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Troy: from fable to history and back: Troy: from fable to history and back

Broekhoven, Gijs van

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Troy: from fable to history and back
How the representation of the past changed

Author:

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Author:

BA thesis: 1083VBTHE

Supervisor:

Leiden University, Faculty of Archaeology

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1. Introduction:

There are a lot of popular media pieces that heavily rely on history. This can be for multiple reasons: either because history can be useful as a setting, to retell an old myth or tale, or simply because it is popular with audiences. But regardless of the reason to use the past, if it is chosen as a setting choices need to be made about its portrayal.

The question of “How do we show the audience this person is a Viking?” can be answered in several ways: Either the Viking themselves, or another character can directly call them a Viking. This will most likely sound very forced, and is generally regarded as bad writing. Another option is to show the Viking doing some perceived “Viking things”. Based on the stereotype of Vikings acting violently, this can be rather difficult however, depending on how violent your media piece is allowed to be. Pillaging and burning the monastery of Lindisfarne might not be possible if your media piece is going to be a children’s video game.

A third option is to rely on some pre-existing idea or knowledge that the audience might already have, and using that. In the case of Vikings this used to be their helmets: just give them some horns and everyone will understand the angry men with axes are supposed to be Vikings. The problem with this sort of visual shorthand is that it might not be entirely true. The example of historical Viking helmets actually not having had horns has been thoroughly discussed in many different places. These statements are oftentimes countered with the rhetoric that “it’s only a movie/game/show”, and that accuracy does not matter in pieces meant solely for entertainment. I would argue that misinformation of any kind should inherently be avoided if at all possible, but there are other, more direct reasons to be weary of such easy dismissals.

Archaeology in particular should care about the accurate depiction of the past, since popular culture will be one of the main ways in which the public interacts with the past. If the way in which the past is represented never changes, one might come to wonder if anything new about our history is ever discovered. And if so, what the point of those discoveries is if the general audience has no use or need for them (Hall, 2004,).

Especially in the current age of the internet these discussions can balloon to enormous size, with all sorts of self-proclaimed ‘experts’ making various claims about the accuracy of certain movies, shows, or games. When I came across such discussions on accuracy I started to wonder if creators of movies or games noticed them or took them into account when creating a new movie. To use the example from earlier: Horns on Viking helmets are very rare in most media pieces that try to convey a sense of realism. This is a very small case, and easy to adapt and alter, so for this thesis I

decided to look for a broader story to research.

I chose the story of Troy, as it is arguably one of the most famous archaeological sites in history. Long thought to be a myth, it was (arguably) rediscovered in 1871 by Heinrich Schliemann (Riorden, 2000, p.55). After this initial discovery, Troy has had a very prominent presence in both the academic discourse, as well as in depictions in popular media. This popularity not only means there is a wealth of sources to choose from, it also means most people will have at least some vague preconceived notion about both the story, and the time it was set in.

This thesis will focus on two such media pieces in particular: “The Trojan Horse” (Ferroni, 1961) and “Troy: Fall of a City” (Wax & Farr, 2018). “The Trojan Horse” (Ferroni, 1961) is an Italian made movie depicting the last year of the Trojan war, with its main focus being the exploits of Aeneas in this time. “Troy: Fall of a City” (Wax & Farr, 2018) is a British-American miniseries depicting the Trojan war, and focusses mainly on the love affair between Helen and Paris. Both of these media pieces are primarily entertainment pieces, and not intended as a teaching tool. This allows for a clear view regarding the way popular culture depicts the past if historical accuracy is not the primary goal.

1.1 Research questions:

This has all lead to the following questions:

How did the depiction of the past in popular media, and particularly Ancient Greece and Troy, by popular culture change over the past decades?

Sub questions: - How did both pieces of media approach accuracy?

- Did any major archaeological discoveries done between the release of these two media pieces influence these depictions?

- What is the relationship between the academic world and pop-culture?

1.2 Theory:

To find satisfactory answers to these questions, several things first need to be defined. What does ‘accurate’ mean in the context of these media pieces for instance? And if these cases are to be held against ancient Troy, it must also be defined what ancient Troy looked like according to academics. Not only right now, but also what was academically accepted back in 1961 when “The Trojan Horse” came out.

Accuracy is a very broad concept, and can be approached in many different ways, this thesis will highlight a few relevant approaches here. Copplestone (2017) states there are three main ways of approaching accuracy: Reconstructionist, constructionist, and deconstructionist.

Reconstructionism tries to stay to the known facts as closely as possible. It revolves around the idea that history exists as something independent that can be removed from the ideology and ideas of those telling said history. Though it should be noted that the possibility of this absolute removal of opinion and worldview has been questioned. In practice a reconstructionist approach to accuracy in moviemaking would revolve around looking at artifacts found in the site of Troy VI and contemporary Greece, and trying to reconstruct them as closely as possible. This would mean arms, armour, buildings, etcetera should end up with clear real-world counterparts the props were modelled after (Coppstone, 2017, p.418).

Constructionism goes one step further and tries to mimic the past by also adding the use of theoretical frameworks to its attempts at recreating the past. Though this potentially allows some of the biases of those recreating the past to creep in, constructionists still believe this method to result in objective retellings of history. In regards to the creation of media, constructionists would not only look at physical artifacts found, but also at larger theories in the academic world regarding life in the past. This might then be used to either create props for which no real-world analogy exists, or to inform the writing of characters behaviour. Things such as religious ceremonies, the difference between men and women in a society, and other broader concepts which leave no direct archaeological trace can be constructed in such a way (Coppstone, 2017, p.418).

Deconstructionism seems to go the opposite way, laying its focus on those telling the story, rather than on the story being told (Coppstone, 2017, p.419). This approach leads to a reduction in authority of those telling the story, and often challenges ideas that are widely accepted as fact. Though an explicitly deconstructionist approach in mass media is rare, pieces challenging what is academically accepted do occur.

Where Coppstone gives insight in the thought process behind the creation of the past, Lowe (2012) tackles the depiction of the past and its possible effects more directly. Immediately Lowe mentions two options to depict ancient artifacts: as new, or as old. As an example: when showing a classical style statue, it can be pristine and painted, or unpainted and worn down. This dual divide is then further split up into four modes of representing the past: Reconstruction, Heritage, Destruction, and Fantasy (Lowe, 2012).

Reconstruction here is slightly different from Coppstone's (2012) use of the word. Lowe (2012) uses reconstruction to mean reconstructing the 'relics' as if they were new. Rather than using images familiar with people nowadays, reconstruction tries to emulate the way the artifact looked when it was made and used. In a movie this might be done by a well-kept temple complex, or an ancient city filled with people doing their daily business (Lowe, 2012, p.56).

Heritage shows ancient artifacts as they are more known to the viewer: in their current state (Lowe,

2012, p.59). This can sometimes be done through a more modern lens, showing the artifacts in a museum, or at an archaeological site. It can also be done more anachronistically, by showing the artefact in its current state, but in its original setting. Seeing an already ruined colosseum in classical Rome is a fine example of this. Although easily recognised as “incorrect”, this approach has the benefit that it makes it easy for people to recognize said artifact. Venus de Milo with its arms would be much harder to recognize for most people for instance.

Destruction, as the name might suggest, focusses mostly on the depiction of the shift between these two modes (Lowe, 2012, p.59). This is often done because it creates an interesting setting filled with action for the story to take place in. Seeing famous or beloved landmarks destroyed can call upon many emotions from the viewer, whilst offering an “explanation” for why things became the way they are nowadays. Whether or not these explanations are factually correct is not necessarily the point of using this method. Destruction can also be used in a smaller scale for a more comedic effect. Think of all the times movies set in ancient Egypt have some throwaway gag about the Sphynx losing her nose in some comedic way.

Whereas the previous methods can all be said in varying ways and degrees to be authentic to what is academically believed to be accurate, fantasy explicitly does not attempt this. Above all others, Fantasy is more focussed on the *feel* of things (Lowe, 2012, p.72). If the story has a Greco-Roman setting there might be pillars or amphoras strewn about for instance. Fantasy can use both the modern and the original form of these relics. Here it again depends more on what emotional reaction the creators of the media wish to invoke, than on what would actually be present. There are some limitations to this choice though, more than in some of the other methods. Recreating artifacts from the classical period in a pristine way always runs the risk of being perceived as neoclassical. Whilst this is a risk for all other styles already – though mostly for reconstruction – it is most apparent in fantasy. The so called folly is a famous example of simply wanting to come across as classically inspired, rather than wanting to show any actual academic representation.

To make these distinctions in the way the media depicts the past, it is also important to know what the academic consensus is on what is being depicted. Troy is a complicated archaeological site, with a complex history regarding its excavation. The site and its excavation was initially made famous by Heinrich Schliemann and Frank Calvert’s excavation which started in 1871. It is located in Hisarlik, in present day Turkey. Troy has been destroyed and rebuilt repeatedly, leading to multiple distinct archaeological layers (Ottaway, 1991, p.57).

In his haste to find traces of Troy and the supposed treasures within, Schliemann’s excavations destroyed large portions of the archaeological traces that were present originally. This destruction has hindered archaeological work to this day. After these destructive excavations the

site management changed to archaeologists, who took a more scientific approach. Troy VI was determined to be the most likely layer to be corresponding to the Troy from the myths (Maurer, 2009).

The city of Troy VI dates from roughly 1750 BC to 1300BC. It consisted of multiple sections, with walls separating these. The inner city, or citadel, was divided into a series of rising terraces. Unfortunately, all but the outermost terrace have been levelled off in the past to make place for the construction of a temple of Athena. This means there can only be speculation regarding the look and layout of any palaces, temples, or other buildings standing at the heart of the city. Those foundations that were found are of multistorey buildings, with varying designs (Easton et al., 2002).

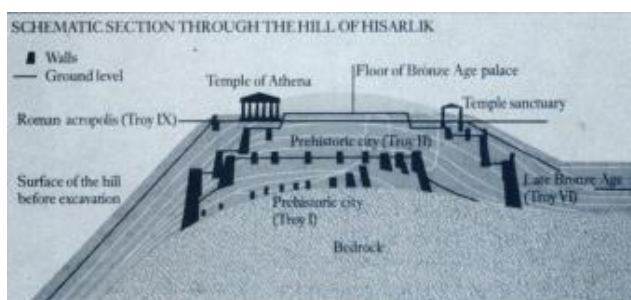


Figure 1 Successive layers of Troy. Here the differing layers are clearly shown in relation to the natural hillsides. (Ottaway, 1991, p.57)

The wall surrounding this citadel was five meters thick, vertical on the inside, and under a light angle on the outside. They are thought to have reached a height of 12.5 meters, and were made from smooth, close fitting stones to make scaling it more difficult. Several large rectangular watchtowers overlooked the wall and the five gates of the citadel, aiding the defence (Easton et al., 2002, p. 90).

Although there had long been speculations about a lower city, archaeological evidence for it was only found in the late 1980s. Directly outside of these defensive walls was a densely populated area containing stone pavements, house foundations, and several indications of agriculture and crafts such as grain threshing floors and murex shells associated with the manufacture of purple dye (Easton et al., 2002, p. 87).

Further from the walls of the citadel archaeological traces become more scarce. This can be explained partially by erosion carrying artefacts down the slope, and partially to later inhabitants repurposing building materials. Korfmann theorizes that this lower city was also protected by another wall smaller in size. Here too, the traces have unfortunately been interrupted by later construction works.

Besides these walls there have also been traces of two sets of ditches. The dating is not absolutely certain, but they seem likely to be successive, with the inner ditch being older. Both were situated at a natural drop in the terrain, giving the defenders an extra height advantage. These ditches were three to four metres wide, two metres deep on the outside, and three to four metres high on the inside. The crossings of the ditches were additionally guarded with palisades and gates dug deep into the bedrock.

1.3 Methodology:

The first part of this thesis will consist of autoethnographic research of both media pieces. Before doing any extensive research into the topics of this thesis I watch both pieces of media. This is done to be as unbiased as possible. Whilst I recognize I have more knowledge of ancient Greece than the average audience member, this first viewing is done mostly through the lens of someone with an interest in, – and therefore more knowledge of – history. This blind viewing is done in order to get as close as possible to the experience of most viewers.

Following this will be an extensive literary analysis in multiple parts. The first part will focus on accuracy and different approaches to accuracy that are both academically accepted and applicable to the two case studies of this thesis. Next will be an analysis of what is the current academic consensus on the archaeological side of the case studies. This means not only what the ancient city of Troy looked like, but also includes its culture, contemporary Greek culture, and what warfare would have been like in this period. The last part of this analysis focusses on what the academic consensus on these subjects was before 1961. In the past six decades a lot of archaeological research has been done, which can of course contribute to differences in depictions of the past. Not only new discoveries, but shifts in thinking can greatly influence the way in which we imagine and depict the past.

Next is a detailed comparative study. Both media pieces are compared to the academic consensus of their respective times to see how closely they follow it. These comparisons are used to determine the way in which both media pieces approach accuracy. Once this is done both pieces can be compared to each other, to analyse how these different approaches influence the way in which the past is depicted.

Using discourse analysis I intend to look at the intentions of the creators regarding the mythical and historical sides of the story of Troy, and at the way both media pieces were received by the public. These analysis' should provide a solid basis for insights between archaeologists and the media.

2.The cases

2.1.1 The Trojan horse:

“The Trojan Horse” is an Italian peplum – also known as sword and sandal – film taking place in the last years of the Trojan war (Ferroni, 1961). Most of the movie was shot in Yugoslavia. It was co-produced by Europa Cinematografica, Compagnie Industrielle Commerciale Cinematographique, Les Films Modernes, and Lovcen Film. It was directed by Giorgio Ferroni, and among others stars Steve Reeves (as Aeneas) and John Drew Barrymore (as Odysseus).

Eschewing the stories original Greek centric story, this movie chooses to put its focus mainly on Aeneas. In part, this could be explained by Reeves’ fame, or partly because Aeneas is sometimes credited as one of the mythological founders of Rome, making him a more popular character for an Italian made film.

This willingness to alter the story raises questions about the creators view on authenticity. The fact that this movie has been restored and as part of "Storia Segreta del Cinema Italiano: Italian Kings of the Bs" at the Venice International Film Festival of 2004 shows that it is still seen as holding some sort of relevance today (La Repubblica, 2004). Especially this “B” nature of the movie is of interest to me, as it implies lower quality. This thesis will take special interest in the effects of this nature on the accuracy of this movie, both in regards of the intentions of the creators and the perception of the audience.

2.1.2 Troy: Fall of a City

“Troy: fall of a city” is a miniseries co-produced between the BBC and Netflix (Wax & Farr, 2018). BBC One aired the first episode on 17 February 2018 in the United Kingdom, whilst Netflix released the first episode internationally on their streaming platform on the same day. Most of the series was filmed in South Africa near Cape Town, whilst the story largely takes place in and around Troy (BBC 2017).

Although centred around the Trojan war, it is presented as more of a reimagination, rather than as a retelling. This means the story deliberately takes some liberties regarding the stories of both the Iliad and the Odyssey. Some of these choices led to public outrage even before the series was aired, since several of the characters were people of colour. Most notable among these where Achilles and Zeus, played by David Gyasi and Hakeem Kae-Kazim respectively (BBC, 2017)

However liberal they might have been regarding the story aspects, the production companies actually claim they paid great attention to the historical accuracy in what they depicted (BBC, 2017). For instance, the arms and armour shown are a ‘mix between iron age and bronze age’.

This is done because Homers own version of the stories mixes customs and items from both Homers contemporary time, and the time of the stories setting (BBC, 2017). These type of considerations show the series was made with at least more than a baseline consideration regarding historical accuracy, and it will be interesting to see how and why certain choices were made.

2.2: Comparing the cases:

Both of these media pieces are inspired by the story of the Trojan war, but each approaches it in its own way. For the sake of clarity and readability this thesis will be focussing on three major factors in these media pieces: the intangible and tangible aspects shown, and the approach to accuracy this results in.

2.2.1: The intangible:

It might be difficult to address something as broad as “interpersonal relationships” in two pieces of media, and comparing them to both each other, and the historical record. After all: beliefs, words, and opinions don’t leave any direct archaeological record. We can, however, combine written sources, images, and artifacts to form theories.

One of the main issues talked about nowadays would be Achilles’ sexuality, specifically in regards to Patroclus. With the shifting acceptance of LGBTQ+ people, a lot of people have talked about medias’ depiction of Achilles and Patroclus. A good example of this is “The Song of Achilles”, a book written from the point of view of Patroclus, focussing on the relationship between him and Achilles.

“The Trojan Horse” (Ferroni, 1961) mostly avoids this entire subject, since the movie starts after Achilles has killed Hector to avenge Hectors’ killing of Patroclus. Whilst Achilles shows a deep grief over this loss, Patroclus is only ever referred to as a “friend” of Achilles. Nowhere is it insinuated to be more than a close friendship though, Aeneas even states to Achilles he is “Hectors friend, as you were his [Patroclus] friend.” (Ferroni, 1961).

In “Troy: Fall of a City” (Wax & Farr, 2018) this relationship is rather complex. Achilles and Patroclus are shown to be in a relationship together, but in accordance with the myth, Achilles takes a female war bride Briseis. This leads to a polyamorous relationship, where gender does not seem to be an issue.

It is important to state that views on sexuality, gender, etcetera can shift from culture to culture, both in regards to space as well as time. Therefore stating Achilles was bisexual is placing a modern label on a character which lived and was written down in a society which had no notion of these terms. This means that calling Patroclus a close friend is not necessarily incorrect, even if it seems rather an understatement to a modern audience.

The part of Achilles in the Trojan story might be personal, but the story of the war itself is much larger. At first this story might seem that of the Trojans versus the Greeks, two different cultures separated by a vast stretch of water, situated across a cultural divide that runs centuries back by now (Baier 2017). Rose (1998) states this divide and its depiction have changed multiple times through the ages, and here too, do the media pieces differ.

In “The Trojan Horse” there are far fewer remarks about differences between the Greeks and the Trojans. The characters mostly act and speak as if they are two similar groups stuck on opposite sides of a conflict. This is also exemplified outside of dialogue, for instance: The Trojans make offerings to Pallas Athena, a goddess the Greeks also make dedications to later on (Ferroni, 1961).

In contrast: “Troy: Fall of a City” repeatedly has both Greek and Trojan characters speak of “our race” and “their race”, implying a fundamental difference between the two people groups. Adding to that sentiment by frequently having the Trojans and Helen lament the sexism of the Greeks, and how equality is so much better for everyone (Wax & Farr, 2018).

2.2.2: The tangible:

Whereas the previous comparison points left little to no direct archaeological traces, both media pieces show many things that (could) have been preserved physically. This might make it seem obvious that these things are almost identical across both pieces then. However: considerations such as material availability, academic knowledge, or storytelling might lead to very different choices being made in these regards.

One of the first things one would see when approaching the ancient city of Troy would have been its walls.

“The Trojan Horse” has its Trojan walls made from large unadorned sandstone blocks, the walls and towers widening slightly at the bottom. The gate is set back slightly so defenders would be able to fire upon attacks from both sides, and towers seem to be placed along the wall with similar

thinking. Later scenes shot from atop the wall show the battlements are far too small to be of any defensive use however. The parapet is somewhere between ankle- and knee-high, whilst the large, square merlons go up to roughly shoulder high (Ferroni, 1961).

These walls seem to only circle a small group of buildings, such as the royal palace, a temple, and a handful of small streets. Apart from the wall most buildings seem to be made of wood, but they are painted to appear made of stone. In this, “The Trojan Horse” seems to follow what was known academically at the time as close as its budget would allow (Easton et al., 2002).

In “Troy: Fall of a City” the walls seem significantly longer, making the city of Troy appear larger as a result. Here the walls also seem to be made from sandstone-esque material, but instead of massive blocks, the stones appear roughly a quarter the size of those in “The Trojan Horse” (Wax & Farr, 2018).

Atop this broad foundation is a straight vertical wall which appears smoothed out with some form of plastering. Here too the battlements are too low to form any real cover from missile fire from the ground, even completely skipping the use of merlons above the gatehouse. Interestingly, these merlons are rounded points, a style mostly used in the near-east and Africa.

There are also multiple layers of wall inside the city, with an outer wall, a wall midway through the city, and a final wall around the palace at the top of the hill upon which Troy is built. All of these walls look similar, and they appear to be copied through the use of CGI.

Another iconic part of the Trojan mythology is the arms and armour, with Odysseus wearing an – at that time outdated – “boar tusk helmet”, and other heroes like Achilles wearing armour tailor made for them by the gods themselves.

In “The Trojan Horse” almost all armour sets seem to be made out of some synthetic fibre, thickened and dyed glossy so as to appear metallic (see figure 1). Despite the fact that these costumes seem made with materials often used in cheap carnival costumes nowadays, they seem to be designed with great care. The armour of both the Greeks and the Trojans share a similar lay-out, being mostly distinguishable by the different colours of their armour. These colour differences are exacerbated by the use of different colours for the fabric part of each outfit: the sleeves, the clothes worn underneath their armour, and most importantly their capes (Ferroni, 1961).

An unfortunate side effect of these differing colours is that the Greeks use mostly golden-yellow coloured armour, and the Trojans mostly use silvery-white. This results in their “metal” appearing to be made out of iron instead of bronze.

It is interesting to note however, that at a certain point the Trojans call upon their allies, the Frigians, to send an army. The soldiers of this army all look distinctly different from both the Trojans and the Greeks, wearing lighter armour, and carrying shields and helmets of a very different shape.

The exception to these masses of similarly clad men are the officers and named characters. The armour of officers and named characters are all slightly more decorated than that of the average soldier in their respective armies, making them seem richer or more important to the viewer. Even more extreme than these differences in armour is the difference in helmets. Each of the Greek and Trojan heroes have a unique helmet, often with an enormous crest of some sort. Most of these crests seem based upon different paintings on Greek pottery, rather than on any real helmets found in the archaeological record. Although they seem cumbersome to their wearers, they aid greatly in both spotting and recognizing the different characters in the more frantic and busy fight- or chase scenes.



Figure 2 Aeneas in full armour (IMDB

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056042/mediaviewer/rm3383341825?ref_=ttmi_mi_all_sf_6



Figure 3 King Menelaus in armour. (IMDB

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5103758/mediaviewer/rm3326233344?ref_=ttmi_mi_all_pbl_40

Where “The Trojan Horse” tries to emulate a metal look, of some kind, “Troy: Fall of a City” prefers leather and fabric (see figure 2). Here too it seems the characters more important to the story get more distinctive sets of armour. The Greek kings wear a variety of chest plates with varying straps and belts, combined with leather pieces around the shoulders and hips (see Figure 1). It is difficult to make out what type of material everything is supposed to be, since most of it is dyed in muted colours. The important characters on the Trojan side seem to favour a kind of lamellar or scale armour, where the scales cover most of the chest, and the rest of the body is protected by either leather, fabric, or nothing (Wax & Farr, 2018).

The helmets are another place where “Troy: Fall of a City” takes a distinctly different path compared to “The Trojan Horse”. Here, the important characters are far more similar. The Greek kings all seem to have the exact same helmet: they leave the face almost completely free, and can only be distinguished by the crest on top of the helmet. The Trojans use a different, more conical helmet style, but theirs seem completely identical, even in plumage on top. Luckily for the viewer these helmets also leave the face mostly bare, if they are even worn at all. Trojan king Priam is the exception to the rule here. He has a more decorated helmet of roughly the same conical type as his sons, but wears a chest plate like the Greeks, instead having a scale skirt and shoulder pads. Interestingly, most of the armour sets in “Troy: Fall of a City” seem purely decorative, since there are very few instances of armour actually stopping the weapon of an opponent.

Both of these media pieces appear to base their arms and armour on those known from several centuries later. This can be done as a nod to the stories origin, since Homer himself lived several centuries after this story took place.

2.2.3: Approach to accuracy:

Looking at the depictions of both the intangible and the tangible the approach to accuracy of each media piece becomes visible. Neither one of the pieces fit strictly in any one of the categories mentioned earlier, but both seem to have a divide between the story told and the objects shown.

“The Trojan Horse” takes what was known about historical Troy, and tries to build upon that in a way that balances what academics expected to find, and the needs of the movie. In this they follow Copplestone’s (2017) constructionist approach. The way “The Trojan Horse” depicts the city of Troy itself is indicative of this. Troy’s wall is shown as large and imposing, but there is only one wall around a tightly clustered city centre. Whilst the existence of an outer city with corresponding

ring wall has been theorised since Troy's first discovery, it had not been proven decisively in 1961 (Easton et al., 2002).

A notable addition from outside of the archaeological record would be the Greek camp. This setting features extensively in multiple scenes, both as a place of dialog where the Greek generals discuss plans, or where king Priam asks for the body of his son back, and as a place of action. Firstly there are funeral games for Patroclus, where Aeneas fights Ajax in multiple competitions of strength, and later when the Trojans storm the Greek camp (Ferroni, 1961). Combining what can be seen in these scenes the Greek camp comes across as a large, but organised place. The tents are in neat rows, areas for e.g. horses are neatly fenced off, the entire camp is protected by first a moat with drawbridge, and then a wooden palisade wall with towers near the gates. There is no archaeological proof for any of these things in the area around Troy, but militarily speaking it would make sense for a besieging army to have fortified their camp in ten years' time.

What stands apart most in "The Trojan Horse" in regards to accuracy of the physical props are the arms and armour. Some of the weapons or armour suits being white/silver would mean they were made of iron – tin seems unlikely given its weak physical properties – whilst the Trojan war is placed in the late bronze age. Whilst this could be ascribed to budgetary reasons – providing new bronze swords for a literal army of extras is expensive after all – it could also be due to Homeric influences. Not only the material, but also the style of weapons and armour used are anachronistic to the time the Trojan war is placed. All of these would be more at home in Homers time (Baier, 2017).

This influence of the heroic poems is seen even more in the characters' actions. The funeral games mentioned earlier feature a competition of strength between two characters where each of the participants is capable of holding back two horses. These feats of superhuman physical prowess seem to be included both to show off the actors physique, and to emphasize to the public that this movie is depicting a myth with larger than life characters.

Contrasting this more grounded approach is "Troy: Fall of a City". Whilst certain parts do appear based upon current academic consensus regarding ancient Troy, most of it seems to be focussed on appearing old and Greek to the audience. In this they closely follow what Lowe (2012) classifies as Fantasy. The city of Troy covers most of the hilltop it is built upon, and there are multiple layers of inner walling (Wax & Farr, 2018). This exterior grandeur is then countered by what is inside the city: the houses are small and cramped, none of the roads are paved, and the palace looks dark and shadowy, despite what we know of Troy VI (Easton et al., 2002, p.).

Following this same pattern are the clothes characters wear in "Troy: Fall of a City". Background and side characters mostly wear chitons with varying colours and decorative flourishes

depending on wealth or status. Contrasting this are the main characters, where historical accuracy seems of less import. Helen wears distinctly modern dresses in several scenes, especially when her beauty is meant to be the main focus. This use of costuming to help tell the story can also be observed in the turban king Priam sometimes wears, it helps show his – and thus Troy’s – otherness from the Greeks (Rose, 1998). The basis of the props is historical, but the story takes precedent. This leads to depictions that are meant solely for a modern audience, for which no archaeological evidence exists.

When looking at the depiction of the Greeks living quarters this difference between the media pieces in approach to accuracy becomes even more clear. Where “The Trojan Horse” has a complete Greek camp built and shown, “Troy: Fall of a City” shows no such thing. There are a few tents of several kings and generals, but nothing more regarding defences, food storage, etc. for the Greek army (Wax & Farr, 2018). Most of the tents shown are large and a clean white. This roomy and bright inside makes filming inside easier, but nothing shown implies this is a besieging army that has been stationed here for ten years. Here too, the creators seem more interested in emphasising these people are living in “the past”, as opposed to showing what such a past would realistically have looked like.

Where this Fantasy approach to accuracy comes through most is in the arms and armour of the named characters. As stated earlier most named characters wear some combination of leather armour with an assortment of straps and other seemingly decorative flourishes. Where the armour sets in “The Trojan Horse” were anachronistic, there seems to be no archaeological basis for those in “Troy: Fall of a City”. The leather and muted colours seem used to convey a feeling of these characters living in older, less sophisticated times.

3: Archaeology and media, how do we reach and influence the public?:

What has been written in this thesis so far might be interesting to some, and it could even be considered a more academically inclined script of one of the YouTube videos mentioned in the introduction. But in the coming chapter, this thesis hopes to argue why its import goes beyond “interesting”, because I would argue that popular culture and mass media are both important parts of our modern-day society, and an excellent opportunity for public outreach from archaeologists.

It is undeniable that Schliemann did unrepairable damage to the site of Troy, forever losing a vast amount of knowledge (Riorden, 2000). Yet the man had an enormous influence on the public view of archaeology. From the very start Schliemann created spectacle around his search for Troy (Maurer, 2009). Whilst this spectacle got him into trouble sometimes, it also created a lot of sensation and interest in his exploits amongst the broader public.

Where archaeology used to be something far away and only for the wealthy, Schliemann styled some of his works to the *Baedeker* travel books from the time. These books helped make traveling more approachable for the middle class, and put a heavy focus on collecting and presenting large volumes of data to its readers. This lent a sort of encyclopaedic style to them, giving an air of authority, but also shirking a more complex interpretation of the facts presented (Maurer, 2009). This Coplestone (2017) reconstructionist approach might be passable for a simple travel guide, and whilst Schliemann styled his works the same way, he used a far different approach to history. Most of Schliemann’s works drew heavily from the Homeric classics, trying to make direct connections as often as possible, whether justified or not (Ottaway, 1991, p.57).

For those who could not afford to travel to the places Schliemann appointed as ancient Homeric sites, Schliemann, ever the businessman, had another solution: the Panorama. These were paintings made on gigantic circular canvasses, set in rotunda-shaped structures, in which the viewer stood upon a raised platform. This allowed for a uninterrupted, 360 degree view of some amazing faraway site, all for a small entrance fee of course (Maurer, 2009).

Another popular tool of Schliemann was photography, perhaps most famously employed in the picture of Sophia Schliemann, wearing part of what he called “Priam’s Treasure” (Maurer, 2009). This visualisation helped grow the great public interest in his works. It invokes feelings of a fashion magazine, pulling the ancient world into modern times.

Although many archaeologists disapproved of Schliemann’s methods, both in regards to excavation, and presentation, it cannot be disregarded what an incredible influence he has had in regards to public outreach. Schliemann helped call into being a broad interest in both the Homeric past, as well as the broader field of archaeology among the wider public. If these viewpoints were created by using mass media from the time, why not try that same thing again, nowadays?

Of course I am not arguing to bring back the panorama paintings, but popular media should be considered more as a tool for archaeologists to reach out. It is a common complaint that archaeologists lose interest in or actively frown upon what is popular. In my opinion this leaves great opportunities for public outreach by the wayside. Surveys have shown that a growing number of people have an interest in archaeology and the past, but this does not necessarily show in practical numbers (Kajda et al., 2018). Most people who actively participate in archaeological public outreach activities are middle aged men of average or higher income. This makes sense, since they have a higher chance of having both the money and time to spend on such things. But we as an academic field cannot complain about our limited audience scope whilst also shirking the broadest avenue of communication available.

The activities described by Kajda et al. (2018) are often outside, take up an entire day or more, and are heavily dependent on the people interested to get to location themselves. Depending on the project getting there might require a car for lack of public transport. All of these are barriers to entry for people interested. In contrast to this is mass media: streaming services make it so you can watch a movie or series as long as you have a smartphone and an internet connection. Having the past portrayed accurately in mass media would therefore reach a far greater number of people.

I have heard from many people “just be quiet and enjoy the movie, accuracy does not matter, this is not a documentary”, but that is not entirely true. Not only is mass media one of the most common sources of ‘information’ about the past a lot of people have, it can also create or strengthen (subconscious) biases, both of the creator of the media piece, and of the audience (Rose, 1998). As stated before, Lowe (2012) mentions the risk of appearing neoclassical when depicting ancient architecture in a ‘new’ state. Depicting ancient ruins as having always been ruined has its own drawbacks however. It creates the illusion that things have simply always been this way. And if a ruin has been standing in its current (ruined) state for over two millennia, why bother spending time and money conserving it? It has been standing unaltered for so long after all, why would it topple now?

4: Archaeologists and media, should we study or critique popular culture?:

In the previous chapter this thesis discussed why it might be interesting for archaeologists to view mass media as a tool for outreach, but achieving this is not a simple or straightforward task. Movies, shows, games, etcetera, are all expensive to produce, and sometimes choices need to be made because of this (Hall, 2004). A simple example of this would be the costumes worn by the cast of “The Trojan Horse” (Ferroni, 1961). If this movie were made with an infinite budget it would not be surprising to see all cast members in solid metal armour. But beyond that, I am unsure of what other changes could occur that a larger budget would make possible, and if they would have made a significant impact in the accuracy and style of the movie.

So besides looking at the direct accuracy of costumes and set design, archaeologists should also look at the broader scope of what the media piece is propagating. Troy is an excellent example of the same story being used for many different purposes. The Homeric Iliad is not even about the war necessarily, the war is the setting of a story about rage and grief. Most stories told in that time still treated the Trojans and “Greeks” as very similar people, worshipping the same gods, speaking the same languages, but all coming from a wide variety of regions. After the Greco-Persian wars this shifted to a more differentiated way of thinking, where the Trojans and the Greeks were two very different sides (Rose, 1998). Later still, Virgil wrote the Aeneid to connect Troy to Rome. The Aeneid is often not seen as part of the original cycle, since it was written in Latin instead of Greek, written so much later, and essentially as a commission to make the emperor look better. All of these external influences caused their own changes and alterations of the story.

It is interesting to note that of all myths available for co-opting, the Trojan war was chosen so often. Even today the story is used in debates regarding Europeanness, when discussing where Turkey lies on the Europe – Asia divide in the world. Both sides of the discussion using stories of the Trojan war to support their argument makes it stranger still (Rose, 1998). No matter one’s opinion on specific subjects, it is important for academics to speak up when their field of study is being used in political debates. Archaeology especially has a past of being used for propaganda purposes, something a lot of archaeologists are keenly aware of, and try to avoid in their own works.

However, never looking beyond one’s own island of expertise risks both isolation and being overlooked. We sometimes study reports, papers, and essays of older excavations and theories no longer academically accepted, not because we believe them to be truthful, but because we want to understand the frame of reference that was broadly accepted at the time. This studying of older paradigms to better understand older academic texts and methods is translatable to mass media in my opinion. By looking at popular media, we can gauge both the interest and knowledge of the past by the general public. By studying both modern and older works we can track changes and adjust

where necessary. Though a sample size of two media pieces is small, these already showed significant changes in the portrayal of the past.

5:Conclusion:

After noticing debates on the historical accuracy of media becoming more frequent and more in-depth, I started wondering if and how these discussions influence the creation of such media pieces. This was investigated using the following question: How did the depiction of the past in popular media, and particularly Ancient Greece and Troy, by popular culture change over the past decades?

To answer this question two cases were chosen: “The Trojan Horse” and “Troy: Fall of a City”, an Italian made movie and a British-American miniseries. To account for any archaeological discoveries or paradigm shifts made between these two media pieces, it was also researched if there were any major archaeological discoveries between the release of these two media pieces that could influence their depictions of the past.

The most notable of these discoveries was the lower city of Troy, which was previously only theorized about. The addition of the lower city greatly increased Troy’s size and importance.

After watching and comparing both media pieces it appears that, although cheaper and more outwardly flashy, “The Trojan Horse” was more grounded in its approach to accuracy. Wherever possible it appeared to stay as close as possible to archaeological consensus, and building upon it as sensibly as possible. The depictions of the physical artifacts in the movie thus follows the constructionist approach as put forward by Copplestone (2017).

Contrasting this is “Troy: Fall of a City”, which mostly seems focussed on appearing old. The setting of the Trojan war is merely a setting, and the story always takes precedent over accuracy. Lowe (2012) classifies this as the fantasy approach to depicting the past.

Since popular media is the main way most people connect with the past, it is worrying that the trend seems to be moving away from realism and towards fantasy. This can cause the audience to lose interest in the academic side of research into the past.

In the past a lot of sensationalism was used to create this interest in the past, but these dramatic flourishes fell out of style among those academics that wanted to be taken more seriously. Part of the problem in this is that a lot of the older ideas were heavily influenced by colonial thinking, and not speaking up to correct these old ideas can cause them to linger in the public mind long after they have been abandoned by academics.

This troubled past has made it so a lot of archaeologists either shy away from to publicly popular subjects, or that they are seen as less credible by their colleagues if they do seek out the spotlight. This thesis argues that this perpetuates old ideas, and it risks losing almost all public interest in the field.

Studying popular media can help create insights in the ideas people have of the past. Studying and critiquing more popular movies, games, or series through a more academical

archaeological lens can be used both to correct possible mistakes in thinking, and to create a larger interest in the wider archaeological field. By also comparing these media pieces to each other, a broader overview of shifts and differences in thinking about the past can be seen.

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