



#### ARCHAEOLOGY OF ARCHAEOLOGY AT TROY

Troy is one of the monumental sites of archaeology. The description of the mythical city by Homer and Virgil has inspired generations of artists, explorers and scholars. The spectacular discoveries made by Heinrich Schliemann in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century helped establishing archaeology as an academic discipline. Later excavations at the site, likewise, have generated scholarly and public attention, as well as controversies.

Since the summer of 2016, the University of Amsterdam is participating in the renewed excavations at Troy, which are directed by Professor Rüstem Aslan from Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey. The excavations aim to shed new light on old questions by adopting different perspectives and applying new techniques and methods. Because Troy has been a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site for 20 years, the Turkish Ministry of Culture has declared 2018 as the 'Year of Troy'. In this framework, the cooperation with Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Turkey will be intensified.

The Amsterdam team focuses on the *Archaeology of Archaeology at Troy*. Over a period of more than 150 years, many archaeologists have worked at Troy, with different aims, methods, and techniques. Study of the ways in which these researches have resulted in academic and popular interpretations of Troy will help to understand better the process of archaeology itself.

The Amsterdam team is headed by Dr. Gert Jan van Wijngaarden from the Amsterdam Centre of Ancient Studies and Archaeology at the University of Amsterdam. The team also includes:

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- Nina Magdelijns
- Ailbhe Turley - MA
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*Amsterdam students excavating  
in Dörpfeld fill at Troy in 2017*



## ARCHAEOLOGY OF ARCHAEOLOGY AT ANCIENT TROY: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The archaeological site at Hisarlık hill in Turkey, better known as ancient Troy, is of great cultural importance for many reasons. Most notably, it is the place where the epic stories by Homer and Virgil about Troy have been anchored in the material world. Scholarly and popular debates about the historicity of the Trojan war revolve around the site and its archaeological record. The cultural reception of the epic verses in antiquity and in modern history have provided additional layers of meaning, which have become inextricably attached to this *Lieu de Mémoires*.

The importance of Troy for the history of archaeology is not often addressed explicitly. Systematic excavations at the site began as early as 1863, at the time directed by Frank Calvert (Easton 2014). Since then, there have been a series of large excavation campaigns, each covering several field seasons and headed by enigmatic scholars, with their own academic and personal goals (Thumm-Doğrayan 2014; Cohen 2014; Jablonka 2014; Rose 2014). Most renowned are the excavations directed by Heinrich Schliemann (1871-1890). His personal endeavor to find Homeric Troy resulted in the discovery of Aegean prehistory and firmly established archaeology as an historical method. Later researches, by W. Dörpfeld (1893-1894), C.W. Blegen (1932-1938) and M. Korfmann (1989-2005), likewise, incorporated the latest archaeological approaches, methodologies and techniques. They also resulted in scholarly and public debates and controversies (Weber 2006). Because of the fame of Troy, these researches have had a wide ranging impact on the discipline of archaeology as a whole.

Archaeologists seek to understand human behavior in the past and changes through time without direct access to people (Trigger 1998). Archaeological interpretations depend highly on ethnographic and historical analogies and on a body of theories, many of which are imported from other disciplines, notably history, geology, biology and the social sciences (Bednarik 2003). In the more than 150 years since the beginnings of excavations at Troy, the discipline has experienced paradigm shifts and theoretical re-orientations, mostly revolving around issues such as positivism, subjectivity and the nature of historical knowledge (Trigger 1996). The long history and the prominence of the excavations at Troy make the site ideal to study changes in archaeological field practice and relate them to theoretical developments in the field.

### **Research aims and relevance**

The project aims to understand better the relations between research objectives, archaeological methods and interpretative narratives at Troy. In particular, we will focus on methods of collecting and documenting archaeological materials. Considerations on what is important to collect, what can be discarded and what needs to be published determine the archaeological data-set on which interpretations are based.

The main research question here is: what was considered important to collect, to document, to discard and to publish and how has this affected archaeological interpretations at Troy? Specific sub-questions are:

- Which explicit and implicit strategies and methods of collecting and documenting archaeological materials existed during the various excavation campaigns at Troy?
- Which archaeological materials were collected during the various excavation campaigns?



- Which archaeological materials were not collected, but discarded during the various excavation campaigns?
- Which archaeological materials were included in the publications on the excavations?

On a general level, this research is of relevance for the history of epistemology in archaeology, i.e. the ways in which results from archaeological excavations are used in archaeological narratives (Murray & Spriggs 2017). More specifically, this research will show the long-term development of field methods at ancient Troy and the relation to archaeological interpretations about the site. In order to be able to study these relations in detail, the focus will be on three interpretative issues that have been subject of scholarly and public debates: the assignment of specific archaeological contexts to the Trojan war (Hertel 2003; Henriksson 2012 ); the stratigraphy of Troy (Korfmann 2006, 2-8); the emphasis on Anatolian or Greek cultural influences at Troy (Weber 2006, 27-29).

### **Research plan and schedule**

The research will consist of three distinct parts: desk research of publications, notebooks and field work documentation (1), excavation of back-filled trenches and dumps (2), synthesis and publication (3). The project will run for two years from 2018 to 2020.

The desk research will concentrate on fieldwork publications and on the field documentation at the Korfmann study center in Çanakkale and at the project library in Troy, where copies of existing fieldwork documentation are available. If necessary, (digital) documentation available in Tübingen or Cincinnati will also be included in the research. This documentation will be consulted to identify research aims and goals of the excavations and, in particular, explicit methods of collecting and discarding in the field and during find processing. In addition, an overview will be achieved of the classes of archaeological materials that were collected and processed.

Field work at Troy will be conducted during the summers of 2018 and 2019. In cooperation with the Turkish excavation team headed by Professor Rüstem Aslan, we will excavate areas that have been backfilled after excavation. Usually such areas are referred to 'as fills': 'Dörpfeld fill', 'Blegen fill' etc., some of which have already been excavated in 2016 and 2017. In addition, we will investigate by excavation dump sites of the various excavations. The whereabouts of dump areas is more or less known (Hueber & Riorden 1994, 118), and will become more clear from the field documentation and small tests. This research will create an overview of the classes of material that were not collected.

The publications of the excavations at Troy include archaeological materials that have been used to interpret the archaeological materials at the site. These materials will be compared to the overviews of finds that have been collected and processed and that have been discarded. Of course existing studies on the methodology of excavation at Troy, will be taken into account as well (esp. Pavel 2011). The research will enable discussions on the development of practices of collecting and discarding at Troy and the effect they had on archaeological interpretations. The results will be presented in a scholarly article in a renowned academic journal that will be submitted in 2020.



### Research team and framework

This research is part of the participation of the Amsterdam Centre of Ancient Studies and Archaeology (ACASA) at the excavations at ancient Troy, which are headed by Professor Rüstem Aslan from Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey. This particular research project is carried out and coordinated by Dr Gert Jan van Wijngaarden from the University of Amsterdam. Participants in the research are RMA students in Heritage, Memory and Archaeology at the University of Amsterdam and 1MA students in Archaeology at ACASA. Students who have already participated in the excavations at Troy will also be part of the research team. The hope is that the project Archaeology of Archaeology at Troy can result in one or more related PhD projects.

In April 2018, Dr van Wijngaarden and one student plan to conduct desk research on field documentation at the Korfmann Study Center in Çanakkale and in the project's library near the excavations for one week. During the summers of 2018 and 2019, Dr van Wijngaarden will work with five students at the site for three weeks. In the fall of 2019 and the spring of 2020 the results of these researches will be analysed and published.

The research is embedded in the research school for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam. The project has an external advisory board consisting of:

Professor R. Aslan (Çanakkale University)  
Dr. D. Thumm (Tübingen University, Germany)  
Dr. F. Gerritsen (Netherlands Institute at Turkey, Istanbul, Turkey)  
Professor W. Hupperetz (UvA & VU)  
Professor C.B. Rose (University of Pennsylvania, USA)  
Mrs Filiz Songu (UvA)  
Professor V.V. Stissi (UvA)  
Professor J. Symonds (UvA)  
Dr. G. Uslu (UvA)

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