ilium and reclaim Helen.

What was first a quest for honour and glory has turned into a grueling slaughter fueled by the petty whims of the infinitely petty Gods. While mere pawns and toys for the divine, the Achaeans still fight on, fueled by rage, determination, and honour; they throw themselves without fear against the Trojan defenses.

But the will of man is not endless. 10 years of fighting has taken its toll, surrounded by enemies, strained by internal rivalries, and ever haunted by the will of higher powers, the Greek coalition is beginning to collapse. But hope remains, when the Achaean fleet first assembled, they were given an omen from the mighty Zeus himself, a red serpent that consumed 9 sparrows before being turned to stone, 9 years of grueling fighting before victory on the 10th.

The final year of the war is here, one way or another. The question is, will the Achaeans find glory and breach the Trojan defenses, or will the omens prove false as the Greek forces shatter upon the Trojan shield?

Sincerely,

Sese Smith

**Director, Monarch Park Model United Nations 2026
The Siege of Troy: Achaean War Assembly**

MOMUN 2026

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Director's Letter

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to MOMUN 2026. I am Sese Smith, and I'll be the crisis director and head of your committee. Before getting into details about the committee, I'd like to introduce myself a bit first. I'm a grade 11 IB student at Monarch Park CI, who has been doing mun for about 2 years now. I've attended 5 conferences and staffed for 3. I've always really enjoyed MUN and the chaos that comes with it, which has inspired me to direct this committee. The last conference I attended was Markmun, and the committee I was in was siege-based, which I found to be a lot of fun, so I decided to take my own spin on it with my own interests. I also want to just mention and thank Harvard MUN Canada for selecting this committee, and wish all of you delegates the best of luck.

The inspiration for this committee stems heavily from my love of Greek myth; they are admittedly often ridiculous and chaotic, but what would be better for a MUN conference? The Iliad tells the story of a great war between the Greeks and the Trojans (an ancient people who lived in modern-day Turkey). The myths tell of a chaotic conflict, with Godly meddling, rivalries, and conquest, which obviously means it's a great choice for mun. The details of the story are below, so don't let me delay you. I hope that you enjoy the committee and the stories that will unfold, and most importantly, don't forget to have fun!

Equity Statement

This committee acknowledges that topics discussed may involve potentially unethical or violent subject matter, given the topics and context of discussion. Due to this, there will be some flexibility regarding the discussion of topics that could be deemed unethical in the context of the committee. Delegates should refrain from discussing topics such as mass murder, torture, or other extreme violence when discussing potential adversaries or other characters within this committee.

MOMUN 2026 has a zero-tolerance policy for equity violations within or outside of the committee. We acknowledge that this committee may touch on controversial issues; however, we implore delegates to maintain a high degree of respect and decorum. As a reminder, instances of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, ableism, or any other form of discrimination will not be tolerated and may lead to disqualification from awards or removal from MOMUN 2026, depending on the severity.

We strongly encourage delegates to refrain from controversial topics, past and present. For clarity, please email or speak to any staff member of this committee. We kindly ask all delegates to approach sensitive issues with the utmost respect and understanding toward others. Moreover, a basic level of respect and order is expected when interacting with other delegates, pages, staff, faculty facilitators, and all MOMUN personnel who make this conference possible.

Glossary

Olympians

The council of the 12 major Gods

Achaearns (or Dannans, or Agrives)

The Alliance of Greek city-states that sailed to Troy, different names are used interchangeably

Xenia

An ancient Greek concept of mandated hospitality, the rules of guest friendship between traveller and host were protected by Zeus, as there were no hotels in ancient Greece, travellers had to rely on the generosity of those living in the area

The Myrmidons

A specialized and mythical force commanded by Achilles, they are known for their absolute loyalty and skill, and were famously described as being “ant people” transformed into legendary soldiers by Zeus

The Catalogue of Ships

A 6-page segment of the Iliad that outlines each of the 29 Achaean generals who sailed to Troy, as well as the size and origin of their regiments.

Committee Background

This committee is based on and heavily inspired by Homer's Iliad, which is not a story of the entire Trojan war, but rather the 10th and final year of conflict. With the entire war being thought to span from around 1194-1184 BCE. Delegates represent members of the loose alliance of Greek city-states known as the Achaeans, taking on the roles of legendary heroes, kings, generals, etc. They must make decisions on how to best resolve any issues and finally conquer the city of Troy, an ancient city located in modern-day Turkey, near the northwestern coast of Asia Minor. Context for how and why the war started is important. This is an inherently fantastical telling of the story, and will focus specifically on the events leading up to and occurring during the Iliad.

The Birth of Paris

The story begins with King Priam and his wife, Queen Hecuba, rulers of Illium (or Troy, the city has many names), and a dream in which the child she was carrying sets fire to the great city with a firebrand (a piece of burning wood used to start fires). When Hecuba spoke of her dream to her daughter Cassandra, Cassandra prophesied that the child was destined to bring about the fall of the windy city. Terrified by the implications, Cassandra advised that the child be killed to prevent such a calamity, but as is a theme in this tale, it was fated that she would not be believed, and so their Paris was born. It is thought that Paris was born around 1224 BC¹, as he was in his late twenties or early thirties during the events of the Trojan war (1194-1184BC). Paris was the younger of Priam's two sons, the elder brother being Hector.

¹ Wikimedia Foundation. (2026b, March 13). *Paris (mythology)*. Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_\(mythology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_(mythology))

The Apple of Discord

Many years later, moving away from Troy brings us to the palace of the Divine and Poseidon, God of the seas, and Zeus, God of the skies, and ruler of Olympus. These two Gods had a shared interest in one Thetis, a beautiful sea Nymph who had caught the affections of both Olympians. However, there was a prophecy that foretold that Thetis was destined to bear a son far stronger than his father. Hearing of this news, both Gods were terrified of siring such a power and quickly arranged for Thetis to be married to a mortal man. Said mortal happened to be Peleus, one of the Argonauts, the companions of the legendary Hercules. The wedding was a splendid occasion, attended by all the Gods and Goddesses except for Eris, the Goddess of discord and strife, who was not invited, because of, as her name suggests, her tendency to cause problems. Angered by being shunned and slighted, Eris went about causing as much strife as she possibly could, which led to her writing upon a golden apple, “for the fairest of them all”. This golden apple, which was subsequently thrown among the guests, single-handedly resulted in the eventual war upon which this committee is based. Attending the party were three Goddesses, who each thought the fruit was for her. Said Goddesses being Aphrodite, Goddess of love, Athena, Goddess of wisdom and war, and Hera, wife of almighty Zeus and Goddess of marriage and childbirth.

The Judgment of Paris

The events of the party led to a feud between the three Goddesses, who took their dispute to the King of Olympus, Zeus. \Zeus refused to mediate the matter, fearing the consequences and trouble it could cause him, and instead decided that the most handsome man on earth would put the issue to rest. And so Paris, now roughly 20 years of age, was called to settle the divine dispute, which unbeknownst to him would result in the sacking of his city. All 3 Goddesses went to Troy to ask Paris to decide who among them was the most beautiful and was the rightful recipient of the golden apple. Each Goddess also secretly offered him a gift: Athena promised him victory in all of his battles, Hera

offered to make him ruler of all of mankind, and Aphrodite offered him the most beautiful woman in the world. And so Aphrodite was awarded the apple. There was, naturally, however, a catch, in fact several catches, chief among them being the fact that Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, was married to Menelaus, king of Sparta. In addition, Paris immediately made enemies of the two Goddesses he had slighted by giving the apple to Aphrodite.

The Capture of Helen

And so Paris had to travel to Sparta. As per the rules of Xenia, Paris was accepted as a guest friend and invited to stay as long as he wished. Quickly after Paris's arrival, Menelaus had to depart to Crete for the funeral of his grandfather, leaving Helen and his household, instructing that Paris be treated well. Aphrodite, seizing the opportunity, instructed Eros (Greek God of love, aka Cupid) to shoot Helen with an arrow, causing her to fall in love with Paris, and so Paris absconded with Helen and a sizable amount of Menelaus's treasure back to Illium. Menelaus, enraged, in addition to his own want for vengeance, also knew that Paris had violated the rules of Xenia, which was punishable by Zeus. So the King of Sparta called upon his brother Agamemnon, King of Mycenae, and the richest and most powerful of the Greek Kings. He, with his brother, began amassing a force of all the Greek nations to take Helen back to Sparta. In order to get the allegiance and loyalty of the other Greek leaders, the brother called upon an oath made by the Kings before Helen's marriage. Before Helen and Menelaus married, Helen had many suitors, but her father Tyndareüs declared that before he decided who she would marry, all of her suitors would swear an oath to come to the aid of the man chosen if she was wronged. And so Menelaus and Agamemnon assembled their forces, and the Achaeans set sail for Troy.

The Sacrifice of Iphigenia

The Greek warriors gathered at Aulis, ready to set sail for Troy, but were met by contrary winds sent by the Goddess Artemis. So the Achaeans were trapped in Aulis, with dwindling supplies and shortening tempers, until in the end Agamemnon was forced to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia to assuage the anger of Artemis and allow the Greek forces to make the journey to Troy.

Current State of Affairs

The Greeks arrived on the shores of Troy, located on the west coast of Turkey, in the 12th century BCE. The Achaeans beached their boats and prepared for a long war, as the walls of Troy were built by Poseidon and Apollo, plus the Trojans were formidable warriors. The Iliad takes place in the 10th year of the war of attrition, specifically focusing on the internal rivalries within the Greek forces and the sacking of Troy. The Trojans and Achaeans have been trading victories over the course of the war; the Trojans would come close to burning the Greek boats and razing their camps before being pushed back, and vice versa.

Map of Troy

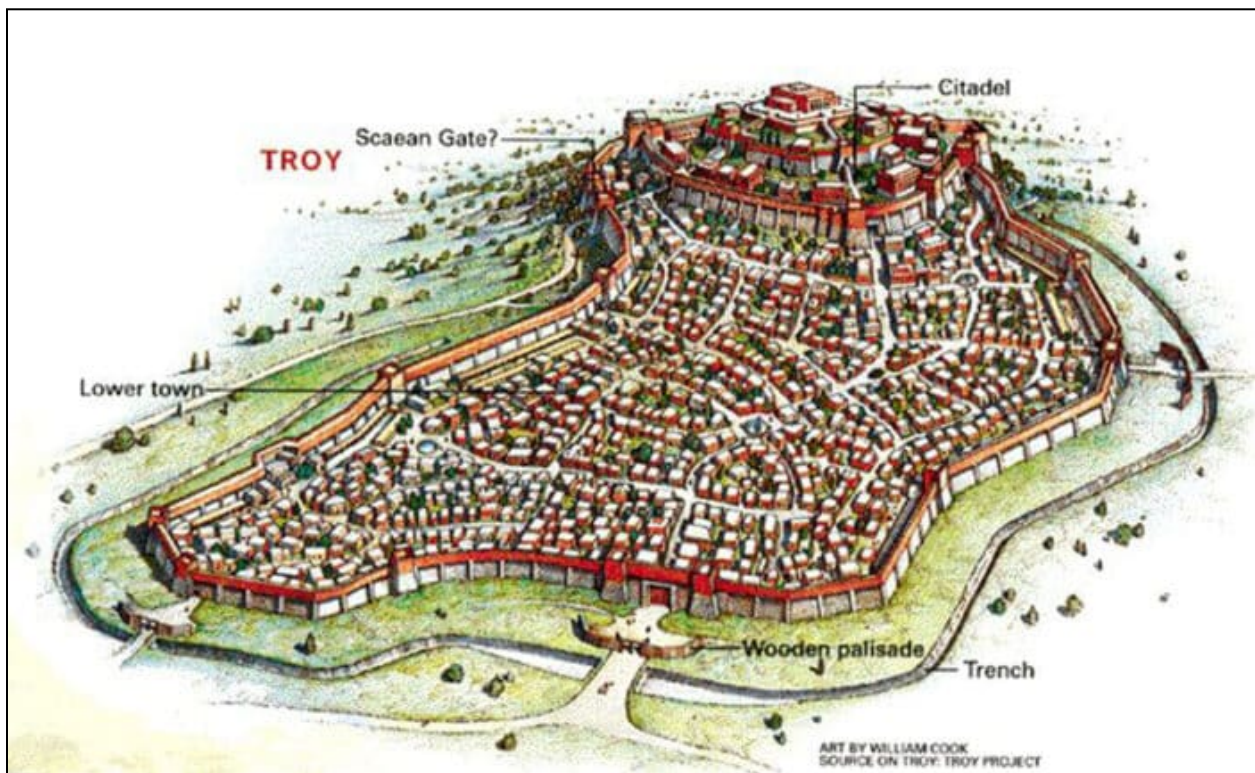


Figure 1: The astonishing city of Troy with 4000 years of history²

² Tours, Made in Turkey. "The Astonishing City of Troy With 4000 Years of History." Made in Turkey Tours, June 10, 2022. <https://madeinturkeytours.com/troy/>.

Siege of Troy: Achaean War Assembly

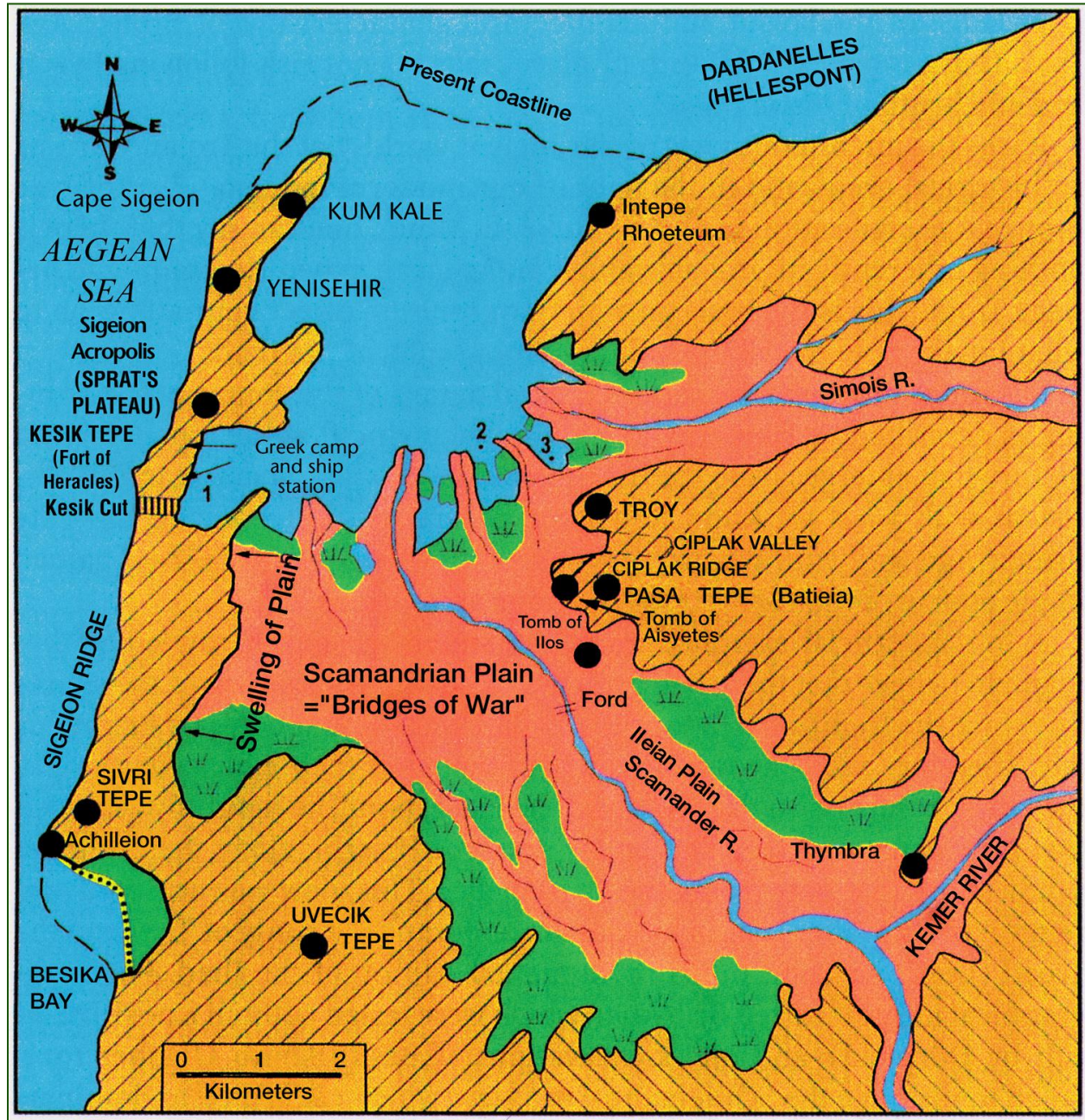


Figure 2: The Trojan Battlefield, BBC³

³ BBC. (2003, February 7). Science/Nature | Geologists investigate the Trojan battlefield. BBC News. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/2736059.stm>

Siege of Troy: Achaean War Assembly



Figure 3: Troy.⁴

⁴ Lumen Ancient History. "TROY," n.d. <https://lumenancient.weebly.com/troy.html>.

The Achaeans

The Greeks, as mentioned, are camped at the shores of Troy, where they have constructed walls, trenches, and other fortifications to protect their ships and camp. Major Greek states, including Salamis, Locris, Argos, Mycenae, Sparta, Pylos, and many more⁵. The Achaeans at the start of the war raided surrounding cities and Trojan allies for supplies, but their stockpiles have begun to run thin. Furthermore, the war of attrition has led to internal tension within the Achaean forces. The Greek kings came to the call of Menelaus expecting a short campaign full of glory and riches, and instead were met with a gruelling, drawn-out campaign. Mounting loss of life, failing supplies, and fragile loyalties have put a quickly ticking clock on the war, and time is not on the Achaeans side. Delegates must decide how best to navigate the threats plaguing their forces and fight for glory or fail in its pursuit.

The Trojans

The Trojans, led by King Priam, are entrenched within the formidable walls of Ilium, weathering the storm of the Achaean offensive, waiting for the Greeks to exhaust their resources and determination. Troy's greatest champion and military leader is Hector, the first son of Priam, and rival to the legendary Achilles. The Trojan command structure is much more unified under the rule of the royal family, in contrast to the competing generals and kings that make up the Greek war party. The Trojans are not alone in the fight either, and are bolstered by reinforcements from across Anatolia and the area beyond, including regiments from Lycia and neighbouring regions. This provides crucial extra forces and resources to the Trojan war effort, but the loyalty of the auxiliary forces is much less concrete

⁵ *The lucian of samosata project*. Achaean League [The Lucian of Samosata Project]. (n.d.). <https://lucianofsamosata.info/wiki/doku.php?id=2013%3Aachaeon-league>

than within the Greek alliance. The allegiance of Troy's allies hinges on the city's continued strength, meaning if it falters, the alliance is likely to collapse.⁶

⁶ Howells, C. (2025, August 9). *Who were Troy's allies during the Trojan War?* GreekReporter.com.
<https://greekreporter.com/2025/08/09/troy-assyrian-vassal-state-allies-trojan-war-troad-thrace-memnon/>

Topic A - *Divine Providence*

The war is not an exclusively mortal conflict; the Gods, divine all-powerful beings, take direct interest and side themselves with the Trojans or Achaeans. The Olympians take active action, taking sides and shaping the course of battles according to their own petty whims and grudges. For delegates, the will of the Gods cannot be ignored, divine favour can single-handedly turn the tide of battles, empower delegates with supernatural abilities, and much more. Prayers, sacrifices, and glory in battle are all ways of getting the attention of these Divine beings, which can be harnessed to further one's own goals significantly. However, the Gods are infinitely petty; get too close to one and invoke the wrath of the rest; in fact, successful connection with an Olympian may drive opposing Gods to bless the enemy in retaliation.

It was common for warriors of the time to dedicate kills, or important events, to individual Gods to earn their favour. Honour and glory are possibly the biggest factors when earning a god's blessings; a warrior's performance in battle, adherence to Godly commands, and honourable performance are essential.⁷ Additionally, the sacrificing of livestock, personal belongings, or other items of significance has been known to help sway Godly opinion. Delegates may contact Gods through individual crisis notes or public directives, depending on the scale of intervention being requested. To be successful, delegates must either complete a specific task or sacrifice something of meaning.

The state of Olympus, home of the Gods, often reflects what is going on on the field of battle, and sides have already been drawn. On the side of the Achaeans, major Olympians include Athena and Hera, both of whom have deep grudges against Paris and his people due to the fiasco with the Golden Apple. The Greeks are also aligned with Poseidon, God of the Sea, who has been known to support the

⁷ Ishtiaq, M. (n.d.). *Homer's conception of Honour and glory in the iliad*. GRANTHAALAYAH.
https://www.granthaalayahpublication.org/journals/granthaalayah/article/view/IJR.G19_A08_2570

Siege of Troy: Achaean War Assembly

Greek troops in times of great need. The Trojans are not without divine aid either; Apollo God of archery and medicine, protects the Trojan forces. With him is Aphrodite, protector of Paris, and Ares, the god of war, who has a long-lasting rivalry with Athena.

Apollo, one of the Gods most devoted to the Trojan cause, is currently posing a devastating threat to the Achaeans' chances of victory. He has loosed arrows of plague and death upon the Greek forces, leaving droves of soldiers dead or unable to fight. God did not act without reason, however, as Agamemnon, leader of the Achaeans, had wronged his favourite priest, Chryses. Agamenon had refused to ransom Chryseis, the priest's daughter, and sent away Phoebus's (another name for the sun God) favoured priest with scorn and insults.

Guiding Questions

1. How should delegates interact with the Olympians? Should they work to earn their favor or disregard them to avoid the risks?
2. Which Gods should delegates align with? How do the interests of the Achaeans align with those of higher powers?
3. In what ways will the delegates earn Divine favour? How should resources and time be spent to garner Godly support?
4. How should Apollo, an enemy God, be assuaged from the continued killings of your forces?
5. Should the Gods that support the enemy be combatted, if so, how, or should they be left alone to avoid further incurring their wrath?

Topic B - *Internal Order*

As mentioned, the long war has taken its toll upon the Achaean forces, dwindling supplies and mounting losses have led to fraying determination within the Achaean council. This has led to internal rivalries that threaten to unravel the Greek alliance and destroy it from the inside. Furthermore, in this war of attrition, the Trojan defence is much more easily maintained; if action is not taken, the Achaeans will quickly come divided and exhausted, making them easily pushed back.

One of the most dangerous consequences of the prolonged campaign is the erosion of Agamemnon's leadership; he is a symbol of the Achaeans' unity, and as his authority slips away, so does the unity of the Greek forces. The Danaans (one of the Achaeans' many names) are not unified under one crown like the Trojans, but are a loosely aligned culmination of independent states, where honour and pride trump all. Each leader retains loyalty for their own soldiers and nation first and foremost, making any slip in leadership exponentially worse.

The most infamous example of the Achaeans' instability is the feud between Agamemnon and Achilles. Agamemnon, angry about the push back and deaths that had resulted in his keeping of the captured Chryses, demanded that he be "compensated" before returning her, choosing Briseis as the partner of Achilles after the legendary warrior spoke out about the King's selfishness. Wounded by the insult, Achilles refused to fight, withdrawing to his ships and withholding his forces, the legendary warriors known as the Myrmidons.

Beyond clashes of pride and personality, material pressures intensify internal strain. Years of raiding Trojan allies for recourse has left the area devoid of resources, and Greek stockpiles are quickly vanishing. The upkeep of armaments, food, and medical supplies all require a constant inflow of resources, which have inexorably run dry. Unlike the Trojans, who need to only defend their

high-walled city, the Achaeans must employ constant pressure to prevent the Trojans from completely outpacing them in terms of resources. But this strategy is highly costly, and the evidence is already highly apparent.

Finally, the morale of the Greek forces is a critical matter. Soldiers came seeking swift victories and riches, and were instead met with 10 years of blood, disease, and attrition. Homesickness festers within the ranks, and whispers of abandoning the campaign grow louder; if even a few of the leaders fold, it could be the doom of the entire invasion.

Guiding Questions

1. Should Agamemnon be kept as the leader of the Achaean forces? How should his authority be reinforced? If not, who will lead the alliance?
2. Can Achilles be reconciled? Is it worth it to risk further conflict in the attempt?
3. How essential is Achilles and his Myrmidons to victory?
4. How should further resources be attained and allocated to support the troops?
5. How should morale be maintained to keep the soldiers fighting?

Topic C - *Taking Troy*

Fighting in ancient times was a matter of honour; it was common for warriors to take trophies such as their opponents' chariots or armour, and running from a fight was often a more significant disgrace than losing. The methods of fighting were extremely varied but fell generally into 2 main categories. Any individual soldier would be most likely fighting on foot with a spear for close combat, with a shield, backed by a sword if needed. Fighters would take individual duels, which would often lead to much training of gear between both sides, as victors of these fights would claim the other's armour if it was of higher quality. The second method of fighting was reserved for higher-ranking officers and involved charioteering. Two soldiers to a chariot, one piloting the horse team, the other with a spear, using the height and speed to their advantage to inflict as much damage as possible. Finally, there were some specialized fighters, chief among them being archers, who would help wound or pick off enemy fighters from a safer distance. This method of fighting was generally viewed as lesser, but could still be incredibly effective. The fighting itself would take place upon the Scamadredian plain (see above maps) between the Greek camp and the city.

It should be noted that 5, 500 lines of writing of the total 15, 000 in Homer's original work were purely dedicated to describing the battles outside the great walls of Illium. Within these sections 3 chief pillars make up both Achaean and Trojan war strategies, being leadership, control, and experience.⁸ Homeric war strategy revolved around controlling the chaos of battle and pushing fighters to greater heights through inspiring leadership.

Firstly, strong leadership is key to success in any battle; without the motivation and direction to continue fighting, soldiers will falter and fail. Homer describes leaders such as Agamemnon and Hector

⁸ *The lucian of samosata project*. Battle Tactics in Homer's Iliad [The Lucian of Samosata Project]. (n.d.). <https://lucianofsamosata.info/wiki/doku.php?id=2012%3Abattle-tactics-in-homers-iliad>

as bastions of strength amongst the troops. When motivation falters and fear begins to set in, it is leadership that reinforces unity amongst the fighters. Even lesser commanders are depicted as maintaining order within smaller regiments and ensuring the fire to fight stays lit.

Next is control; Homer constantly emphasizes the importance of rigour and organization within battles. This is especially efficient within the Achaean forces as the army is made up of regiments from a range of kingdoms, meaning that it can be broken down into separate parts, making management much more efficient. This is highlighted by the "Catalogue of Ships"⁹ The structure means that each force is easier to control and direct, and is likely much more efficient and motivated in battle, as the soldiers are being directed by the King or general, they owe their original allegiance.

Finally, Homer marks the importance of experience, order, strength, and courage are important, but an experienced veteran is likely to triumph against an inexperienced fighter. Furthermore, Homer speaks to the value of wisdom and patience, not only within battle but without. Elders within the armies provide knowledge and motivation to the fighters, which is key to the army's success.

The main issue the Achaeans have encountered is actually taking the walls of Troy; guerrilla warfare strategies have been used to great success on Trojan allies, but the city itself remains untouched. Despite successes on the open field through brute force and strategy, field victories do not translate into strategic success, as Troy's defences, which, as the legends state, were made by the Gods themselves, prevent any real progress. Key fortifications include massive stone walls that repel any attempts at scaling and are too thick to be felled by flame or rams. Limited gates act as choke points, allowing the Trojans to control the flow of battle and concentrate their forces with heightened efficiency. Their elevated defensive position gives Trojan archers and spear men an easily defensible position if they are

⁹ Wikimedia Foundation. (2026, January 12). *Catalogue of ships*. Wikipedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalogue_of_Ships

pushed back into the city. Additionally, internal supplies, civilian and ally support, mean that the Trojan position is easily maintained in a prolonged siege. By contrast, the Achaean position is extremely vulnerable; their defences hastily constructed from raided materials pale in comparison to the Trojan bastion, and if their walls fall even once, it could mean irreversible defeat if the Greek ships burn.

Delegates must decide how the Achaeans can overcome these obstacles and finally conquer the city. Potential weaknesses that could be exploited include their reliance on key leaders, as stated, the Trojan leadership structure is much more hierarchical, with a handful of key generals leading the entire force. While this may create more unity in contrast to the Achaean war band, it also means that losses of any of these key figures would result in great internal instability. Furthermore, the Trojans are highly reliant on their allies to match the Greeks' numbers, meaning that instability or loss of even one ally could mean the scales shifting towards an Achaean victory.

Guiding Questions

1. Considering the pillars of Homeric strategy, how are delegates going to decide on who should lead their forces?
2. What strategies should the alliance pursue: direct assault, siege tactics, guerrilla warfare, infiltration, or something else entirely?
3. How should the known weaknesses of the Trojan defences be exploited, and the strengths be worked around?
4. Can new weaknesses be created or discovered?
5. How should your forces be directed and managed to their greatest efficiency?

Character List

1. Menelaus
2. Odysseus
3. Great Ajax
4. Patroclus
5. Nestor
6. Diomedes
7. Little Ajax
8. Teucer
9. Idomeneus
10. Machaon
11. Phoenix
12. Antilochus
13. Calchas
14. Tlepolemus
15. Podalirius
16. Meriones
17. Polyxenus
18. Sthenelus

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