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A extract from the Chronicle &
sample of the Wallbook from
The What on Earth? Wallbook
Timeline of Big History

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Published by
What on Earth Publishing Ltd

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Archaeologist finds remains of ancient Troy

BY OUR ARCHAEOLOGY EDITOR,
Turkey, 28 May 1873

THE LOST CITY of Troy, the setting of one of ancient history's most epic conflicts, has been unearthed in Turkey, according to the German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann.

Troy was the powerful city described by the Greek poet Homer in his poems The Iliad and The Odyssey. It finally fell at the end of a bitter ten-year struggle between Greeks and Trojans.

Mr Schliemann says that he has found the site on the north-western shores

City featured by Homer in his epic poems now considered a matter of fact, not fiction

of Turkey, in the Ottoman Empire. For a long time, the city has been considered little more than a legend and the Trojan war only a fanciful story, but Mr Schliemann's discoveries place Troy firmly in the world of non-fiction. "My sole and only aim is to be able to establish a historical fact," he said.

The site which Mr Schliemann and his team have unearthed is made up of multiple settlements, each built over the top of the last. The most likely candidate

for Homer's Troy lies several layers down, beneath the remains of a later Roman city named Ilium.

The story of the fall of Troy is one of the most famous in Western literature. The Iliad describes events during the final year of the great conflict, which was initially triggered by the capture of the beautiful Greek queen, Helen. In revenge for her abduction, the Greek leader Agamemnon attempted to sack the wealthy city of Troy.

The poem is thought to have been written in about 850 BC during the collapse of Bronze Age civilisations, when much of Europe was ravaged by conflict and war.

The Odyssey, a sequel to The Iliad, describes the fall of Troy after Greek soldiers hid within a giant wooden horse which was wheeled inside the city by its curious citizens.

Historians are electrified by Mr Schliemann's finds, but remain sceptical of his claim to have found the great treasure hoard of the Trojan king Priam, arguing that it may have originated from another place or not be genuine at all.



Terracotta Army found buried in Chinese fields

BY OUR ASIA CORRESPONDENT,
Xi'an, 30 March 1974

A COLOSSAL ARMY of life-size clay soldiers has been accidentally found by a group of farmers in central China. The incredible figures are thought to be part of a giant military force that Chinese emperor Qin Shi Huangdi, who died in 210 BC, had buried with him to protect him in the afterlife.

While scouting for a new place to sink water wells, the farmers were

shocked by the sudden appearance of an ancient soldier, ready for battle. But this soldier wasn't out for blood – he was made of terracotta and had stood motionless at his post for thousands of years. After the farmers notified the authorities, archaeologists arrived to investigate. What they have found is truly astonishing.

Thousands of individually hand-crafted soldiers, some with chariots and horses, are now being unearthed at the site. Flecks of paint suggest that they were once vibrantly coloured,

and archaeologists have even found a wide variety of weapons buried alongside. Each figure appears to have been meticulously crafted with its own individual facial features, expression and personality.

At the centre of the site lies a sealed tomb, buried in a hillside. This is thought to be the location of a palace that may contain the remains of the emperor himself. Chinese authorities say this part will remain sealed for the foreseeable future for fear that opening the tomb may damage its priceless contents.

Ancient writings say the emperor created an underground kingdom, complete with a ceiling mimicking the night sky set with pearls as stars. The tomb itself is thought to be surrounded by rivers of liquid mercury, which ancient Chinese people believed could bestow immortality.

When Qin Shi Huangdi rose to power as ruler of the Qin kingdom, China was ravaged by civil war. Its various states had fought one another for hundreds of years, but this new ruler succeeded in defeating his rivals and uniting the country under a single banner, proclaiming himself Emperor of Qin. Except during brief periods of internal conflict, China's borders have remained largely unchanged ever since, making it the longest-surviving civilisation ever known.

Qin Shi Huangdi's reign saw the development of large-scale civic projects, one of which would eventually lead to the creation of the Great Wall of China. This massive barrier was built to stem the invasion of nomadic tribesmen from the north and eventually nearly stretched across the entire nation.

In his later life, Qin Shi Huangdi became obsessed by his own mortality and began a futile quest for the 'elixir of life', a magical substance that he hoped would allow him to live forever. His followers thought mercury – now known to be highly toxic – was the answer, leading to the emperor taking pills laced with the deadly substance. As a result, he died of suspected poisoning at the age of thirty-nine.

The practice of being buried with servants, soldiers and artefacts to provide protection in the afterlife is common to many unrelated ancient cultures, ranging from the Egyptians (the tombs of the pharaohs) to the Anglo-Saxons (ship burials such as the one found at Sutton Hoo).

World's largest amphitheatre opens with orgy of blood, guts and gore

BY OUR SPORTS EDITOR,
Rome, AD 80

A TEMPLE DEDICATED to violent entertainment has opened for business in the centre of Rome, capital of the vast Roman Empire.

The Colosseum, constructed from concrete and stone, is the largest amphitheatre ever built. The stunning new arena will be officially inaugurated by the Emperor Titus. More than a hundred days of bloody games will follow in front of audiences of more than fifty thousand – everybody from the nobility to the poor. Sports will include gladiatorial combats to the death, fights with exotic beasts, including lions, bears and elephants, and huge mock sea battles.

Gladiators are people captured from conquered lands, enslaved and forced to fight for their lives. Gladiatorial combat is thought to have originated from small-scale fights organised as funeral performances in honour of the dead. But today's contests are a



popular form of public entertainment throughout the Roman Empire.

Some gladiators have become major celebrities. One hundred and fifty years ago, Spartacus used the combat skills he had learned in gladiator school to

lead a rebellion that threatened the city of Rome. His rebel army was finally defeated in 71 BC by formidable forces under General Marcus Crassus.

Commentators say the Colosseum is designed to make sure such rebellions

never happen again, by channelling the aggressive instincts of Rome's huge population. Gruesome entertainments keep Rome's most violent people all in one place, safely under the watchful eye of the Praetorian Guard.

The Colosseum project has taken almost a decade to complete and was mostly paid for by treasures looted from Jerusalem. The sacking of the Temple in Jerusalem ten years ago followed a mass rebellion against Roman rule in the province of Judaea. Unrest has been frequent in that region ever since the crucifixion of the rebel Jewish leader Jesus Christ, whose followers are establishing a new religion called Christianity that is threatening to spread across the Empire.

The early years of Emperor Titus' reign have been beset by disasters. A great fire devastated Rome, plague still stalks the city's overcrowded streets and a massive volcanic eruption at Vesuvius last year wiped out the town of Pompeii. The Colosseum, Titus' latest gift to his people, will therefore be regarded as a welcome distraction.

Decline and fall of the once mighty Romans

Emperor Honorius orders the abandonment of Britain as Saxon tribes invade

BY OUR HOME AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT,
London, AD 410

NEARLY FOUR HUNDRED years of Roman rule in Britain have finally come to an end following the Empire's abandonment of the British Isles in the face of violent invasions by Saxon raiders from mainland Europe.

Honorius, Emperor of the Western Roman Empire, has rejected calls for all further aid from Rome, leaving the Roman occupiers of Britain to fend for themselves.

Meanwhile, Saxon bandits from northern Germany are increasingly raiding the coast of Britain in search of plunder. In some cases, they have been looking for places to settle.

Britain's Roman rulers had begun constructing a series of large forts along the island's coast in an effort to hold off the invaders. Despite this, Britons have been forced to take up arms themselves to repulse Saxon forces.

Rome's abandonment of Britain, its far north-western province, comes as little surprise to many, given the chaos now consuming the Western Empire.



The once mighty Roman Empire is under frequent threat from internal rebellions organised by ambitious generals. Citizens also live in constant fear of barbarian invasion from Germanic tribes and

hordes of nomadic warriors from central Asia that are sweeping across Europe.

Earlier this year the proud city of Rome itself was conquered and looted by a Germanic tribe known as the Visigoths. They were led by their general, Alaric, who was provoked into attacking Rome after Emperor Honorius ordered the massacre of many thousands of Visigoth men, women and children across the Empire. In revenge, the Visigoth army tore Rome apart, enslaving many of its inhabitants and looting homes, palaces, tombs and public buildings.

Also helping drive these unprecedented invasions is a terrifying tribe from the east, known as the Huns, who first appeared in Europe at the end of the last century. Although their origins remain largely a mystery, these hordes spread destruction wherever they go and are thought to have been responsible for driving Germanic tribes across the Rhine into the Western Empire three years ago, triggering the Germanic invasions.

For almost a thousand years the Roman Empire has remained unconquered, earning its capital city Rome the name 'the eternal city'. But now it seems to many as if the end of an era is upon us, as the Western Roman Empire crumbles to dust.

