

VIRGINIA MODEL UNITED NATIONS



Trojan War: City-State Alliance
Chair: Aniket Chandra
Crisis Director: Sam Lisner

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Chair-Aniket Chandra

Crisis Director-Sam Lisner

Committee Letter:

Hey Guys! My name is Aniket and I'll be your chair for The Trojan War: City State Alliance committee at this year's VAMUN. And I'm Sam Lisner, and I'll be your Crisis Director. We're really looking forward to what kind of creativity and cunning you're going to bring to this committee! We expect to see strategic missions, advanced military tactics and some outright scheming. We all know how the Trojan War played out in the Iliad, so we are looking for originality and new ideas to defeat the Trojans. Each one of you will be assigned a Greek hero with their own expertise and soldiers, However, it was only through the alliance of all the Greek city states that Troy was defeated, and we expect you to similarly collaborate with your fellow delegates throughout the conference. A good delegate in this committee would have a creative and innovative crisis arc and give great arguments during committee. Most importantly, remember to also enjoy yourselves. This weekend is about the experience and meeting your peers from around the country!

Good luck! We look forward to meeting you soon!

Aniket Chandra, Chair

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Committee Overview:

Our committee begins with the assembly of the Greek forces at the Boeotian port of Aulis, before they have set sail for Troy. Therefore, this committee must plan for the voyage to Troy before the war can begin. Then the committee will have to decide upon the strategy with which to engage Troy, protect against inevitable counter offenses, maintain enough supplies and food for the army, and ultimately sack the city.

Each Greek hero will have a vital role to play in this committee, and has at his direct command his own forces. The military actions conducted by the committee will involve Agamemnon's 100 ships, along with the ships of the Greek leaders too unimportant to be represented on the committee, unless otherwise specified. However, it is unlikely that such forces alone would be sufficient to breach the walls of Troy.

It is important to remember that this committee takes place in the historical context of the late bronze age, as well as the world of Greek mythology. Aspects of both worlds will play a vital role throughout the weekend, especially the role of the Greek pantheon. It will be almost impossible for any action to succeed without the support of the appropriate deity. The favor of the gods is not guaranteed, and will fluctuate in response to events in committee and actions in crisis.

The Crisis Room will be located apart from the committee room and crisis staff will come in and out intermittently, collecting crisis notes and delivering responses. Only in special circumstances will a delegate be granted an audience with the crisis director regarding their personal arcs.

Introduction:

The story of the Trojan War, the Bronze Age conflict between the kingdoms of Troy and Mycenaean Greece—straddles the history and mythology of ancient Greece and inspired the greatest writers of antiquity, from Homer, Herodotus and Sophocles to Virgil. Since the 19th-century rediscovery of the site of Troy in what is now western Turkey, archaeologists have uncovered increasing evidence of a kingdom that peaked and may have been destroyed around 1,180 B.C., perhaps forming the basis for the tales recounted in 12 volumes by Greek poets in what is now called the Epic Cycle. The best preserved and most famous two books of this cycle being Homer’s “Iliad” and the “Odyssey,” which were written some 400 years after the war is purported to have occurred. ¹

Judgement of Paris:

Most scholars agree that the this infamous tale of lust and greed began with *The Judgement of Paris*. At the wedding of the hero Peleus and his divine bride Thetis, Eris, the goddess of discord, introduced a golden apple, engraved upon with the words: “to the fairest.” This treasure was claimed by the goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. Unable to come to an accord, the Olympians reached an impasse. Zeus dispatched Hermes with the three divine claimants to the mountains of Asia, where Paris, son of

¹ History.com Staff. "Trojan War." History.com. 2009.
<https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/trojan-war>.

Priam the King of Troy, resided. It was said that the decision was placed in the hand of Paris and each goddess offered her own rewards.

Athena, the goddess of wisdom and strategy, offered him the abilities of a warrior. Hera, the goddess of women and marriage, offered to make Paris the ruler of all Asia. Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, offered him the love and affection of the most beautiful woman in the world: Helen of Sparta. Paris, supposedly following his heart, decided upon Aphrodite, much to the fury of Hera and Athena. It was this decision, that set in motion a decade long clash of heroes, a divided Olympus and the destruction of one of the ancient world's greatest cities.

Seduction of Paris:

Helen of Troy (born Helen of Sparta) was the daughter of Tyndareus, the King of Sparta. At the time, she was considered to be the most beautiful woman in the world. It is said that she was actually the result of an affair between the god Zeus, and the Spartan King's wife Leda.²

When it was time for Helen to marry, many kings and princes from around the world came to seek her hand or sent emissaries to do so on their behalf. Her father, Tyndareus, would not choose a suitor, or send any of the suitors away, for fear of giving grounds for a quarrel. Odysseus proposed that, to get all of the suitors to make an oath, swearing their support to the man who would eventually wed Helen. This idea succeeded and Menelaus was declared the winner of Helen's hand, and soon the two

² Helen of Troy." Jama Masjid, Delhi - New World Encyclopedia. Accessed August 14, 2018. http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Helen_of_Troy.

were married. Following Tyndareus' death, Menelaus became King of Sparta because the only male heirs, Castor and Pollux, had died and ascended to Olympus.³

It was around this time there was a great event among the Olympians: the marriage of the goddess Thetis to the mortal Peleus. After making his decision, Paris travelled to the court of Menelaus to claim his prize, from where he was honored as a guest and personally welcomed by the King himself. True to her promise, Aphrodite made it so that Helen would fall in love with Paris upon first seeing him enter the palace.

On the 10th day of Paris's visit, Menelaus had to leave to attend his grandfather, Catreus, a King in Crete's funeral. In her husband's absence, Paris and Helen made their escape to Troy, leaving behind Helen's 9 year old daughter, Hermione⁴. Menelaus, understandably furious at the abduction of his wife, beseeched his brother Agamemnon, King of Mycenae, the largest and most powerful city in Greece, to aid him in recovering his wife from the Trojans. Agamemnon, in turn, invoked the oath that Tyndareus, on the advice of Odysseus, made all of Helen's suitors swear, calling upon the Kings of Greece to prepare to wage war against Troy. Unwilling to cross the might of Mycenae, the former suitors have assembled their fleets. Totalling nearly 1200 warships, the

³ Kamil, Miriam. "The Legend of Helen of Troy." Ancient Origins. .
<https://www.ancient-origins.net/myths-legends/legend-helen-troy-002076>

⁴ Parada, Carlos. "The Trojan War ." Greek Mythology Link, 1997,
www.maicar.com/GML/TrojanWar.html.

Greek forces now lie in the Boeotian port city of Aulis (see map below⁵), and await the blessing of the gods to set sail for Troy.⁶



The Greeks:

Homer does not refer to the Greek forces as Greeks, but rather as Danaans or Achaeans. The term Danaan derives from Danaus, an mythical immigrant from Libya who came to rule Argos and name the regional inhabitants after himself, while the Achaeans, named after Achaeus, expanded from Thessaly until they merged with the Danaans. While Homer uses both Achaeans and Danaan to describe the entirety of the

⁵ Image from: <https://networthroll.com/blog1/aulis-net-worth/>

⁶ Homer. "Homer: The Iliad." Translated by A. S. Kline, Poetry in Translation, 2009, www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/Iliad2.php#anchor_Toc239244711.

Greek coalition, modern historians refer to Greeks of this era as Mycenaean Greeks, after the dominant Greek city state of the later bronze age.⁷

As King of Mycenae, Agamemnon would be the wealthiest and most powerful ruler in the region. Menelaus, by having his brother invoke the oath of Tyndareus, guaranteed that the former suitors would honor it, as none of the other city-states would dare cross Mycenae.⁸

The majority of the mainland and surrounding islands were settled by distinct peoples ruled by independent Kings (see map on next page). While many of the Kings were related to each other, their peoples were distinct and often shared little in common with their “fellow Greeks.” The assembly of the fleets at Aulis is the first time that such a large and diverse force of Greek soldiers will meet in peace. It remains to be seen if such a tentative alliance can endure the challenges of besieging the walls of Troy.

⁷ Parada, Carlos. “ACHAEAN LEADERS .” Greek Mythology Link, 1997, www.maicar.com/GML/ACHAEANLEADERS.html.

⁸ Thucydides. “The Peloponnesian War.” Greek Texts & Translations, UChicago, perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus-cgi/citequery3.pl?dbname=GreekFeb2011&getid=1&query=Thuc.%2B1.9.3.



The Trojans:

Troy is ruled by King Priam, and his domain consists of the walled city of Troy, along with the surrounding regions of Anatolia (modern day Turkey) collectively referred to as Troad or Troas (see maps below). Priam was the youngest son of his father, Laomedon, who was King before him. Laomedon made the mistake of refusing to pay Heracles for the rescue of his daughter, resulting in the demigod, along with Telamon, leading 18 ships against the city. After breaching the walls, Heracles killed

⁹ Image from: Bunny, Brainy. "Greek Leaders in the Trojan War." Owlcation, Owlcation, 22 Feb. 2018, owlcation.com/humanities/Greek-Leaders-in-the-Trojan-War.

Laomedon and his older sons, leaving Priam alive to assume the throne¹⁰. Priam proved a capable King, growing the wealth and influence of Troy throughout Anatolia, with many of the smaller cities and surrounding regions recognizing him as their ruler. In total, the regions under Priam's influence include Thrace, Dardania, Adrastia, Caria, Maeonia, Phrygia, Percote, Mysia, Lycia, Zelia, Paphlagonia, and Paeonia. The span of Priam's allies spreads even further, stretching from Ethiopia to Macedonia¹¹.



¹⁰ Parada, Carlos. "Priam 1." Greek Mythology Link, 1997, www.maicar.com/GML/Priam1.html.

¹¹ Parada, Carlos. "TROJAN LEADERS ." Greek Mythology Link, 1997, www.maicar.com/GML/TROJANLEADERS.html.

¹² Wikimedia Archives. "Turkish Coastline At Dardenelles." Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.org/Trojan_Coastline.html.

Troy owed its prosperity due to its location. Located at the entrance to the Dardanelles, a narrow strait separating Europe from Asia, Troy would have grown rich from the many traders sailing between the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Additionally, Troy was surrounded by fertile land, adding to the wealth of its population. This wealth enabled the Trojans to build a practically impenetrable wall around the city of over 5,000 people. While the numerous surrounding towns lack the level of fortification found in the city, inevitable reinforcements from Troy's allies and the seasonal marshy terrain would prove challenging to any force carrying out a prolonged siege of the region.¹³

The Gods:

The Greeks, as well as the Trojans, worship the same Pantheon of gods. Classical Greek mythology was dominated by the powerful 12 Olympians--Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Hera, Aphrodite, Apollo, Artemis, Athena, Dionysus, Hephaestus, Hermes and Ares. These gods were selfish, arrogant, jealous, and scandalous, and played an active role in the affairs of mortal men. Their blessing would ensure success, while their curse would condemn to failure¹⁴. However, the Olympians are divided upon the abduction of Helen. Aphrodite, the goddess of love, assisted in the abduction, and will likely continue to support Paris as her champion. Apollo, god of the sun, music, medicine and prophecy, and his sister Artemis, goddess of the hunt and the moon, both support the Trojans as

¹³ Strauss, Barry. "Strauss Offers Fresh Look at 'Trojan War'." NPR, NPR, 21 Sept. 2006, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6117459.

¹⁴ Runyon, Carl. The Greek Pantheon. Kentucky Community and Technical College System, legacy.owensboro.kctcs.edu/crunyon/HRS101/Homer/03&4-Iliad/Greek%20Pantheon.html.

well. However, Athena, goddess of wisdom, warfare and the arts, along with Hera, goddess of marriage, are likely to support the Greek mission, having been offended by the judgement of Paris. Poseidon, god of the sea and storms, and Hermes, messenger and god of travelers and thieves, both lean towards supporting the Greeks as well. The remaining gods and goddesses have not yet revealed their favorites, and the Greeks can hope to win their support by appealing to their vanity. With only the slightest perceived insult, any of the gods will unleash their wrath. Ultimately, the conflict among the deities will define the course of the Greek conflict with the Trojans¹⁵.

Weapons and Warfare:

The Trojan War occurred during the late bronze age, somewhere between 1230-1180 BC, right on the verge of the Dark Ages, during which written records throughout much of the ancient eastern mediterranean disappeared for nearly 500 years. However, what few sources remain appear to corroborate Homer's depiction of Greek soldiers. On both sides, the armies were divided into smaller groups led by generals, chiefs, or, in the case of the Greeks, kings. While Agamemnon and Priam were the supreme commander for their respective armies, their authority depended upon the allegiance of the lesser chiefs and kings. The common soldiers were loyal only to the chief or king that would led them in battle.¹⁶

¹⁵ Sienkeicz, Tom. "The Gods in the Iliad." Department of Classics, Monmouth College, department.monm.edu/classics/courses/clas210/coursedocuments/epic/gods_in_the_iliad.htm.

¹⁶ Strauss, Barry. "Strauss Offers Fresh Look at 'Trojan War'." NPR, NPR, 21 Sept. 2006, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6117459.

The primary arms of both the Trojans and the Greeks was a bronze-tipped spear, which could be either thrown or thrust, and an ox-hide shield plated with bronze. Most soldiers would also carry a bronze sword. While the style of the sword would vary between each group, almost all the swords of the era were designed to cut rather than stab. Additionally, armor would have been minimal, with only the leaders wearing bronze breastplates, greaves and helmets. The common soldier would typically only wear padded cloth or leather for minimal protection.¹⁷ Both armies also contained small, specialized units of archers and charioteers. While the exact specifications of the Trojan army was unknown to the Greeks, they can expect to face archer and chariot superior to their own. However, when it comes to naval warfare, the Greeks were unmatched during the late bronze age.

¹⁷ Williamson, Mitch. "HOMERIC AND MYCENAEAN WARFARE ." Weapons and Warfare, 2 May 2016, weaponsandwarfare.com/2016/05/03/homeric-and-mycenaeon-warfare-i/.

A Letter from Agamemnon

My fellow lords of Achaea, long have we fought amongst ourselves at the expense of our own people. Yet today we set aside our petty squabbles for the purpose of our noble mission. Helen, whose marriage we have all sworn to uphold, has been stolen from her husband's home by a foreign prince. He now hides behind the walls of Troy. By harboring this coward, the Trojans have insulted us all. Such an insult will be tolerated. Troy must burn!

We are also fighting for our future. Paris's abduction is only the latest insult, as Troy has long mocked our cities from behind her high walls, growing rich not from the efforts of her people but from her geography. From its location on crossroads between the Black Sea and the Aegean, Troy has monopolized commerce and harassed our merchants. Now is the time for us Greeks to assert our dominance in the region, and finalize our control of the seas. Troy must burn!

Here, in the Boeotian port of Aulis, we have assembled the combined strength of our lands. Never before has a force of such courageous and heroic men gathered in such numbers. Now we must decide upon our campaign across the Aegean, and as we prepare to face the seas, we must seek the favor of the gods. Surely they will rally to our cause, as never before has there been a war fought with a more honorable purpose. With their divine assistance, Troy cannot possibly withstand our assault. Troy will burn!

Your's Truly,

Agamemnon, Son of Atreus

Questions to Consider:

1. How will the Greeks win the support of the gods for their cause?
2. How will the massive Greek fleet assembled at Aulis coordinate a safe voyage across the Aegean?
3. How will the geography of the Troas region influence an attempted siege?
4. What will be the reaction of Priam's allies to an invasion?
5. What will be the reaction of other late bronze-age civilizations to an invasion of Troy?
6. How will the tentative Greek alliance endure the challenges of a protracted siege?
7. How will the large number of Greek soldiers be fed and supplied throughout the duration of a protracted siege?
8. How will the city of Troy, with its wealth, regional influence and numerous allies, be conquered?
9. How will the events in Troy affect the balance of power on the Greece mainland?

Research Tools and Resources:

This committee follows the story of Homer's Iliad up to the assembly of the Greek forces at Aulis, and translations first two books of the Iliad can be found easily online (two excellent versions are listed in the bibliography). While the committee may decide to diverge from the recorded events that occurred once the fleet left Aulis, it is recommended to at least be familiar with the later books of the Iliad, Odyssey, and the other books of the Epic cycle. It is possible that the committee will face similar challenges throughout the weekend. In particular, notice the role the Greek deities had in deciding the ultimate outcome of the conflict, as they will also be influential in our committee.

There are also numerous classical Greek historians who commented on the war, and provide detailed descriptions of events Homer glossed over. I have found www.perseus.tufts.edu to be a useful tool in searching through these sources, though they can usually be found easily through a simple internet search. Be cautious, though, as some of these sources contradict each other. For example, some stories claim Helen was in Egypt during the duration of the war, rather than in Troy with Paris. This will not be the case for our committee, as we have tried to stick to the Homeric version as closely as possible. As long as it does not contradict the story presented in this background guide, however, any obscure historical/mythical fact is fair game and may provide an advantage in committee.

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