

A New Suggested Site for Troy (Yenibademli Höyük)

By Oliver D. Smith*

Nearly all archaeologists identify the remains of Troy with Hisarlik. This article in contrast looks at some alternative suggested locations and finding them to be implausible suggests a Bronze Age site – Yenibademli Höyük – on the North Aegean Island Imbros (Gökçeada). The popular identification of Hisarlik with Troy is questioned and doubted. It is argued on the basis of an ancient tradition Hisarlik cannot be the site of Troy and reveals descriptions from the Iliad are not compatible with Hisarlik.

Introduction

Archaeologists and classical scholars almost universally identify the city Troy (*Troia*) with Hisarlik in northwestern Turkey; the classicist John Luce argued while not impossible, the probability of an alternative location for Troy is “virtually nil.”¹ However, Hisarlik is not a particularly strong candidate since its archaeology is somewhat different to the Troy described in Homer’s *Iliad* (c. 700 BCE). Despite discrepancies between the two which have long known to exist, the identification of Troy with Hisarlik remains popular because in the words of Carl Blegen (who excavated the site in the 1930s), “No other key site has been found in the northern Troad. There is no alternative.”² On the other hand, it is a mistake to think Hisarlik has been proven to be Troy; an eminent archaeologist in 1978 cautioned:

Although Blegen fully accepted the identification of Hisarlik with Homeric Troy, the equation, however, remains unproved.³

To this day the Troy-Hisarlik hypothesis remains questionable:

Theoretically, it is not impossible that Troy might be one day identified with other settlements in Anatolia or the Aegean...⁴

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1. John V. Luce, *Celebrating Homer’s Landscapes: Troy and Ithaca Revisited* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 91.

2. Carl Blegen, “The Identification of Troy,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Volume 1, Part 2 (ed.) Iorwerth E. S. Edwards, Cyril J. Gadd and Nicholas G. L. Hammonds (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 411.

3. James Mellaart, *The Archaeology of Ancient Turkey* (Totowa, NJ: Rowan and Littlefield, 1978), 34.

Troy can be found outside of the Troad,⁵ but with caveats; the site cannot be far from this region because the *Iliad* notes the allies of king Priam of Troy inhabited adjacent territories of the Troad such as Mysia and (southern) Thrace.⁶ The Achaean army sacked nearby Aegean islands, including Tenedos⁷ which undoubtedly locates Troy also near the Hellespont (modern Dardanelles). Furthermore, in one passage of the *Iliad*, Troy is explicitly placed next to the Hellespont: “With this in his hand the strong Argeiphontes flew, and quickly came to the land of Troy and the Hellespont.”⁸ The general geographical setting of the *Iliad* is therefore not in doubt by any classical scholars, but this does not necessarily mean Troy is the site of Hisarlik.

Hisarlik

Prior to Heinrich Schliemann’s excavations at Hisarlik (a 200 x 150m mound and lower plateau) in the 1870s,⁹ archaeologists disputed the location of Troy across the Troad, including Pinarbaşı (six miles southeast of Hisarlik) and Akça Köy (four miles south of Hisarlik). In fact, Schliemann originally favoured Pinarbaşı over Hisarlik. What though made the Hisarlik-Troy hypothesis popular is Pinarbaşı and Akça Köy were either falsified or shown to be improbable, leaving Hisarlik which benefited from Greco-Roman tradition.¹⁰ Throughout most of classical antiquity Hisarlik was thought to be the location of Troy (and its citadel Ilios/Ilion) to the extent the site was visited by Alexander the Great; the Romans later named the same location, Ilium:

4. Catalin Pavel, “Homer and Archaeology: Perspectives from the East Aegean/ West Anatolian Interface,” in *Homère et l’Anatolie 2* (ed.) Valérie Faranton and Michel Mazoyer (Paris: Association Kubaba, 2014), 11.

5. The Troad is an ancient name for the Biga Peninsula in the Çanakkale province of Turkey.

6. Hom. *Il.* 2. 816-877.

7. Hom. *Il.* 11. 625.

8. Hom. *Il.* 24. 345-346. August T. Murray (Trans.) William F. Wyatt (Rev.), *Homer Iliad* (Volume 2) Books 13-24, Loeb Classical Library 171 (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 589.

9. These digs were sanctioned by the archaeologist Frank Calvert (who owned land at Hisarlik) and made the first excavations on the site between 1863 and 1865. Calvert had met Schliemann in August 1868.

10. For classical sources that identify Hisarlik with Troy see Abigail Baker, *Troy on Display* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 17; Susan H. Allen, *Finding the Walls of Troy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 37-40; Michael Wood, *In Search of the Trojan War* (London: Guild Publishing, 1984), 29-31; Joachim Latacz, *Troy and Homer: Towards a Solution of an Old Mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 5.

...rumor since ancient times has identified the city of Troy – poetically known also as Ilios – with ruins on a mound at Hisarlik near the Turkish Dardanelles (ancient Greek Hellespont). Alexander the Great famously reversed the site of Achilles' rage, and the Romans so romanticised the spot that they rebuilt it as Roman Ilium, commemorating the home town of Vergil's hero Aeneas. Although the ancient site was rendered inhabitable ca. 500 CE, admirers of the *Iliad* continued to visit Hisarlik for centuries.¹¹

There is no evidence Greeks identified Hisarlik with Troy during the time of Homer in the late eighth century BCE.¹² A few ancient Greeks rejected to identify Hisarlik with Troy, namely Strabo in the first century BCE who "stood alone among major authors in his insistence that it lay elsewhere."¹³ The earliest literary evidence Greeks identified Hisarlik with Troy dates to the fifth century BCE.¹⁴ Strabo knew the idea or claim Troy is Hisarlik did not predate the sixth century BCE.¹⁵ Therefore, it is possible Troy was originally a separate location during the time the *Iliad* was composed but a few centuries after the time of Homer – Troy was relocated to Hisarlik. Nearly all contemporary archaeologists are convinced Hisarlik is Troy¹⁶ based on the sheer lack of viable alternative Bronze-Age sites (that are fortified settlements) in the Troad:

The arguments for locating Troy here [Hisarlik] are as follows. First, from Homer's poems it has always been clear that Troy (Ilios/Ilios) was situated very close to the Achaean camp on the Dardanelles. Second, since Classical times the settlement at Hisarlik has been identified by inscriptions and coins as Ilios. Third, excavations since Schliemann's first campaigns in the 1870s until this day have unearthed at Hisarlik a citadel with remarkable architecture and finds as well as a 30ha fortified lower city. Fourth, a number of surveys across the Troas have established that the largest site in the Troad is undoubtedly Hisarlik. Fifth, Hittite sources of the late 15th

11. Margo Kitts, "Anthropology and the Iliad," in *Ashgate Research Companion to Anthropology* (ed.) Stewart Pamela and Andrew J. Strathern (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 389-390.

12. Jonas Grethlein, "From Imperishable Glory to History: The Iliad and the Trojan War," in *Epic and History* (ed.) David Konstan and Kurt A. Raaflaub (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 135; Latacz, *Ibid.*, 4 incorrectly claims Homer's contemporaries identified Troy with Hisarlik.

13. Allen, *Finding the Walls of Troy*, 1999, 40.

14. Hdt. 7. 43. 2; Hellanicus apud Strab. 13. 1. 42.

15. Strab. 13. 1. 25.

16. On the apparent consensus Troy is Hisarlik by archaeologists, see Luce, *Celebrating Homer's Landscapes: Troy and Ithaca Revisited*, 1998, 81; Mark Q. Sutton, *Archaeology: The Science of the Human Past* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 32; Barry Strauss, "Why is Troy Still Burning?" *Historically Speaking* 8, no. 2 (2006), 18 notes "virtually all archaeologists now agree [Hisarlik] was the site of Troy"; Matthew Maher, "Fall of Troy VII: New Archaeological Interpretations and Considerations," *The University of Western Ontario Journal of Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (2003): 59-60.

to late 13th c. speak of conflicts between Mycenaeans and Hittites (or their vassals) ... over 'Wilusa' in the region later named Troad.¹⁷

How strong are these five arguments? Each one is addressed below.

The Hellespont

It is not in doubt the *Iliad* locates Troy next to the Hellespont (modern Dardanelles), but it is reasonable to argue for a different site outside the Troad if nearby the Hellespont.¹⁸

Desolation of Troy

The Greco-Roman tradition Hisarlik was Troy is contradicted by the fourth century BCE Athenian writer and orator Lycurgus who claimed the city of Troy after its destruction by the Achaeans was abandoned; in fact, he maintained the site was left uninhabited in his own day:

Who has not heard of Troy and how it became the greatest of the cities at that time and ruled over all of Asia, and then was obliterated all at once by the Greeks and is eternally uninhabited?¹⁹

Lycurgus' claim Troy was left desolate after its destruction is impossible to reconcile with the archaeology of Hisarlik (consisting of many different layers from 3000 to 500 CE revealing continuous occupation). Hisarlik was destroyed more than once during the Bronze Age; many classical scholars identify the Trojan War²⁰ with archaeological layer VIIa which shows signs of warfare and burning²¹ (although this is quite contentious since some archaeologists question if the Trojan War took place as Homer describes, if at all.²²) Despite destructions,

17. Pavel, "Homer and Archaeology: Perspectives from the East Aegean/West Anatolian Interface," 2014, 10.

18. Crowe, John, *The Troy Deception: Finding the Plain of Troy* (Leicester: Matador, 2010), 10.

19. *Oratio in Leocratem*. 62. 3 (trans.) Cassandra J. Borges, *The Geography of the Iliad in Ancient Scholarship* (University of Michigan, 2011), 43.

20. The siege of Troy was dated by ancient Greek chroniclers sometime between 1250 and 1135 BCE.

21. Maher, "Fall of Troy VII: New Archaeological Interpretations and Considerations," 2003, 60-61.

22. For different perspectives on Trojan War, see: Moses Finley et al., "The Trojan War," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 84 (1964): 1-20; Kurt A. Raaflaub, "Homer, the Trojan War and History," *The Classical World* 91, no. 5 (1998): 386-403; Donald F. Easton, "Has the

Hisarlik was rebuilt and continuously inhabited until the sixth century CE, when the settlement was suddenly depopulated because of an outbreak of a plague.²³ Throughout the Greek Dark Age (eleventh to ninth centuries) Hisarlik was a sparse settlement until colonisation by Greeks (c. 800 BCE).

Site Level	End Date (Approx.)	Cause of Destruction	Aftermath
Vlh	1300 BCE	Earthquake	Continuity/rebuilding
VIIa	1230 – 1180 BCE	Attacked by enemy / fire	Continuity/rebuilding
VIIb [1]	1150 BCE	Unknown	New Culture
VIIb [2]	1100 BCE	Earthquake or enemy attack	Continuity/rebuilding
VIIb [3]	900 – 800 BCE	Unknown / fire?	Sparsely populated until Greek settlement

Schliemann outright dismissed Lycurgus' claim as stemming from his poetic imagination.²⁴ However, there is reason to think Lycurgus was relying on a tradition Troy was left desolated when sacked and destroyed by Achaeans – rivalling the separate tradition Hisarlik was Troy. Strabo²⁵ knew a story Troy was not rebuilt after its destruction because reoccupation of the site was considered a bad omen; he therefore rejected to identify Hisarlik (or Roman Ilium) with Troy and proposed another location nearby, about three miles to the east.²⁶ Strabo further knew of “other inquirers who find that the city changed its site” and named Demetrius of Scepsis.²⁷

Troy's Citadel (Ilios)

Hisarlik is often identified with Troy based on its citadel and walls. Troy's citadel (Ilios) is described in the *Iliad* as “well-fortified”²⁸ with high gates and

Trojan War been Found?” *Antiquity* 59, no. 227 (1985): 188-196; Denys L. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959); there is also an interesting collection of papers in Lin Foxhall and John K. Davies (Ed.), *The Trojan War: Its Historicity and Context* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1984).

23. Kitts, “Anthropology and the Iliad,” 2015, 390.

24. Hendrich Schliemann, *Troja* (London: John Murray, 1884), 292.

25. Strab. 13. 1. 42.

26. Strab. 13. 1. 25, 35.

27. Demetrius' writings from the second century BCE are lost but are quoted by Strabo.

28. Hom. *Il.* 2. 113.

stone walls.²⁹ The *Iliad* mentions the word Ilios, 105 times and Troy, 53 times; the former presumably refers to a smaller division within the larger city³⁰ meaning the citadel which was elevated on a mound³¹ and housed Trojan royals.³² Its summit was called Pergamos, where stood a temple to Apollo.³³ Homer repeatedly describes Ilios as sacred, referring to the prominent position of the temple. Outside the citadel, the lower area (of the plateau) was also fortified with a surrounding wall and gates,³⁴ as well as a large tower.³⁵ Proponents of the Hisarlik-Troy hypothesis argue despite inconsistencies between the Homeric or Iliadic Troy and Hisarlik, nowhere else in the Troad is there a mound with a fort; to quote Blegen again, “no place other than Hisarlik... can show characteristics of a royal fortress.”³⁶ This is only though true if the search for Troy is limited to inside the Troad.

In 1988, the archaeologist Manfred Korfmann carried out excavations at Hisarlik and claimed to have found evidence Hisarlik’s lower plateau was once surrounded by an outer wall and contained a large number of buildings (he dated these layers to VI, VII and VIIa c. 1700 – 1180 BCE). Korfmann’s claims have been challenged (mainly on the grounds “excavations have not proven the existence of a lower city wall”³⁷ and the number of buildings in the lower plateau are likely much lower than estimated by Korfmann in his controversial reconstruction). It is now known Korfmann was mistaken about the purpose of a ditch on the periphery of the lower plateau; the hole instead of a trench to defend Hisarlik was “an attempt at draining the area below the hill in the south.”³⁸

29. Hom. *Il.* 4. 34.

30. Maria D. V. Muñoyerro, “Troy and Ilios in Homer: Region and City,” *Glotta* 75 (1997-98): 68-81.

31. Hom. *Il.* 20. 52.

32. Hom. *Il.* 6. 317.

33. Hom. *Il.* 4. 508; 24. 700; 5. 446

34. Hom. *Il.* 5. 789; 6. 393.

35. Hom. *Il.* 6. 386.

36. Blegen, “The Identification of Troy,” 1971, 411.

37. Frank Kolb, “Troy VI: A Trading Center and Commercial City,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 108, no. 4 (2004): 577-613; Korfmann’s supporters have responded to similar criticisms, see: Donald F. Easton et al., “Troy in Recent Perspective,” *Anatolian Studies* 52 (2002): 75-109.

38. Nicolas A. Corfù, “Was Hisarlik an Interregional City With Important Harbor in the Late Bronze Age?” *Orbis Terrarum* 13 (2015): 77.

Wilusa

Troy/Ilios is sometimes identified as a place named Wilusa in ancient Hittite documents but not all scholars agree with this identification.³⁹ The Wilusa-Ilios equation is based on a simple linguistic argument Wilusa (or Wilusiya) was the Hittite name of the Greek word Wilios (an archaic form of Ilios before dropping the “w”). Hittite documents are vague about the location of Wilusa and do not provide many geographical clues, “as with most of Hittite geography, no strict proof is possible.”⁴⁰ Therefore, even if it is one day proven Wilusa and Troy/Ilios are one and the same place, its location will probably remain undeterminable by Hittite documents.

Troy – Alternative Location Hypotheses

If the search for Troy is restricted to the Troad, there is no doubt Hisarlik is the sole candidate because “Troy was the only fortified settlement in the Troad during the second millennium BC.”⁴¹ However, alternative sites for Troy have been suggested outside of the Troad by a small number of amateur archaeologists and independent researchers.⁴² The most notable of these unorthodox location hypotheses for Troy is Karatepe – the site of an ancient fortress in Cilicia, southern Turkey.⁴³ The Cilicia-Troy hypothesis was proposed by a German translator of Homer and accomplished poet named Raoul Schrott in 2008; a few scholars have published a lengthy rebuttal.⁴⁴ The other location hypotheses have attracted very little if any attention of classicists: Pergamon (northwestern Turkey), Cambridgeshire (England), Helsinki, Finland and Dalmatia, Croatia.⁴⁵

39. Vangelis D. Pantazis, “Wilusa: Reconsidering the Evidence,” *Klio* 91, no. 2 (2009): 291-310.

40. Hans G. Güterbock, “Troy in the Hittite Texts?” in *Troy and the Trojan War* (ed.) Machteld J. Mellink (Byrn Mawr, PA: Bryn Mawr College, 1986), 41.

41. Charles Rose, *The Archaeology of Greek and Roman Troy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 27.

42. Corfù, “Was Hisarlik an Interregional City With Important Harbor in the Late Bronze Age?” 72.

43. Raoul Schrott, *Homers Heimat: Der Kampf um Troia und Seine Realen Hintergründe* (Munich: Hanser, 2008).

44. Christoph Ulf and Robert Rollinger, *Lag Troia in Kilikien? Der aktuelle Streit um Homers Ilias* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011).

45. Pergamon: John Lascelles, *Troy: The World Deceived* (Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing, 2005), Crowe, *The Troy Deception: Finding the Plain of Troy*, 2011; Cambridgeshire: Iman Wilkens, *Where Troy Once Stood* (London: Rider and Company, 1990); Helsinki: Felice Vinci “The Nordic Origins of the Iliad and Odyssey: An Up-to-Date Survey of the Theory,” *Athens Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 3, no. 2 (2017): 172; Dalmatia: Roberto S. Price, *Homeric Whispers* (San Antonio: Scylax Press, 2006).

The latter three hypotheses are far too distant from the Hellespont to be taken serious and are best categorised as pseudoarchaeology.⁴⁶ One archaeologist points out quite rightly it would be unfair to lump the more reasonable Cilicia location hypothesis with Helsinki.⁴⁷

Unlike the Cilicia-Troy hypothesis, the Pergamon (or Pergamos) hypothesis has seldom been mentioned or been paid attention to by classical scholars.⁴⁸ This is unfortunate since John Lascelles and John Crowe, the main proponents of this theory have amassed a lot of evidence against Hisarlik being the site of Troy.⁴⁹ Both researchers sensibly distance themselves from the three much less credible hypotheses; Lascelles even describes them as blatantly false trails:

These false trails should not confuse us. Ancient writers provide abundant evidence that the Trojan War took place, not in Dalmatia, England, or Finland, but around the Aegean Sea.⁵⁰

The identification of Pergamon with Troy however is implausible because of its chronology. Pergamon dates no older than the eighth century BCE (the earliest dated ceramics at the site are proto-Corinthian.⁵¹) Lascelles and Crowe are left with revising the chronology of the Trojan War but Homer's setting for Troy certainly predates the construction of Pergamon by at least a few centuries.⁵² Perhaps this major difficulty is why no classicists have bothered to rebut the Pergamon hypothesis in detail. If Pergamon and Cilicia are both dismissed, are there any viable alternative locations for Troy left? The author of this article in 2020 identified a different site for Troy at Yenibademli Höyük on the North

46. Anthony M. Snodgrass, "A Paradigm Shift in Classical Archaeology?" *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 12, no. 2 (2002): 190 (Snodgrass describes Wilkens as an "infinitely less serious" writer); Eric H. Cline, "Troy as a Contested Periphery...", in *Anatolian Interfaces: Hittites, Greeks and Their Neighbours* (ed.) Billie J. Collins, Mary R. Bachvarova and Ian Rutherford (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), 17-18 (Cline notes "assertions that Troy was located in England and/or Scandinavia" are patently nonsense). Neither mention the obscure Croatian location hypothesis.

47. Pavel, "Lag Troia in Kilikien? Der aktuelle Streit um Homers Ilias," *BMCR* (2011).

48. An exception is a brief mention by Corfù, "Was Hisarlik an Interregional City With Important Harbor in the Late Bronze Age?" 2015, 72.

49. Lascelles, *Troy: The World Deceived*, 2005; Crowe, *The Troy Deception: Finding the Plain of Troy*, 2011.

50. Lascelles, *Troy: The World Deceived*, 2005, 16.

51. Esther V. Hansen, *The Attalids of Pergamon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 8.

52. For different perspectives on the setting of the *Iliad*, as Late Bronze Age, Greek Dark Age or an amalgamation of these periods (both predate the eighth century BCE) see: Kitts, "Anthropology and the Iliad," 2015, 389-410; Sinclair Hood, "The Bronze Age context of Homer," in *The Ages of Homer: A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule* (ed.) Jane Carter and Sarah P. Morris (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 25-32; Oliver Dickenson, "Homer the Poet of the Dark Age," *Greece and Rome* 33, no. 1 (1986): 20-37.

Aegean Island Imbros (Gökçeada), close to the Hellespont.⁵³ Before this hypothesis is discussed, below are reasons to doubt Hisarlik is Troy.

Five Reasons to Doubt Hisarlik is Troy

There are many reasons to doubt Hisarlik is Troy,⁵⁴ but five are:

1. Poseidon's View of Troy

The god Poseidon in the *Iliad* observed Troy and Achaeans from the highest mountain on the island Samothrace. If Hisarlik was the site of Troy, there would be no clear line of sight because the mountainous island Imbros (Gökçeada) sits between them and obstructs the view:

...the Shaker of Earth, keep, for he sat marvelling at the war and the battle, high on the topmost peak of wooded Samothrace, far from there all Ida was plain to see; and plain to see were the city of Priam, and the ships of the Achaeans.⁵⁵

The nineteenth century traveller Alexander Kinglake visited the mound of Hisarlik and realised it was impossible to view Samothrace because Imbros sits in the middle (see Figure 1):

Now Samothrace, according to the map, appeared to be not only out of all seeing distance from the Troad, but to be entirely shut out from it by the intervening Imbros, a larger island, which stretches its length right athwart the line of sight from Samothrace to Troy.⁵⁶

Likewise, from Samothrace – there is no clear line of sight to the mound of Hisarlik. Although it has been argued on occasions when the sky is not cloudy or hazy Hisarlik is dimly observable from the highest peak on Samothrace (Mount Fengari), “even a small amount of haze in the atmosphere blots it out.”⁵⁷ Homer stresses Troy was plainly visible to Poseidon on the topmost peak, where he had

53. Oliver D. Smith, “An Alternative Site for Troy on Imbros (Gökçeada),” *Kerberos: KCL's Classics Undergraduate Research Journal* 2, no. 2 (2020): 61-70.

54. At least one difficulty of identifying Hisarlik with Troy was known as far back as Strabo; Homer describes there having been two springs one hot, one cold outside the walls of Troy, but these have never been found near Hisarlik. This topographical problem was never explained by Schliemann, Blegen nor Korfmann, see Lascelles, *Troy: The World Deceived*, 2005, 80.

55. Hom. *Il.* 13. 10-14, Murray (trans.).

56. Quoted in Lascelles, *Troy: The World Deceived*, 2005, 134-135.

57. Luce, *Celebrating Homer's Landscapes: Troy and Ithaca Revisited*, 1998, 24.

observed the Trojan War.⁵⁸ The distance of Mount Fengari to Hisarlik is approximately 45 miles; this is too distant for an ancient observer to have a good view of the Trojan battlefield. Crowe⁵⁹ acknowledges the aforementioned problem, but he tries to avoid it by arguing Poseidon viewed Troy from the island of Samos (instead of Samothrace):

...line 12 seems to offer a wonderful opportunity for some later poet to change the name of Poseidon's lookout from Samos to Samothrace.

Relocating Poseidon from Samothrace to Samos is not supported by the Homeric text. Why deny the obvious? Poseidon would have had a clear line of sight to Troy from Samothrace if the former was on Imbros (only about 20 miles away); the highest peak on Samothrace towers over the highest mountain on Imbros (İlyas Dağ) and would have provided Poseidon (or a real ancient watcher), with a decent view of the Trojan battlefield. This is the most straightforward explanation while proponents of the Troy-Hisarlik hypothesis have failed to provide a solution.



Figure 1. Map of Hisarlik and Surrounding Territory.

Illustration credit: Oliver D. Smith.

2. Mount Ida

Poseidon is said to have had a plain view of “Ida” from the highest peak on Samothrace.⁶⁰ This is a mountain range named Ida (modern Kazdağı) in the Troad, but ancient Greeks knew of separate mountains named Ida such as Mount

58. Hom. *Il.* 13. 11.

59. Crowe, *The Troy Deception: Finding the Plain of Troy*, 2011, 102.

60. Hom. *Il.* 13. 13.

Psiloritis on Crete; Idalia was also the name of a mountain in Cyprus.⁶¹ Ida (Ἴδη) translates as “wooded hill” and was a generic name applied to mountains with forests during classical antiquity. The distance of Mount Fengari to Kazdağı is about 75 miles. However, if one considers the lower slopes and foothills of Kazdağı – the distance is approximately 60 miles. This distance is unquestionably too great for Poseidon to have a clear view of the mountain Kazdağı; instead, the Homeric Ida can arguably be identified with the stratovolcano İlyas Dağ on Imbros. Homer describes Ida as shaken by earthquakes.⁶² The island Imbros sits close to the Northern Anatolia Fault and is a high seismic intensity area.

3. Zeus’ View of Troy

Zeus watched the Trojan War on Ida from its highest peak where he signalled Trojans in battle against the Achaeans.⁶³ Kazdağı’s summit ridgeline to Hisarlık is about 30 miles and if weather is not too hazy, there is a faint view.⁶⁴ The Homeric Ida could not though have been Kazdağı because the *Iliad* argues for a clearer view of Troy (Ilios) from Ida, implying a shorter distance. The distance of İlyas Dağ to Yenibademli Höyük is under ten miles (there is a plain view from atop the stratovolcano). The identification of İlyas Dağ with Ida is supported by the fact Homer describes Ida as a place of oxen sacrifice.⁶⁵ Greek inhabitants of the Imbros village Agridia (modern Tepeköy) nearby İlyas Dağ sacrifice oxen at an annual festival at the bottom of the mountain.⁶⁶ Homer notes a small settlement adjacent to Ida was named Zeleia (Ζέλεια). An argument can be made this is the same place as Agridia (Αγρίδια).⁶⁷

4. Desolation of Troy

An ancient tradition first recorded by Strabo⁶⁸ asserts Troy was not reoccupied after its destruction, rather it was left desolated and uninhabited. Hisarlık therefore could not have been Troy because it was continuously occupied until the sixth century CE. As noted by a classicist:

61. Virg. *Aen.* 1. 681.

62. Hom. *Il.* 20. 58-59)

63. Hom. *Il.* 8. 170-173.

64. Luce, *Celebrating Homer’s Landscapes: Troy and Ithaca Revisited*, 1998, 27.

65. Hom. *Il.* 22. 170.

66. Elene Psychogiou, “Thysia Taurin kai Nekrika Ethima st’ Agridia tes Imbrou,” *Archaologia* 41 (1991): 83-91.

67. Hom. *Il.* 2. 824.

68. Strab. 13. 1. 42.

Enough has been adduced, I think, to prove that in the settled Greek belief of at least six centuries – from the time of Plato to that of Pausanias – Homeric Troy has been utterly destroyed and had ceased to be inhabited.⁶⁹

5. Achilles' Sacking of Cities

Homer mentions Achaeans led by Achilles sacked twelve cities by ships and eleven cities by land⁷⁰ (including across Mysia before Troy). A few islands are mentioned: Lesbos, Scyros, and Tenedos but Imbros is noticeably absent from the list.⁷¹ Arguably the reason Imbros is not among the islands Achilles sacked before Troy – is because Troy was itself located on Imbros. Imbros is not either mentioned as having been sacked by Achilles in any other classical source.

Yenibademli Höyük – Troy?

Yenibademli Höyük is a mound (covering an area of 120 x 130 meters) on the northeast of the island Imbros (Gökçeada) about one mile from a harbour and bay (Kaleköy); nearby is a village with same name. Approximately 250 meters west of the mound is a creek (Büyükdere) which drains into Aegean Sea (see Figure 2). In classical antiquity the creek was a larger river, named Ilissos (or Ilissus).⁷² Remarkably, this is similar in name to Ilios, and these could be the same location; the citadel of Troy might have taken its name from the valley, or vice-versa. Yenibademli Höyük was first settled at the beginning of the third millennium BCE; after an interval it was resettled during the Late Bronze Age and abandoned at the end of Mycenaean era (c. 1100 BCE). It was left uninhabited until a hundred years ago when a church was built.

69. Richard C. Jebb, "Homeric and Hellenic Ilium," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 2 (1881): 15.

70. Hom. *Il.* 9. 328-329.

71. Hom. *Il.* 9. 129, 668; 11. 625.

72. Plin. *NH.* 4. 73; Halime Hüryılmaz, Ivan Gatsov and Petranka Nedelcheva, "The Early Bronze Age Lithic Industry in Yenibademli Höyük (Gökçeada/ Imbros)," *Studia Troica* 18 (2009): 229.

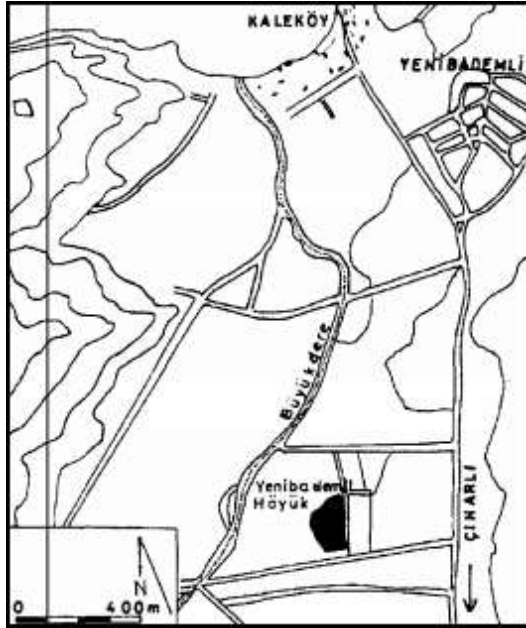


Figure 1. Map of Yenibademli Höyük

Illustration credit: Halime Hüryılmaz.

Since the 1990s the site has been excavated by Halime Hüryılmaz (who has recently published a paper detailing the three historical periods of occupation, beginning c. 3000 BCE):

The systematic excavations conducted between 1996 and 2013 have revealed the presence of three cultural periods at this old settlement. From most recent to oldest, these can be listed as follows: (1) The culture of the inhabitants with Greek origins, (2) Late Bronze Age culture, (3) Early Bronze Age II culture. The chapel, which was built as a singular structure on the hilltop about 100 years ago, was used by the inhabitants with Greek origin. There have not been any settlement activities around this religious building, which represents the first cultural period at the mound. The second cultural period is made identified by the Mycenaean and Minoanising pottery sherds and small-scale remains of cyclopean masonry. The finds of this period which represent Late Bronze Age, are dated between 1400-1060/1040 B.C. The third cultural period is characterized by wide-spread settlement activities and lasted for about 400 years, starting from beginning of the third millennium B.C.⁷³

The archaeology of Yenibademli Höyük matches the tradition Troy was abandoned after destroyed and not reoccupied. Early Bronze Age archaeology of the site during its first period of occupation (3000 – 2600 BCE) has revealed the mound was fortified with stone walls from the east, south and west; there is

73. Hüryılmaz, “Northwest Anatolian Influences on Early Bronze Age Cultures of Gökçeada (Imbros) Yenibademli Höyük,” in *The Early Bronze Age in Western Anatolia* (ed.) Laura Harrison, Nejat Bilgen and Asuman Kapuci (Albany, NY: University of New York Press, 2021), 83.

evidence for a tower with a ramp structure and gate.⁷⁴ Within the hillfort lay buildings and wide roads (an average width of 1.6 meters).⁷⁵ The *Iliad* describes Troy as having “broad paved streets”.⁷⁶ Palaeogeographical studies have shown the site at the beginning of the third millennium BCE was adjacent to a bay and the Aegean Sea (see Figure 3). Over the past five thousand years, the bay has expanded to the extent Yenibademli Höyük is now about a mile inland from the bay and harbour town (Kaleköy).



Figure 3. Yenibademli Höyük 5000 Years Ago (Top), Compared (Bottom) Today
Illustration and photo credit: Sercan K. Alkan.

The second occupation of Yenibademli Höyük began during the Late Bronze Age (dating is based on LH IIIB to LH IIIC Mycenaean decorated sherds). The Late Bronze Age levels have eroded away but it is reasonable to presume these occupants built on top of earlier fortifications and buildings. In the late 2nd

74. Hüryılmaz, “Yenibademli Höyük: Kuzeydoğu Ege Denizi’nden Bir Erken Tunç Çağı Yerleşmesi,” *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 19 no. 1 (2002): 27-44.

75. Hüryılmaz, “Gökçada-Yenibademli Höyük’te Kent Organizasyonu ve Yönetim,” *Elektronik Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 5 no. 18 (2006): 34.

76. Hom. *Il.* 2. 329.

millennium BCE, the site was more distant to the bay (a quarter of a mile or 400 meters) than it was a thousand years earlier. An invading Greek force could have docked in this bay and set up camp on the shoreline. The close distance of the Greek camp on the beach to the walls of Troy is implied by Homer in several lines of the *Iliad*, for example, the Trojans had a clear view of the Achaean encampment from a lookout in Troy and Greeks were at one point driven back from the Trojan battlefield to their camp on the shore:

That the [Greek] camp looked directly onto the plain and across to Troy is clearly implicit in Homer's picture of the sleepless night spent by Agamemnon before the second engagement... Similarly, Achilles, standing on the stern of a ship to watch the progress of fighting, catches sight of Nestor's chariot leaving the fray.⁷⁷

Conclusion

This paper identifies Troy with a fortified mound outside of the Troad but still near the Hellespont – Yenibademli Höyük on Imbros. The island Imbros is mentioned five times in the *Iliad* but refers to two places (1) the island, and (2) a city on the island. To distinguish the two, Homer gave the epithet “rugged” to the island⁷⁸ (when Hera departs from Imbros to Mount Ida, she does not leave the island but its capital of the same name⁷⁹). Blegen's assertion Troy could have only existed in the Troad is arguably disproven since it has now been shown Yenibademli Höyük is a viable alternative site. The Imbros-Troy location hypothesis is more plausible than Pergamon and Cilicia; the author plans to develop his ideas about Troy in a subsequent book.

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77. Luce, *Celebrating Homer's Landscapes: Troy and Ithaca Revisited*, 1998, 143; see also Hom. Il. 8. 532; 14. 8-15.

78. Hom. Il. 13. 33.

79. Hom. Il. 14. 281.

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