

## The Trojan War in Greek Art

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The legacy of Homer's *Iliad* is far-reaching and intense on many levels. It had a major influence on the societies that followed the story, especially Greek society. Ancient Greek memory knew the story of the Trojan War because of its importance in society and its prevalence in life. In Greek society, the themes from these epic tales were prevalent in the works of Greek art in a multitude of mediums. Greeks viewed their own culture through the lens of the Trojan War myth and evidenced this through art. The tales were constantly reshaped and seen through new lens as people sought to utilize the epics of the Trojan War.

Myths in general played an important role for the ancient Greeks. According to a quote from Walter Burkert, Greek myths can be considered as “traditional tale[s] with secondary, partial reference to something of collective importance.”<sup>204</sup> The purposes of myths have always been complex, as “the narratives of myths were never meant solely to entertain, but always possessed a meaningful content.”<sup>205</sup> This could involve the invocation of several themes that would have been familiar to ancient Greeks, amongst other purposes. Greek myths had a special attribute, however: the imagery “never constituted a religious dogma... and could thus be much freer in both its choice of subject and mode of representation.”<sup>206</sup> There was a much greater freedom in how art could depict certain scenes and events. For example, a scene depicting Achilles helping Patroclus with a wound does not appear anywhere in the *Iliad*, but makes an appearance on pottery.<sup>207</sup> Overall, many of the stories from the epic cycle that includes the *Iliad* “must have been part of the common heritage of Greeks during the Archaic and Classical periods, and as with stories of other heroes, conflicting details and even different versions could exist side by side.”<sup>208</sup> Therefore, Greek artists could take liberties in the scenes they depicted without ruining the overall effect of the mythology.

Details from works of art could contribute to different meanings. The popular scene in Greek art concerning Achilles and Ajax playing some sort of game was depicted in a multitude of ways that all lend different meanings. In three different vases, this scene is shown with varying details that give completely different perspectives on the event. In the black-figure amphora painting by Exekias, Achilles is clearly the more important of the two warriors, since he is the one wearing his helmet and thus looks taller than his fellow Ajax.<sup>209</sup> On another black-figure amphora painting by the Lysippides Painter, the two warriors are both shown bareheaded, implying an equal status shared by the two.<sup>210</sup> In a red-figure amphora painting by the Andokides painter, both of the men appear with helmets on, and the use of the most sophisticated red-figure painting technique allowed for a more detailed scene to emerge.<sup>211</sup> Even with such a minor scene, the artists were able to convey different meanings to suit their own needs, even though these cups came from the sixth

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<sup>204</sup> Klaus Junker, *Interpreting the Images of Greek Myth: An Introduction*, trans. Annemarie Kunzl-Snodgrass and Anthony Snodgrass (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 19.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> H. A. Shapiro, *Myth into Art: Poet and Painter in Classical Greece* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994), 7.

<sup>207</sup> Junker, *Interpreting the Images*, 5.

<sup>208</sup> T. H. Carpenter, *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1991), 195.

<sup>209</sup> Black-figure amphora refers to the Greek art style of black figures being painted on to red clay. Susan Woodward, *The Trojan War in Ancient Art* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 60.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>211</sup> Red-figure amphora refers to the Greek art style of red figures being painted on to black pottery. *Ibid.*, 61-62.

century rather than the fifth century BC.<sup>212</sup> This ability to manipulate the perceptions of a scene even so well known in Greek art, as Achilles and Ajax playing a game, shows just how much power the artist has and just how easy it is to influence people through the art they come into contact with.

The arguments for a historical Trojan War and how the tale is perceived today are endless, but another perspective lends itself to the argument about the Trojan War in Greek art--how the Greeks would have perceived the Trojan War themselves. There are two differing opinions on the role these myths played. On one hand, for ancient Greeks “the Trojan War and the return of Odysseus in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* respectively were considered historical events.”<sup>213</sup> Our modern conceptions of myth were for Greeks “the early history of their own people... they saw themselves in a direct line of descent from men of the Heroic Age.”<sup>214</sup> The tale was integral to their history with support for the basic facts. Thucydides considered the epic poem to be historically accurate to the extent that he bases his estimates about the size of the expedition to Troy on the numbers given in the Catalogue of Ships located in Book 2 of the *Iliad* (Thuc. 1.10.2-5)<sup>215</sup> The heroes themselves were considered to be historically accurate as well, including Achilles, Helen, and Odysseus.<sup>216</sup> Later uses of kinship ties were deemed to be accurate, as Aristotle and Thucydides trusted in a historical Minos and Pausanias and Aristotle believed there to be a historical Theseus, even if their more fantastic endeavors were questioned.<sup>217</sup> At most levels of Greek society, the stories in the epic cycle were treated as a part of their history.

On the other hand, there was some doubt amongst ancient Greeks about the details considering the Trojan War. Some intellectuals recognized certain issues and thought “the traditional myths about gods and heroes, with their unreal happenings, were without exception to be classified as untrue, as simple stories which had been used by people in earlier times to try to make sense of certain aspects of the world.”<sup>218</sup> Xenophanes, Hecataeus, and Pindar all criticized Homer’s tales, stating that they were exaggerated.<sup>219</sup> However, some of them, like Plato, agreed that the tales themselves were not wholly rejected: they communicated universal ideas and certain truths that could be used to advantage.<sup>220</sup> Myths invaded daily life for the Greeks, and “there is hardly an aspect of human life that is not in some way touched upon by one myth of another and its meaning.”<sup>221</sup> The higher classed Greeks in society, especially the more educated ones, included “kings, statesmen, and politicians who might manipulate kinship myth, even invent it, knowing full well the myth’s fictiveness but recognizing its efficacy in the deliberations of a democratic assembly or a royal court or even on a campaign.”<sup>222</sup> Overall, the credulity of Greek myths must be seen as an inconsistent view, since there were in truth a variety of reactions to mythology’s historical accuracy and it was fairly easy to manipulate myth such as kinship and genealogies for specific purposes.

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<sup>212</sup> Woodward, *The Trojan War in Ancient Art*, 61-62.

<sup>213</sup> Jonas Grethlein, “Homer and Heroic History,” in *Greek Notions of the Past in the Archaic and Classical Eras*, ed. John Marincola, Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, and Calum Maciver (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 14.

<sup>214</sup> Shapiro, *Myth into Art*, 1.

<sup>215</sup> Quoted in Grethlein, “Homer and Heroic History,” 14.

<sup>216</sup> Grethlein, “Homer and Heroic History,” 14.

<sup>217</sup> Lee Patterson, *Kinship Myth in Ancient Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>218</sup> Junker, *Interpreting the Images*, 28.

<sup>219</sup> Grethlein, “Homer and Heroic History,” 14.

<sup>220</sup> Junker, *Interpreting the Images*, 28.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>222</sup> Lee Patterson, *Kinship Myth in Ancient Greece*, 4.

The *Iliad* also served another function for the ancient Greeks: it outlined a history within a history that helped Greeks to maintain their identities. The *Iliad* itself is rife with documentation of kinship lineages that tie the story itself back to an even more remote past.<sup>223</sup> This phenomenon is known as ‘epic plupast,’ or *mise en abyme*, which means “the embedded past of the heroes figures as a mirror to the heroic past present in epic poetry.”<sup>224</sup> Homer included several mentions of age and an allusion to the previous pre-Trojan War generations in the *Iliad* (*Iliad* 1.259-64, 1.271-2, 9.527-8).<sup>225</sup> Homer’s accused exaggerations came into play when referencing the heroes of the Trojan War, such as Achilles and Diomedes.<sup>226</sup> However, there is a limit to the extent that the *Iliad* employs the epic plupast. Oral traditions are typically limited to the most recent generations, as the memorization of more than a few generations might seem excessive and unnecessary after a while.<sup>227</sup>

The epics, on the other hand, do not envisage a development, which leads from the heroic age to the present. According to scholar Jonas Grethlein, “the difference between epic past and the present is rather quantitative than qualitative.”<sup>228</sup> In many cases, “present interests prompt the heroes to turn to their past.”<sup>229</sup> There are three modes identified that explain the links to the past: causal, in which past and present are linked by heroes own experiences; continuity, which is often displayed by tracing genealogies in the text; and exemplum, which “directly juxtaposes a past event with the present” or searches for parallels to the past.<sup>230</sup> These modes are not only important to assessing how the characters in Homeric epics understood their own pasts, but also how Greeks understood their epic pasts.<sup>231</sup> However, while myths are given a sort of special authority in the realms of morality and identity, they still lack power when it comes to more “pragmatic interactions.”<sup>232</sup>

While an understanding of the Greek perceptions of the Trojan War is important, it is also useful to see how these perceptions played out in art, particularly in the fifth century BC. In Athens, there is the idea that monument are not just “architectural or art-historical works, but...forms of commemoration, as places of memory, as one of the conspicuous forms of making ‘history without historians.’”<sup>233</sup> Tonio Holscher explains their purpose quite concisely:

Monuments are designed and erected as signs of power and superiority. As such, they are effective factors in public life: not secondary reflections but primary objects and symbols of political actions and concepts. Monuments have their place in public space ... they inevitably address the community and, precisely because of

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<sup>223</sup> Grethlein, “Homer and Heroic History,” 15.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Quoted in Grethlein, “Homer and Heroic History,” 16.

<sup>226</sup> Grethlein, “Homer and Heroic History,” 17.

<sup>227</sup> Grethlein, “Homer and Heroic History,” 15.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>233</sup> H.A. Shapiro, “Attic Heroes and the Construction of the Athenian Past in the Fifth Century,” in *Greek Notions of the Past in the Archaic and Classical Eras*, ed. John Marincola, Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, and Calum Maciver (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 160.

their public nature, challenge it, provoking consent or contradiction; they do not allow indifference because recognition automatically means acceptance.<sup>234</sup>

Athenian monuments are especially useful when assessing the history of the area because they usually involve inscriptions that can give valuable information to the viewer.<sup>235</sup> There is also a shift in the purposes of monuments, as was described by Holscher previously: the emergence of political monuments, rather than monuments meant just for funerary purposes or votive offerings.<sup>236</sup> Monuments by nature cannot be hidden, and so their purpose becomes political because they will have a profound impact on the people who see them. Wars became an easy way to create a political agenda.

There is a frequent connection between the Trojan War and the Persian Wars against the Greeks throughout many forms.<sup>237</sup> The Persian Wars consisted of a series of wars spanning the beginning of the fifth century BC between the Greek states and the Persians.<sup>238</sup> The Persians attacked the Greek mainland at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC and were defeated largely by a significantly smaller army of Athenians and Plataeans.<sup>239</sup> In a naval and land battle near Thermopylae in 480 BC, the Persians defeated the Spartan forces and later burned down Athens.<sup>240</sup> The Persians were later defeated in the naval battle at Salamis and their invasions of the Greek mainland ended with their defeat at the Battle of Plataea in 479 BC.<sup>241</sup> However, conflicts between the Persians and the Greek states continued for another 30 years as Athens created the Delian League to free certain Ionian city-states from Persian control, which was finally ended by the Peace of Callias in 449 BC.<sup>242</sup> It is clear that the conflict between the Greeks and the Persians was intense and long lasting, which made it a major theme for art during the fifth century BC.

One of the earliest forms of this connection in art between the Persians and the Trojans comes from an epigram that is located on a herm.<sup>243</sup> The herm bears the following inscription:

Once from this city Menestheus, together with the Sons of Atreus,  
Led his men to the divine Trojan plain;  
Menestheus, who Homer said was an outstanding marshaller of battle (kosmeter)  
Among the well-armoured Achaeans who came to Troy.  
Thus there is nothing unseemly for the Athenians to be called  
Marshallers (kosmetais), both of war and of manly prowess (Plut. *Kimon* 7.5;tr.  
author).<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> T. Holscher, "Images and political identity: The case of Athens," in *Democracy, Empire and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, ed. D. Boedeker and K. Raaflaub (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 153-183, quoted in Shapiro, "Attic Heroes," 160-1.

<sup>235</sup> Shapiro, "Attic Heroes," 161.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>237</sup> Grethlein, "Homer and Heroic History," 19.

<sup>238</sup> "Greco-Persian Wars," Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/244117/Greco-Persian-Wars>

<sup>239</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Greco Persian Wars."

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Greco-Persian Wars."

<sup>243</sup> An epigram is a short poem, especially a satirical one, having a witty or ingenious ending. Shapiro, "Attic Heroes," 166.

<sup>244</sup> The translation comes from Shapiro, "Attic Heroes," 166.

Between the bravery and power of the Achaeans who stormed Troy in the *Iliad* and the Athenians who fought against the Persians. This association was very common for the Greeks and occurred as almost natural, and it served a very specific purpose. Menestheus was the leader of the Athenian regiment that fought in the Trojan War (*Iliad* 2.552), and as such he became a major figure for the Athenians to look to.<sup>245</sup> However, his small role in the Trojan War as a whole meant that Athenians had to focus on him when connecting their heritage and trying to promote their own prestige during the Persian War.<sup>246</sup> Even though their contribution to the Trojan War was minimal, Athenians still turned to their epic past to find a basis for their prowess during the Persian Wars.

The Athenian perception of the Trojans in general was negative in the public sphere when cast through the lens of the Persian War. The Athenians regarded the Trojans as eastern foreigners and barbarians.<sup>247</sup> According to scholar Edith Hall, “In fifth-century tragedy the Greeks are insistently demarcated from the rest of the world by the conceptual polarity of which all other distinctions in culture or psychology are corollaries, the polarity labeled as the gulf between Hellene and barbarian.”<sup>248</sup> Although this analysis refers to the vast distinction between Greeks and foreigners in Greek tragedies, the same concept about the difference between the Greeks and the “others” can be applied other areas such as art. The Greeks are also unique in this sense, since even though other cultures such as the Mesopotamians, Chinese, and Egyptians all conceptualized and had words for foreigners, “none of [them had] invented a term which precisely and exclusively embraced *all* who did not share their ethnicity.”<sup>249</sup> It could be argued that it was not until the fifth century the term for these vastly different barbarians was invented to show that the foreigners were in a conflict with the Greeks and that they were “the universal anti-Greek against whom Hellenic – especially Athenian – culture was defined.”<sup>250</sup> It is clear that there was an important distinction between the Greeks, especially the Athenians, and any non-Greeks who entered their realm.

A large way in which this Greek vs. non-Greek dichotomy evidenced itself was through art, especially Athenian art. The Athenians connected the Trojan War with the Persian Wars because “it was a myth that emphasized aggression rather than defence; in imitation of Agamemnon the Greeks would take the war to Asia.”<sup>251</sup> The most prominent way that this was accomplished was by juxtaposing the Trojan War with other wars and battles against non-Greeks in art and architectural features. The Painted Stoa is an important example of this visual comparison.<sup>252</sup> It showed three scenes from battles that were from three separate wars. On this stoa, the scene depicting the Trojans against the Greeks was in between the scene of the Athenians fighting the Amazons (or the Amazonomachy) and the Athenians defeating the Persians at the Battle of Marathon (during the Persian Wars) (Paus. 1.15.2).<sup>253</sup> Due to the nature of the stoa, the Trojans became “grouped with their Asiatic partners.”<sup>254</sup> This idea of associating the Trojans with foreigners was also shown by the metopes on the Parthenon, where the four scenes depicted were the Greeks versus the Trojans, the gods versus the giants, the Greeks versus the Amazons, and the

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<sup>245</sup> Shapiro, “Attic Heroes,” 167.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 4.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>251</sup> Andrew Erskine, *Troy Between Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 69.

<sup>252</sup> A stoa is a covered walkway or portico, commonly for public use.

<sup>253</sup> Quoted in Erskine, *Troy Between Greece and Rome*, 70.

<sup>254</sup> Erskine, *Troy Between Greece and Rome*, 70.

Greek Lapiths versus the centaurs.<sup>255</sup> Visually, the effect would be clear and quite impressive: there is a Greek vs. non-Greek dichotomy in each of these scenes. There is also an association of the Trojans with groups so foreign as to be almost inhuman. Centaurs and giants are not even fully human, so the metopes push the Trojans to the far end of the spectrum for humanity. Overall in the public sphere, the association of the Trojans to the warring Persians was made clear and the association was not a positive one.

This public perception of the Trojans as being “other” because of the association with the enemy Persians during the Persian Wars stands out because it is such a departure from how the Trojans are treated in the *Iliad*. In Homer’s epic, the Greeks and the Trojans are portrayed as being fairly similar groups of people. For example, both groups of people respect the idea of *xenia*, or guest friendship. When Glaucus and Diomedes, who come from opposing sides in the war, met in battle, Diomedes asked to hear of Glaucus’ lineage (*Iliad* 6.124). Once Glaucus explained his heritage and ancestors (*Iliad* 6.148-217), Diomedes stated they “have old ties of friendship” through their respective grandfathers and as a sign of this *xenia*, they both agree “we can’t cross spears with each other even in the thick of battle” (*Iliad* 6.221, 234-235). Even though they came from opposing sides in the war and were meant to fight to the death for the glory and victory of their respective sides, *xenia* outweighed their obligation to fight each other.

Another sign of similarity is shown by a phrase in Hector’s farewell speech to Andromache. When Andromache stated her worry about Hector heading off to war, Hector responded by stating, “You worry too much about me, Andromache. No one is going to send me to Hades before my time” (*Iliad*, 6.511-512). By discussing his fate with relation to Hades, Hector was admitting that as a Trojan he accepts the Greek pantheon of gods. This is of note because a group of barbarians who were considered to be removed from Greeks and Greek culture by fifth century Athenians would likely not have held the same beliefs. In fact, the two groups culturally would have differed because “the Greek army at Troy includes heroes from the whole length and breadth of the Greek mainland and the Aegean islands” while “the Trojan allies number several from Asia Minor with close ties to Greece through immigration and intermarriage” (*Iliad*. 2.534-997).<sup>256</sup> The shared acceptance of a belief system from groups who could have possibly been very different culturally points to similarities between the Trojans and the Greeks in Homer’s *Iliad*.

However, in the private sphere the perception of the Trojans by the Athenians shifted to a less negative one in light of the Peloponnesian War, a perception, which tied more closely with the perceptions of the Trojans in the *Iliad*. An example of this softening perspective would be the fact that many Athenians had similar names to Trojans from Homer’s epic, such as Aeneas and Hector.<sup>257</sup> The change from the negative perception in the public to the more accepted private view was made clear by the shift in the portrayal of Trojans in art. On pottery, most Trojans were portrayed as Greek, with the exception of Paris, who was usually displayed as oriental.<sup>258</sup> By the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Paris appears as oriental on red-figure paintings based on his adornment in “ornate trousers and a Phrygian cap.”<sup>259</sup> The differences on pottery between Greeks and Trojans were hard to tell, if there were any at all. Another shift concerning pottery was the change of actual scenes being displayed from the Trojan War. The pottery shifted from displaying acts of battle to acts of preparation for battle, which allowed the implication of equal status between the Trojans

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<sup>255</sup> Erskine, *Troy Between Greece and Rome*, 72.

<sup>256</sup> Quoted from Shapiro, *Myth into Art*, 2, in reference to the *Iliad* passages.

<sup>257</sup> Erskine, *Troy Between Greece and Rome*, 78-79.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>259</sup> Carpenter, *Art and Myth*, 198.

and Greeks in the battle scenes to be avoided without outright denying it.<sup>260</sup> One such example is a scene found on a red-figure cup. In this scene, Achilles is seen as tending to Patroclus' wounds, an event that would have taken place off to the side of a battlefield rather than directly on it.<sup>261</sup> One reason for this shift to a less extreme view of the Trojans could be the changing context of the Trojan War. During the Persian War, the Trojans were associated with the Persians. With the advent of the Peloponnesian War, Sparta became a common enemy for both the Athenians in the present and the Trojans in the mythological past.<sup>262</sup> Due to this link, the shift from Trojans being barbarians to being more similar to Greeks once again began.

Another major group that discussed the Trojans in their art was the Aeginetans, who also tried to connect the Persian War to the Trojan War following the Battle of Salamis. By invoking the history of the Aiakids, who were involved in both sieges of Troy during the times of King Laomedon in the first Trojan War and King Priam in the second Trojan War respectively, the Aeginetans were trying to promote their own glory in the Battle of Salamis against the Persians.<sup>263</sup> Their connection to the two sieges of Troy was shown by the two pediments in the Temple of Aphaia in Aegina. On this temple, the east pediment showed the siege by Heracles in the first Trojan War, while the west pediment showed the siege by Agamemnon in the Trojan War of Homer's *Iliad*.<sup>264</sup> On these pediments, the Homeric idea of the Trojans is still identifiable, since the Greeks and the Trojans in each scene are dressed similarly except for a single oriental-dressed archer.<sup>265</sup> It is also notable that in Pindar's Fifth Isthmian, he mentions Heracles, Hector, and Salamis within a few lines of each other, further emphasizing this link by way of proximity (Pind. *Isthm.* 5.34-50).<sup>266</sup> Overall, the Aeginetan perspective on the Trojans was that they didn't necessarily associate them closely with barbarians, but instead utilized a connection to the Persians in order to boost their own status.

Although there was certainly a connection between the Trojans and the Persians in Greek society and the art produced by the Greeks, the choice of the Trojan War also speaks to certain themes that were relevant during the fifth century BC. The Trojan War myth as a whole managed to "[create] a unified vision of the Heroic Age, of the natures of gods and heroes, their relationship to one another, of fundamental issues of life and death."<sup>267</sup> Warfare and its depictions in art served a multilayered purpose for the Greeks. With the onset of the Persian Wars, the use of the Trojan War as a recurring theme in art helped promote the idea that "every citizen had a potential role in warfare, and was trained and equipped accordingly."<sup>268</sup> War could affect everyone in a society, so it would make sense that the onset of a new war would spark past wars as themes for art.

The idea of mortality is also reflected by the depictions of the Trojan War in art, since it is the fact that humans must die, "which in the end makes them so much more interesting, many of the myths turn on the motif of the death of a hero."<sup>269</sup> Any depiction of war, regardless of how idealized it is or how peaceful the scene itself appears to be, "was always something that could get

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<sup>260</sup> Erskine, *Troy Between Greece and Rome*, 82.

<sup>261</sup> Junker, *Interpreting the Images*, 5.

<sup>262</sup> Erskine, *Troy Between Greece and Rome*, 76, 87.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> Quoted by Erskine, *Troy Between Greece and Rome*, 66-67.

<sup>267</sup> Shapiro, *Myth into Art*, 1.

<sup>268</sup> Junker, *Interpreting the Images*, 5.

<sup>269</sup> Shapiro, *Myth into Art*, 2.

across a message about one's own existence."<sup>270</sup> The looming danger of death was always present in wartime and therefore the idea that death as inescapable was apparent in the war-steeped culture of the fifth-century. The red-figure cup emphasizes this further by pairing the interior picture of Achilles and Patroclus on the cup with an exterior painting of Heracles; while Heracles becomes immortal, Achilles and Patroclus remain mortal and both die.<sup>271</sup> Athenian vase painting commonly used this theme of mortality and death in battle, which shows that Athenians had no issue with understanding that while war was glorified through battle scenes in art, it also had its consequences.<sup>272</sup>

Honor and glory also played a major role in both Greek society and the scenes chosen from the Trojan War in Greek art. The suicide of Ajax in the *Little Iliad* exemplifies this ideal of an honorable death.<sup>273</sup> In this epic, Ajax and Odysseus had quarreled over Achilles' armor (Soph. *Aj.* 41).<sup>274</sup> Odysseus won the vote due to the assistance of Athena, and Ajax responded by killing a flock of sheep that he had hallucinated were the Achaeans who had robbed him of the right to Achilles' armor (Soph. *Aj.* 1-70).<sup>275</sup> When he regained his sanity, Ajax realized the dishonor he had caused and committed suicide by falling on his sword (Soph. *Aj.* 332-692).<sup>276</sup> The scene is also described in Sophocles' *Ajax*, in which Ajax states that "The options for a noble man are only two: either live with honor, or make a quick and honorable death" (Soph. *Aj.* 480). This play, which appeared around 441 BC,<sup>277</sup> demonstrates just how important honor was to Greeks in the fifth century, as Ajax's guilt plagues him for hundreds of lines until his suicide as a form of honorable death. The same scene appears on a black-figure cup from around 580 BC by the Cavacade Painter in which Ajax is shown on the ground with the hilt of his sword protruding from his back.<sup>278</sup> Although there is a period of about 140 years between the play and the artwork, it shows just how important the theme of honor was to Greeks and how it was used in a variety of forms, including a portrayal of the Trojan War in art.

The appearance of the Trojan War in Greek art, especially during the fifth century BC, suited many needs. Not only did the inclusion of the Trojan War serve as a way to help the Greeks remember the myths and history of their past, but it helped link the Greeks to a common enemy during the period of the Persian Wars. Although the Trojans were treated much differently under Homer in the *Iliad*, the vast differences sometimes shown in art between the Trojans and the Greeks served the political purpose of uniting the independent Greek states together to take on a powerful enemy, while also applying several scenes from the *Iliad* to themes important in the era of the fifth century Greeks.

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<sup>270</sup> Junker, *Interpreting the Images*, 5.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>273</sup> Note: since no copies exist of the *Little Iliad*, the following description comes from Carpenter's understanding of the epic and the play by Sophocles.

<sup>274</sup> Carpenter, *Art and Myth*, 207.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> Philip Mayerson, *Classical Mythology in Literature, Art, and Music* (Lexington, MA; Toronto: Xerox College Publishing, 1971), 419.

<sup>278</sup> Susan Woodward, *Images of Myths in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33.