



A Nonprofit Education Corporation  
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## MYTH, HISTORY AND POETRY IN HOMER'S ILIAD

Presented by Professor Howard Clarke

Three Wednesdays, January 7, 14, 21

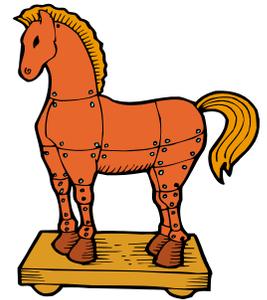
9:30am to 12:30pm

Valle Verde Social Room  
900 de Los Amigos

### The Historical Content and Background

The story of the Trojan War, along with the fall of the city and its aftermath, has had a special hold on the western imagination, so it is understandable that many have felt that so momentous an event must have some basis in history.

We will look at the three archaeological attempts to find material evidence that would corroborate the *Iliad's* narrative, first by Heinrich Schliemann (1870s, 1890s), then, in the 1930s by Carl Blegen of the University of Cincinnati, and most recently by Manfred Korfmann from the University of Tuebingen (1998-2002), and speculate to what extent the world of the Bronze Age also illuminates the special world of Homer's poem. And then there is Homer himself—if there was a Homer. How could an illiterate bard compose a poem of 15,693 lines, an effort as enormous as it was unprecedented? And what happened to Homer's oral poem when it was written down? By Homer himself? Or did he dictate it to a scribe?



### The Poem Itself

But all of these speculations, interesting though they may be, are of less importance than what Homer achieved, the *Iliad* we read today, usually in a English translation. And so most of our three sessions will be devoted to a book by book reading of the poem itself, noting the artistry of its structure, the personalities of its main characters, and the profundity of its themes. Of paramount interest for a modern reader seeking to appreciate the *Iliad* are the conventions of oral poetry, the distinctive "Homeric similes," and the various ways how out of Bronze Age myths Homer created nothing less than literature.

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#### ENROLLMENT FORM: *Myth, History & Poetry in Homer's Iliad*

VISTAS Members \$30/per person — Non-members \$45.00 per person  
Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: VISTAS Lifelong Learning, Inc., P.O. Box 23228, Santa Barbara, CA 93121-3228

Deadline for registration: December 24, 2008

Would you be willing to share a ride? Yes No

## Meaning and Influence

The *Iliad* has suffered from its admirers, always ready to acclaim it as a masterpiece but oddly reluctant to show much sympathy, much less affection, for its main hero or seek to understand his tragic predicament. In this session we will consider the poem in terms of its afterlife, its transformation, for example, into a medieval romance, a Renaissance allegory, and a modern tragedy. Is there now a modern consensus on its importance as the first and greatest of epics? Does it still have meaning for contemporary readers? Finally we will also look at the artistic record—the *Iliad* in painting and sculpture.

### BIOGRAPHY

Howard Clarke (Ph.D., Harvard, 1960) has taught at Harvard, Boston University, Oakland University, and UC Santa Barbara, from which he retired in 1991. He has authored and edited six books on classical antiquity, from Homeric epic to Matthew's Gospel. For the past fifteen years he has been lecturing on cruise ships visiting the *Mediterranean*.

### Books

Any *Iliad* translation is acceptable. The best prose version is the Rieu Penguin edition, as revised by Peter Jones; the best verse translation is by Richmond Lattimore. Inexpensive used copies of both are readily available.

## VISTAS Fall 2008 Calendar

Seminar/Event	Inclusive Dates	Time	Venue
Globalization	Tues., Dec. 2, 9, 16	9:30am-12:30pm	Karpeles Museum
Winter Social	Sun., Jan 25	1:30-4:30pm	Serra Hall
Meeting of the Minds Claire Chennault and the Flying Tigers	Mon., Feb. 2	TBA	TBA
Birding at Morrow Bay	Thurs. Feb. 19		
Documentary Film	Tues., Mar. 10, 17, 24	TBA	TBA
Women in Art	Thurs, Apr 2, 9, 16	TBA	TBA
Epic Naval Battles of the West	Mon., Apr. 13, 20, 27	TBA	TBA



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