

Günay Uslu

# Homer, Troy and the Turks

Heritage and Identity in the  
Late Ottoman Empire, 1870-1915

Homer, Troy and the Turks

# Heritage and Memory Studies

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# Homer, Troy and the Turks

*Heritage and Identity in the Late Ottoman Empire,  
1870-1915*

*Günay Uslu*

Amsterdam University Press

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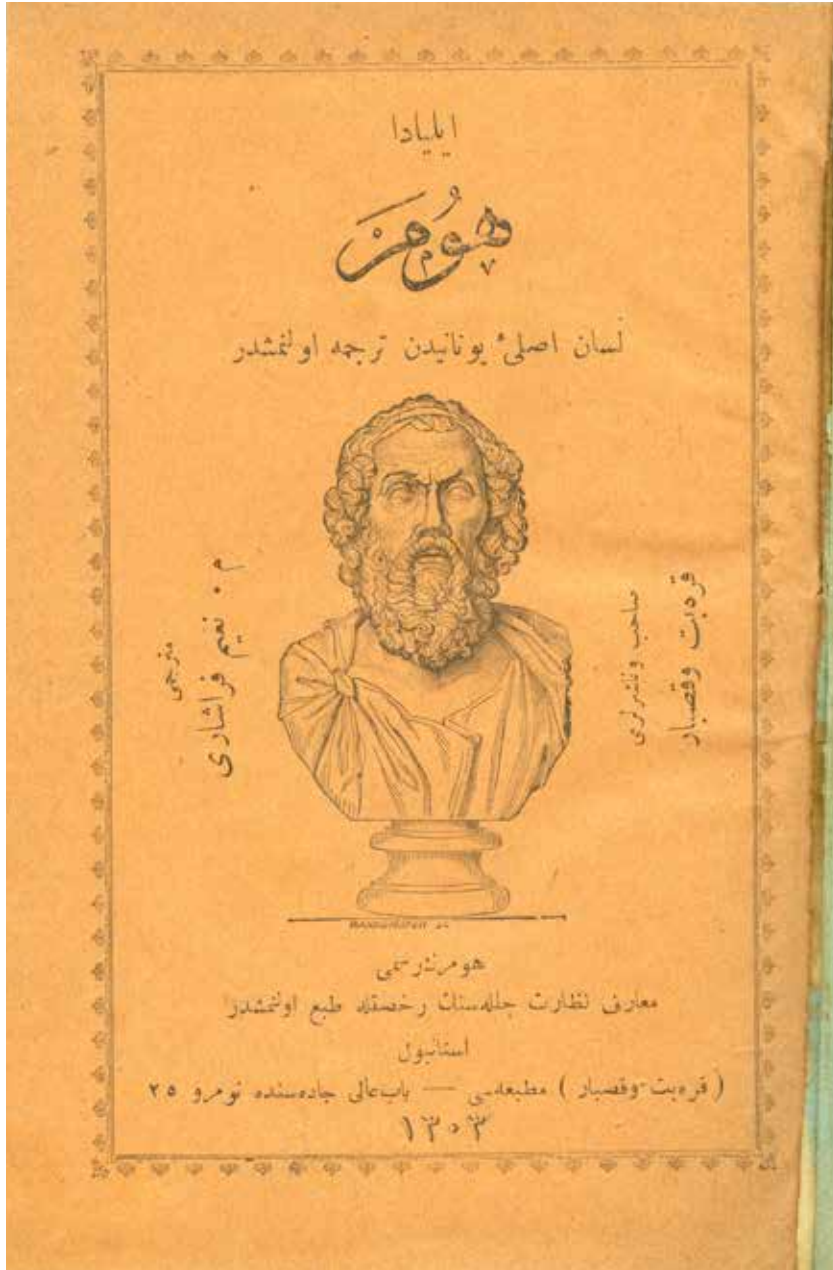
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Troy was situated near Çanakkale. Although in the past, Troy and both the siege and the war were thought to have existed only in the imagination, excavations in the surroundings have confirmed and supported the contents of the *Iliad*.  
*Na'im Fraşeri, Ilyada. Eser-i Homer (Istanbul, 1303/1885-1886), preface, 7, translated from Ottoman Turkish*

*To Hans Polak*

Figure 1 Frontispiece, Na'im Fraşeri, *Ilyada: Eser-i Homer* (Istanbul, 1303/1885-1886)



Source: Kelder, Uslu and Şerifoğlu, *Troy: City, Homer and Turkey*

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Source: Ward et al., *The Cambridge Modern History Atlas*

## Preface and Acknowledgements

It was during an excursion to Istanbul and Troy with students of the University of Amsterdam's Master Heritage Studies course in 2006 that the idea for this study arose. The purpose of the excursion was to investigate the function of heritage in Turkey and the contribution this heritage could make in the debate surrounding the negotiations for Turkey's accession to the European Union. Although we expected to see many foreign tourists at the World Heritage Site of Troy, most of the visitors were Turkish. We were even more surprised when some of the Turkish visitors began informing us about the Trojan origins of the Turks and the heroic deeds of the Turks in the 'Last Trojan War' of 1915 (the Battle of Gallipoli). This suggested that Homer and Troy, the first *lieux de mémoire* of Ancient Greek civilization and a fundamental element in the collective identity of European nations, also formed part of Turkish cultural memory.

While Turks have been present in Europe since the Middle Ages, they are largely excluded from most European cultural histories, in which the Homeric epics occupy an exceptional place. Clearly, besides firing the European imagination, Homeric heritage has also inspired Turkish cultural traditions. Our excursion to Troy awakened an interest in the role of Homer and Troy in Turkey, his reputed homeland and the location of Troy. In a series of invaluable sparring sessions with Professor Pim den Boer, my curiosity developed into a set of ambitious research questions directed towards re-examining the function of Homeric heritage, with particular reference to the perspective of the Ottoman Empire. A Mosaic grant from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) provided the means to realize this project and enabled me to conduct research. I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Professor den Boer, for his infectious enthusiasm, ground-breaking perspectives and incisive guidance. I wish to express my gratitude to my second supervisor, Professor Frank van Vree, who gave me new insights and has been generously helpful in the complicated final stage of this research project. Without the unceasing support of my supervisors this research could not have been realized.

The present study relies for a large part on Ottoman documents found in the Ottoman State Archives and the library and archives of the Museum of Archaeology in Istanbul. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to librarian Havva Koç and museum director Zeynep Kızıltan for their support and assistance in finding and exploring these valuable documents. Deciphering Ottoman Turkish manuscripts and literature was a great challenge.

I am grateful to my instructor in Ottoman Turkish, Mustafa Küçük, for his remarkable patience and enthusiasm as I learned to read and interpret nineteenth-century Ottoman-Turkish texts. I am grateful too to librarian Selahattin Öztürk, of the ISAM (İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi) Library, who helped me search Ottoman-Turkish publications and articles relating to Troy and Homer in periodicals and newspapers in various libraries in Istanbul, such as the Atatürk Library, the Beyazit State Library and the ISAM Library in Istanbul. I am grateful to Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu for his invaluable support in finding precious sources, for connecting me with the right people and institutions in Turkey, and above all for cooperating in organizing a symposium, an exhibition and accompanying publications on the subject of this survey.

From December 2012 to May 2013, the Archaeology Museum of the University of Amsterdam (Allard Pierson Museum) hosted an exhibition titled *Troy: City, Homer and Turkey* featuring exceptional loans from Turkish collections and accompanied by an eponymous catalogue. As senior editor of that publication and one of the exhibition curators, I gained considerable insight and experience in how to make the subject of this PhD study appealing to a broader public. I immersed myself in the topic even further as a member of the organizing committee of the 'New Perspectives on Archaeology and Cultural Heritage in Turkey' symposium at Allard Pierson Museum in 2013, and connected and worked with leading scholars of the heritage of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, including Edhem Eldem, Zeynep Çelik, Wendy M.K. Shaw and Murat Belge. I would like to thank all those with whom I have had the pleasure of working on the symposium, the exhibition and the publications: Wim Hupperetz, Vladimir Stissi, Jorrit Kelder, Gert Jan van Wijngaarden, René van Beek, Floris van den Eijnde, Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, Paulien Retèl, Marian Schilder, Steph Scholten, Gökçe Ağaoğlu, Rüstem Aslan, Mithat Atabay, Cem Utkan, M. Hakan Cengiz, Enis Tataroğlu (then director of the Turkish Tourist Office in the Netherlands), Uğur Doğan (then Turkish ambassador in the Netherlands), and the secretary of state of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey at the time, Özgür Özaslan.

I would like to thank the staff of Gennadius Library of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens for granting me permission to explore the Schliemann Archive. I am most grateful to the staff of the Netherlands Institute Turkey (NIT) in Istanbul, who were helpful in various ways, in particular director Fokke Gerritsen. I also extend special thanks the Archive of the Heinrich Schliemann Museum in Ankershagen, in particular to Gerhard Pohlan, and Bijzondere Collecties of the University of Amsterdam.

Parts of this survey have been published previously. A version of the introduction appeared in 'New Perspectives on Archaeology and Cultural Heritage in Turkey,' a special edition of the Turkish art periodical *ST: Sanat Tarihi Araştırmaları* (2013). An adaption of Chapter 1 was included in *Tijdschrift voor Mediterrane Archeologie* (2009) and in *Troy: City, Homer and Turkey* (2012), in which a version of Chapter 4 also appeared. Finally, many of the figures and captions in this survey also appeared in these publications and were incorporated in various exhibition materials and texts.

I would like to thank Ans Bulles for the careful editing of the English text, Charlie Smid for her critical reading and great support in the final stage of this venture and Sam Herman for editing the current published version. Others to whom I am indebted include Mirjam Hoijsink, Alja Schmidt, Geert Snoeijer, Saffet Gözlükaya, Alexander Bessem, Pieter Hilhorst, Friso Hoeneveld, Kazim Ayvaz, Huriye Ayvaz, Zeynep Ayvaz, Leonie van den Heuvel, Atilay Uslu, Meral Uslu, Tuncay Uslu and my parents, Fadime and Ata Uslu.

My greatest thanks go to my partner, Mehmet Ayvaz, and our children Rana and Kaan; thank you for your patience and encouragement.

Figure 3 The Road to Troy



Photo: Geert Snoeijer, 6 November 2012



# Introduction

'Homer a native of Izmir. The city's gateway to culture': these words are emblazoned on the cover of the leading monthly *Izmir Life*.<sup>1</sup> The magazine's February 2008 edition formed a platform for prominent members of society to consider and reflect how to demonstrate Homer's fundamental importance to Izmir's identity: Turkey's third most populous city, located on the Gulf of Izmir (Aegean Sea). The ideas advanced here provide an insight into Izmir's appropriation of the Homeric heritage. The discussions focus on the importance of building monuments to Homer in the city, establishing academic and popular institutions for Homeric research and exploring the city's tangible Homeric heritage more intensively, such as Homer's caves and the Homer monument at the Yeşildere Delta, on which a quote attributed to Homer states: 'I was born in the lap of Izmir, where the Meles joins the sea' (Fig. 4).

The origins and date of birth of Greece's most famous poet, the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, without doubt among the most influential literary works in the history of Western civilization, are uncertain. Neither is it clear exactly where and when the *Iliad*, describing the Trojan War, and the *Odyssey*, the story of the return voyage of the Greek hero Odysseus after the fall of Troy, were composed. Researchers place Homer and his works between the ninth and seventh century BC, while the idiom of the poems indicates Izmir (Smyrna) and Cyme in Turkey or the Greek island Chios as his birthplace.<sup>2</sup>

Homer's leading role in the marketing of Izmir is nothing new. Tourist leaflets published by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture have been pointing it out for years: *Izmir, Hometown of Homer*. Official (tourism) websites of the Izmir region emphasize Homer's Smyrnian origins and underscore the Anatolian identity of the Trojans. Troy's Anatolian identity is the subject of a popular dance performance *An Anatolian Legend Troy: A Dance Show from Its Native Land*, which attracts full houses. A square in the city of Izmir bears the name of Ancient Homer. The city hosts an annual Homer Festival, confers Homer awards on major Turkish poets, and has ambitious plans to construct a large monument to Homer in Classical style on Mount Pagos (Kadifekale), overlooking the Gulf of Izmir.<sup>3</sup>

1 Özsüpandağ Yayman, 'Izmirli Homeros, şehrin kültüre açılan kapısı.'

2 The dialect in the poems is a mixture of Ionian and Aeolian. These regions are situated in overlapping areas. Source: De Jong, 'Homer', 13; See also Kelder, 'The Origins of the Trojan Cycle', 16-19.

3 Dikmen, 'Izmir Homeros ile taçlandırılmalıdır.'

Çanakkale, where the archaeological site of Troy is located, is even more ambitious.<sup>4</sup> Its popular Troy Festival has been a huge attraction for decades. The annual Homer reading event and poetry days are well known. The Trojan horse appears in various designs and forms, from poster to wooden effigy, all over the province of Çanakkale (Fig. 5). The Ancient geography of the north-west of this province, the Troad, with its famous heroes defending their city on the Asian shore of the Dardanelles, gloriously described in Homer's *Iliad*, acquired an even greater legendary and mythical status among the Turks in 1915 with the Battle of Gallipoli,<sup>5</sup> when they defended the strait against the allied armies of the West in the First World War. In the modern landscape of the Troad the Ancient epic of the Trojan War and the modern legend of Gallipoli have become interwoven and the remains and signs of both stories are scattered all around the area a century after the latest defence of the Dardanelles.

The construction of a colossal modern museum near the archaeological site to house finds from the various excavations at Troy is part of this celebration. The reclamation and return of artefacts from Troy – many of which were removed illegally from the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century and dispersed around the world – is high on the political agenda of the Turkish government. In international newspapers Turkish officials have proclaimed: 'We only want back what is rightfully ours.' According to former culture minister Ertuğrul Günay, who calls Troy the 'Istanbul of Ancient ages,' 'Artefacts, just like people, animals or plants, have souls and historical memories' and 'When they are repatriated to their countries, the balance of nature will be restored.'<sup>6</sup> In this context, 24 pieces of jewellery from Troy held by the American Penn Museum (University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) were recently returned to Turkey. These artefacts received on indefinite loan will be part of the collection displayed at the new Troy Museum near the archaeological site.<sup>7</sup>

4 Troy became a Historical National Park in 1996; in 1998 the site was placed on the World Heritage List. Other historical heritage sites in the Çanakkale region also became National Parks, such as Ida Mountain (Kazdağı), a National Park since 1993, and Gallipoli, which became a Peace Park in 1973.

5 The Turkish name for the Dardanelles Campaign or Battle of Gallipoli is the Battle of Çanakkale. Çanakkale is the main town on the Asian side of the Dardanelles Strait, source: Broadbent, *Gallipoli*, 17.

6 Bilefsky, 'Seeking Return of Art, Turkey Jolts Museums.'

7 'Günay Heralds Return of Ancient Troy Artefacts.' For a critical view of the political dimensions of archaeology and the political, particularly nationalistic claims and use of antiquities by 'source countries' (countries where antiquities were and are found), see: Cuno, *Who Owns Antiquity?*

### Homeric Heritage: Transformation, Reuse and Reclamation

Homer was already celebrated in Classical Antiquity. Over the centuries, Homeric heroes, their deeds and their motives, were honoured, reinvented, adopted and reworked. Alexander the Great himself identified with Homeric heroes and visited Troy. Homer's epics were studied in Greek in the Roman Empire. Both Julius Caesar (100-44 BC) and his adopted son Octavian Augustus (63-14 BC) traced their origins to the Trojan hero Aeneas, while in the time of Augustus, Rome's foundation was linked to the destruction of Troy. The Roman poet Virgil (70-19 BC) glorified this myth in his *Aeneid* and Troy became a destination for those wishing to pay homage at the remains of the legendary city.

After the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, Homer continued to be studied in the centres of Greek knowledge in the east until the Eastern Roman Empire finally collapsed with the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453.<sup>8</sup> Sentiment in mediaeval Europe favoured the Trojans, famed as glorious warriors, or, in the words of David Lowenthal, a leading authority in the field of heritage studies, 'history's quintessential losers.'<sup>9</sup> For centuries European countries identified with Troy and traced their founders to the Trojan heroes to provide honourable and glorious ancestors.<sup>10</sup> Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror (1432-1481) saw himself as the ruler of the Eastern Roman Empire (Kaiser-i Rum) and in his search for historical legitimacy he identified with the Trojans: 'we Asians.' In doing so, he joined the tradition of European countries tracing their founders to Homer's heroes (Fig. 6).<sup>11</sup>

Transformation, reuse and reclamation characterizes Homeric heritage. In his famous study of *lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora analyses the construction and development of sites of national memory and key notions of national identity. *Lieux de mémoire* may be described as concrete or abstract places to which identity-defining memories have been attached and anchored. Nora's project is 'less interested in what actually happened than its perpetual reuse and misuse, its influence on successive presents; less interested in traditions than in the way in which traditions are constituted and passed on.'<sup>12</sup>

8 Den Boer, 'Homer and Troy,' 112-118.

9 Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, 68, 74-76.

10 Recent publications on Trojan Legends: Shepard and Powell, *Fantasies of Troy*; Thompson, *The Trojan War*.

11 Ortaylı, *Tarihin Izinde*, 67-69; Rijser, 'The Second Round'; Spencer, 'Turks and Trojans in the Renaissance'; Harper, 'Rome versus Istanbul'; see also Harper, 'Turks as Trojans, Trojans as Turks'; Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, in Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 9.

12 Nora and Kritzman, *Realms of Memory*, introduction.

Hence, *lieux de mémoire* 'only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications.'<sup>13</sup> From this perspective, the Turkish appropriation and identification with the 'patriot' Homer and the 'Anatolian' Trojans is not exceptional; it is characteristic of heritage. As Lowenthal maintains, heritage is a key ingredient when domesticating the past and using it for today's causes. He emphasizes the distinction between history and heritage: 'History explores and explains the past grown ever more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes.'<sup>14</sup> Heritage is the chief focus of patriotism and a vital tool for tourism. Furthermore, Lowenthal notes that every manifestation of heritage excites a jealous possessiveness, since 'heritage is not any old past. [...] It is the past we glory in or agonize over, the past through whose lens we construct our present identity, the past that defines us to ourselves and presents us to others.'<sup>15</sup> In this sense, the use of Homeric heritage (the poems, Troy, artefacts) as a tool with which to claim identity fits the general pattern.

### Homer and Troy: European Identity

Heritage is closely connected with identity. Homer, who gave Antiquity its mythical ideology, is considered one of the founding fathers of European culture and therefore quintessential to the formation of European identity. Exploring the process of appropriation of Homeric heritage in Europe in his article 'Homer in Modern Europe,' historian Pim den Boer notes 'the misunderstanding, misjudgement, historical errors and distortions of Homer' and discusses the use and abuse of Homeric texts through the ages.<sup>16</sup>

However, until the eighteenth century it was Virgil rather than Homer who was more appreciated in Europe. This changed with the rise of primitivism and pre-Romanticism. Homer's simplicity of manners and his observations of nature rose in esteem.<sup>17</sup>

Early-eighteenth-century translations of Homer, by Madame Dacier (1654-1720) and Alexander Pope (1688-1744), affected the intellectual climate profoundly and ushered in a new appreciation of Ancient Greece. As Richard Stoneman shows in *Land of Lost Gods*, 'The Homeric taste was born. Homer encapsulated and prefigured the main trends of the Greek

13 Nora, 'Between Memory and History,' 7, 19-22.

14 Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, introduction.

15 Lowenthal, 'Heritage and History,' 29; Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*, introduction.

16 Den Boer, 'Homer in Modern Europe,' in *Pharos*; and Den Boer, 'Homer in Modern Europe,' in *European Review*.

17 For a history of Homer's reception, see: Clarke, *Homer's Readers*.

Revival: consummate artistry, truth to nature, and a genius which rapt the beholder. To be Greek meant to exhibit a matchless simplicity and naturalness.' Ancient Greece represented the concepts of freedom, beauty and knowledge and Homer was the acme of Greek literary genius.<sup>18</sup>

In this intellectual climate, the geographical context of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* attracted travellers and scholarly members of newly founded antiquarian societies, such as the English Society of the Dilettanti (1734). The desire to visit the Troad with a copy of Homer to hand just to be close to that sublime world excited the minds of these travellers. In his *Ruins of Palmyra* (1753), Robert Wood tells us that his travels to the eastern Mediterranean were stirred by his longing to read Homeric poems 'in the countries where Ulysses travelled and where Homer sung' in order to understand them better.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, increasing interest in archaeology and the discovery of the geographical context of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* stimulated interest in Homer even more. Finally, during the nineteenth century Homer became the original master of European poetry.

Affection for Greece flourished among well-educated Europeans in this period. The Greek War of Independence (1821-1832) against the Ottomans stimulated an even greater interest in Ancient Greece. A personal identification with the classics transformed into a national identification and the study of the classics came under the influence of modern nation building. In this era of neo-humanism, characterized by the nationalization of humanities, Classical Greece laid the groundwork for the construction of national identities in European countries such as Germany, England and France. The identification of Europe with civilization and emerging cultural nationalism in the nineteenth century increased the appreciation of Homer and his heroes in Europe all the more. Homer became a powerful element in European education in a period in which the masses adopted nationalism.<sup>20</sup>

Archaeology played a major role in the legitimization of national identities. In his groundbreaking work on the origins of archaeology, *The Discovery of the Past*, Alain Schnapp regards archaeology as a nineteenth-century invention.<sup>21</sup> Scholarly interest in Antiquity – whether historical texts or material remains – had existed since Ancient times, irrespective of origin or

18 Den Boer, 'Homer in Modern Europe,' in *European Review*, 171-176; Stoneman, *Land of Lost Gods*, 111-120.

19 Bahrani, Çelik and Eldem, *Scramble for the Past*, 19-21.

20 Den Boer, 'Neohumanism'; Den Boer, 'Homer in Modern Europe,' in *European Review*, 177-181; for relevant work on the emergence and development of nationalism and mass democracy, see: Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses*.

21 Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past*.

religion. By the nineteenth century, however, European interest in Antiquity was no longer just antiquarian or scholastic; it had become interwoven with a new understanding of history – which had developed from universal to national – and Western imperialism, with its ambitions of colonial expansion and cultural supremacy.<sup>22</sup> Europeans had appropriated the role of inheritors of Antiquity, responsible for its study and preservation. The study of antiquities became the study of the origins of European civilization ‘presented as a new discovery and development, emerging out of Western European forms of scholarly knowledge.’ Hence, the development of archaeology and ideas were closely related to the political aims of nations and their ‘constructions of the European Ancient past in the Mediterranean world.’<sup>23</sup>

In the nineteenth century, modern museums were instrumental in associating ‘civilization’ with Europe and in promoting of this idea.<sup>24</sup> Particularly after the 1840s, national identity became the focus of Europe’s museums. By the 1870s, museums in Europe’s capital cities were expanding further and more large-scale state-funded archaeological expeditions were being organized. Through narratives of the museums, Classical objects became national symbols and a fundamental part of the modern collective identity of nations. The desire to collect antiquities to stock the European museums reached new heights. Antique collections represented national power and influence.<sup>25</sup> Possessing Ancient objects meant being part of the narrative of the universal history of civilization, and above all, it implied the possession of ‘the idea they represented: civilization itself.’ This led to competition between European nations for the ownership of the material remains of Ancient Greece.<sup>26</sup>

The ‘inherited’ remains of Classical Greece for which European museums competed were not in France, Germany or Britain: most lay on and under Ottoman soil. The Ottomans, however, were not exactly Europe’s favourites.

22 Bahrani, Çelik and Eldem, *Scramble for the Past*, 177, 150. For the development of a new understanding of history in the first part of the nineteenth century, see: Foucault, *The Order of Things*; for the study of universal history and national history, see: Bödeker, ‘The Debates about Universal History and National History’; for a critical treatise of the history of European expansion around the world and its ‘universal’ legitimizations, see: Wallerstein, *European Universalism*.

23 Bahrani, Çelik and Eldem, *Scramble for the Past*, 16, 25-29.

24 For the correlation between civilization and Europe, see: Den Boer, *Europa*; and Den Boer, *Beschaving*.

25 For the development and function of national museums and the relationship with constructions of national identities, see: Meijers et al., ‘National Museums and National Identity,’ 10-13; and Hoijtink, *Exhibiting the Past*. For the Ottoman context, see: Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*.

26 Bahrani, Çelik and Eldem, *Scramble for the Past*, introduction.

On the contrary, as the leader of the British Liberal Party, Prime Minister William Gladstone (1809-1898), who wrote several articles and books about Homer, once stated, ‘from the black day when they first entered Europe, [they have been] the one great anti-human specimen of humanity. Wherever they went, a broad line of blood marked the track behind them; and, as far as their dominion reached, civilisation disappeared from view’: the Ottomans were described as ‘terrifying invaders.’<sup>27</sup> Considering themselves the legitimate claimants of Ancient Greece, European nations believed that they had to protect this heritage against the ‘barbarian’ inhabitants of these regions in the East, who could not have any historical relationship to Ancient sites and antiquities. European moral superiority justified intervention and the export of antiquities.<sup>28</sup>

An important source for the Classical idea of the contrast between East and West, Orient and Occident, Asia and Europe was in fact Homer. In the history of Greek ideology the Trojan War played a significant role in the military conflicts with the East.<sup>29</sup> From a political perspective, it was crucial for this war to ‘be interpreted as a battle of East against West, Europe against Asia. Whoever undertook anything similar recalled the epic model.’<sup>30</sup> This principal idea of a contrast between East and West was expressed by Gladstone as follows: ‘A finer sense, higher intelligence, a firmer and more masculine tissue of character, were the basis of distinctions in polity which were then Achaian and Trojan only, but have since, through long ages of history been in no small measure European and Asian respectively.’<sup>31</sup>

### The Longest Century of the Empire

The nineteenth century or the ‘longest century of the Empire,’ as the prominent Turkish historian İlber Ortaylı termed this tumultuous final century of Ottoman rule, was a turbulent and enervating era in which major transformations took place and the foundations were laid for crucial future developments and institutions.<sup>32</sup> Once one of the most powerful

27 Gladstone, *The Turco-Servian War*, 9.

28 Bahrani, ‘Untold Tales of Mesopotamian Discovery,’ 126; and Toliaş, “An Inconsiderate Love of the Arts,” 71-73.

29 Wesselman and Gyr, ‘Ein ideologischer Ausgangspunkt Europäischen Denkens.’

30 Korfmann and Mannsperger, *Homer*, 8.

31 Quoted in Den Boer, ‘Homer in Modern Europe,’ in *European Review*, 180. Medieval sentiment favoured the Trojans. For centuries legendary rulers and various individuals identified with Troy and traced their origins to the Trojan heroes. Until the eighteenth century Virgil was more appreciated. This changed with the study of Greek texts. In the eighteenth century, Homer rose in esteem and affection for Greece increased (see pp. 12-16 above).

32 Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*.

forces in the world, controlling much of Southeast Europe, North Africa and West Asia, the Ottoman Empire had fallen into disrepair and faced major internal nationalist movements and the aspirations of European imperial powers eager to take over their territory. Separatist movements were often supported by various Great Powers and resulted in huge territorial losses.

In the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, this fragmentation of the Empire reached new heights: vast European provinces were lost and the new hegemony of Europe proved a painful awakening as the Great Powers continued 'parceling out Ottoman territories and forcing its wishes on the world.' Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania became formally sovereign and Bosnia and Herzegovina were placed under Habsburg administration. These territorial losses continued until the First World War.<sup>33</sup>

The Ottoman Empire's weakness and its consequent political, economic and social malaise became a major issue on the international political agenda. European attitudes were ambivalent: on the one hand there was a consensus for maintaining the Empire and on the other, the various wars with the Empire and support of separatist movements stimulated its disintegration.<sup>34</sup>

This weakness and disintegration was experienced acutely in the Ottoman Empire. Leading figures in Ottoman society sought ways to save the Empire with grand plans for modernization. During the Tanzimat (reorganization) era (1839-1876) the government explicitly adopted European values, the basic principles of the Enlightenment, and modernization became a state programme. With the Tanzimat edict of 1839, the Empire and Ottoman society set aside the heritage it had nurtured for centuries and entered a new age based on Western European values, a civilization with which it had been in conflict for centuries.<sup>35</sup>

The main goal of this radical top-down programme of political reform promulgated by Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) and carried out by his sons Sultan Abdülmecid I (1823-1861) and Abdülaziz I (1830-1876) was to create a modern, centralized, unitary and constitutional state to restrain separatist movements and control power. This centralization of the state during the

33 Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 59.

34 The so-called 'Eastern Question' was essentially about satisfying the national movements in the Balkans and the imperialist ambitions of the Great Powers without destroying the Ottoman Empire. While if the Empire did collapse, the question was how to divide it to avoid disturbing the European balance of power, see: Zürcher, *Turkey*, 38; see also: Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, 32; and Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 56.

35 Tanpınar, *XIX. Asr Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, 126-129; the Tanzimat period coincided with Europe's economic boom of the mid-nineteenth century.



Tanzimat period created a powerful bureaucracy. Many of the new bureaucrats attended European schools to learn Western languages and skills, which they passed on to successive generations of Ottoman students. These bureaucrats presented a new Ottoman identity, with a modern, Western outlook and lifestyle.<sup>36</sup>

The nineteenth-century reforms and Westernization stimulated European cultural influences in Ottoman-Turkish art, literature and culture. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Empire experienced a cultural metamorphosis: Western political concepts, Enlightenment ideas, Ancient philosophy and history and civilization became a part of the Turkish intellectual patrimony.<sup>37</sup>

### Ottoman Reclamation of Classical Antiquities

Transformations in social, economic and political life triggered the search for change in Ottoman literature. In the 1850s, a new literary wave known as New Ottoman/Turkish Literature was closely connected with French literature.<sup>38</sup> Translations of eighteenth-century classics such as Fénelon's novel *Les Aventures de Télémaque*, philosophical dialogues by various French writers such as Voltaire (*Dialogues et Entretiens Philosophiques*), Fénelon (*Dialogues*) and Fontenelle (*Dialogue des Morts*) and poetry by La Fontaine, Lamartine, Gilbert and Racine engendered a lively interest in Ancient Greek history and mythology and triggered new translations.<sup>39</sup>

The intellectual modernization, the improvement of public education, the rise of printing and publishing and innovations in Ottoman literature in the second half of the nineteenth century created a climate in which Western humanist philosophy and Classical Greek literature could penetrate Ottoman literature and shape the ideas of the intelligentsia of the late Empire period. New literary genres appeared; knowledge of Greek literature and tragedy increased and became a growing point of reference; in Ottoman

36 Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 62-64; Zürcher, *Turkey*, 56-58, 66-68.

37 Renda, 'The Ottoman Empire and Europe'; for a general account of Ottoman modernization processes, see Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*; Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*; Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*; Shaw and Shaw, *A History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*.

38 Yüksel, *Türk Edebiyatında Yunan Antikitesi*, 2-4, 23; Budak, *Münif Paşa*, 289, 362-368, 397; Okay, 'Osmanlı Devleti'nin Yenileme Döneminde Türk Edebiyatı'; Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, 244-254; Tanpınar, *Edebiyat Dersleri*, 59.

39 Baker and Saldanha, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 556; Toker, 'Türk Edebiyatında Nev Yunanilik'; see also Meriç, *Bu Ülke*, 115; Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, 38-40; and Yüksel, *Türk Edebiyatında Yunan Antikitesi*, 1-3.

painting and sculpture Greek mythology also became a significant source of inspiration.<sup>40</sup>

Changes in society intensify the need for history. As Herman Lübbe, who introduced the concept of '*Musealisierung*,' emphasizes, the institutionalization of historical interest in the West is closely linked to the pace of modernization.<sup>41</sup> The new Ottoman institutions which emerged in this era of modernization, such as the ministries of trade and commerce, health, education and public works, included a museum. Although antiquities had been collected for centuries, the Empire's first formal 'Collection of Antiquities' was established in 1846. By 1869, the Ottomans had published their first law on antiquities and established their now considerably expanded collection at the Imperial Museum (Müze-i Hümayun), which was presented as a product of progress and modernity.<sup>42</sup>

Separatist movements in the Balkans and in Anatolia and the 'continuing territorial erosion' of the nineteenth century robbed the Empire of many of the ethnic groups that had formed part of its imperial identity for centuries. For the intelligentsia and the ruling elite, the Empire needed a new identity. In this process of cultural change and search for identity, 'the multiple layers of the land's history' were embraced and Ancient artefacts – *asar-i atika* in the bureaucratic jargon of the time<sup>43</sup> – were increasingly collected, preserved and displayed in the Ottoman Imperial Museum.<sup>44</sup>

40 Yüksel, *Türk Edebiyatında Yunan Antikitesi*, 2-4, 23; Budak, *Münif Paşa*, 289, 362-368, 397; Okay, 'Osmanlı Devleti'nin Yenileşme Döneminde Türk Edebiyatı'; Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, 244-254; Tanpınar, *Edebiyat Dersleri*, 59.

41 Lübbe, *Der Fortschritt und das Museum*, 16-19.

42 Çal, 'Osmanlı Devleti'nde Asar-ı Atika Nizamnameleri'; Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 47; Eldem, 'From Blissful Indifference to Anguished Concern.'

43 Nineteenth-century bureaucratic correspondence, antiquities regulations and laws show how the Ottoman definition of antiquities changed. Early-nineteenth-century texts refer to antiquities as 'image-bearing stones' (*musavver taş parçası*) or 'old marble stones and earthen pots decorated with figures' (*eski suretli mermer taşları ve toprak saksıları*). In the 1820s, terms like 'ancient buildings' (*ebniye-i kadime asarı*) entered the administrative jargon. Later in the nineteenth century, antiquities were generally called '*asar-i atika*,' as well as 'the valuable produce of the [Ottoman] land of plenty.' The antiquities law of 1884 defined Ancient objects as 'all of the artefacts left by the Ancient peoples who inhabited the Ottoman Empire.' The Ottoman elite developed their vision of antiquities from stones without historical or artistic value to essential aesthetic and historical objects which were part of the Ottoman patrimony. Source: Çal, 'Osmanlı Devleti'nde Asar-ı Atika Nizamnameleri'; Eldem, 'From Blissful Indifference to Anguished Concern'; Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 108-127; Ersoy, 'A Sartorial Tribute to Late Ottomanism,' 204n17.

44 Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 53-57; Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 95; Çelik, 'Defining Empire's Patrimony,' in *Essays*, 2.

### Discovery of Troy

Fascinated by Homer and in search of the historicity of the *Iliad*, archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890) began excavating at Hisarlık on the Asian shore of the Dardanelles in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>45</sup> His excavations were some of the most extensive archaeological projects in the Ottoman territories. Schliemann carried out his famous excavations at a time when the Muslim cultural elite of the Ottoman Empire had already begun to appreciate the Classical heritage.

Following his first series of excavations (1871-1874), Schliemann claimed that he had discovered Homeric Troy and found what he hailed as Priam's Treasure, which he then illegally removed from the Empire. Schliemann's archaeological activities and his Trojan discoveries received global acclaim and were the toast of nineteenth-century Europe. They triggered an even more intense European appropriation of Homer.<sup>46</sup>

Schliemann's research and excavations in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and that of his successor Wilhelm Dörpfeld, revealed many impressive walls and an archaeological web of successive layers spanning a period of over four thousand years. It seemed that Troy had a long history of human habitation and that there was not one Troy, but many. At least ten.<sup>47</sup>

### New Heroes of the Dardanelles

The years prior to the First World War were turbulent and dynamic, and presaged the imminent ruin of the Ottoman Empire. Revolutions, coups and wars shook its foundations, leading to internal unrest and yet more territorial losses. Some of the principal events include the constitutional revolution of 1908 by the Young Turks (united in the Committee of Union and Progress, CUP)<sup>48</sup> and the end of the Hamidian regime, the counterrevolution of 1909, revolts in Albania, Kosovo and Yemen, the Ottoman-Italian War of 1911-1912, the coup of 1913 (consolidating the power of the CUP) and the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913.<sup>49</sup>

The wars between the Balkan League (Greece, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Serbia) and the Ottoman Empire were particularly catastrophic for

45 Schliemann's biographies include: Schliemann, *Heinrich Schliemann's Selbstbiographie*; Ludwig, *Schliemann of Troy*; Traill, *Schliemann of Troy*. On Schliemann's life in the Netherlands, see: Arentzen, *Schliemann en Nederland*.

46 Den Boer, 'Homer in Modern Europe,' in *European Review*, 182; Traill, *Schliemann of Troy*, 123.

47 Van Wijngaarden, 'The Archaeology of Troy in Prehistory.'

48 Members of this French constitutional movement called themselves Jeunes Turcs.

49 For an overview of the political and economical developments in this period, see: Zürcher, *Turkey*, in particular Chapters 7 and 8.

the Ottomans: almost all the Balkan territories were lost and the Empire was severely weakened. Although it was in no condition to fight a serious war, the Empire decided to back the Central Powers in October 1914 and so entered its final conflict.<sup>50</sup> Defending the Dardanelles against enemy attack was a major concern for the Ottomans during the First World War. In 1915, the Allied armies landed in an attempt to capture the Dardanelles, only to be held at bay in the Battle of Gallipoli, set against the heroic landscape of the Troad, now once again a legendary battlefield between East and West.

The Trojan War had introduced the first heroes of history. Trojan warriors, supported by the surrounding Anatolian peoples, had defended their country on the Asian shore of the Dardanelles against enemies from the west. More than 3,000 years later in the Battle of Gallipoli, Ottoman troops from all over the Empire held off the Western armies to defend the same area.

These latter-day Anatolian heroes of the Dardanelles managed to stop the enemy: the Battle of Gallipoli was an Ottoman victory. The principal hero of the Dardanelles was Ottoman commander Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938), later known as Atatürk,<sup>51</sup> first president of the Republic of Turkey (1923), who had already followed the trail of legendary figures such as Persian king Xerxes and Alexander the Great in 1913, in a military exploration of Troy.<sup>52</sup> The Turkish defence of the Dardanelles was a seminal event in the growth of Turkish nationalism and the collective memory of the final years of the Ottoman Empire and the new Republic of Turkey. Today, the landscape of the Dardanelles is one of the most important *lieux de mémoire* for modern Turks.<sup>53</sup>

### Troy, Homer and the Turks

Homer has been the subject of a great deal of valuable historical research, as has the archaeology of Troy and in particular Schliemann and his archaeological activities in the Troad. Most research, however, relies on Western sources. Little attention has been paid to the archaeological concerns and interests of the Ottomans themselves,<sup>54</sup> to the Ottoman attitude towards

50 On why the Ottoman Empire joined the First World War, see: Zürcher, *Turkey*, 110-114.

51 Mustafa Kemal received his surname Atatürk from the Turkish parliament in 1934. In modern Turkish, Atatürk means 'Father of the Turks.'

52 Atabay, 'Balkan Muharebeleri Esnasında Mustafa Kemal'in Çanakkale Bölgesinde Yaptığı Faaliyetler'; Atabay and Aslan, 'Atatürk in Troy'; Kinross, *Atatürk*, 96-98.

53 Albayrak and Özyurt, *Yeni Mecmua*, preface; Kraaijestein and Schulten, *Het Epos van Gallipoli*; see also the numerous reports, accounts and anecdotes published in *Ikdam* between 3 November 1914 and 3 February 1916, collected in Çulcu, *Ikdam Gazetesi'nde Çanakkale Cephesi*.

54 Although the title of Jerry Toner's 2013 book *Homer's Turk: How Classics Shaped Ideas of the East* suggests an exploration of the views of the East, the book deals with the way Classical authors have been used to express Western ideas about the East.

Schliemann's archaeological activities and his relentless illegal export of artefacts.

Schliemann, and his successor Wilhelm Dörpfeld, faced Ottoman rules and directives and Ottoman authorities staffed by officials enthused to varying degrees by the Ottoman modernization programme. Many were part of the elite who had initiated the reforms or were the product of these intellectual modernizations and innovations. Schliemann had to deal with their archaeological concerns and interests, which did not always coincide with his own. In fact, Ottoman officials were appalled at the loss of Troy's principal treasures, exported illegally by Schliemann. They regarded Troy as 'the most eminent city of Ancient times'<sup>55</sup> and felt deceived. Public indignation ran high. The discovery of Troy and the subsequent archaeological research stimulated Ottoman interest in Homer and Troy. Various attempts were made to translate the *Iliad* into Ottoman Turkish, along with biographical notes on the poet, informative articles on Homeric literature and the topographical characteristics of Homeric locations on Ottoman soil.<sup>56</sup> However, this appreciation of Homeric epics and the appropriation of Troy's remains, contrasts with the passive role ascribed to the Ottomans in histories of archaeology and cultural history.<sup>57</sup>

The present study suggests that the Ottomans were far more interested in Classical heritage, particularly Homeric heritage, than historians of archaeology have previously acknowledged. An analysis of Ottoman documents and literature reveals the extent of Ottoman-Turkish involvement and interest in Homeric heritage. This study relies largely on Ottoman sources, such as administrative, political and diplomatic documents relating to the excavations in Troy and found in the Ottoman State Archives in Istanbul and the Imperial Museum Archives and Library in Istanbul, and on an analysis of Ottoman translations of the *Iliad* and various publications and articles relating to Troy and Homer in Ottoman newspapers and periodicals found in libraries in Istanbul.

55 Istanbul Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister/Istanbul Başbakanlık Arşivi (hereafter: IBA): I.HR. 250/14863 (1 and 2); 01/Ra/1288 (20/06/1871) and 10-11/Ra/1288 (29-30/06/1871).

56 The way Homer was approached, read and translated is not the main point of this study. Much has been written about Homer and the reception of Homer. However, little attention has been paid to the Ottoman-Turkish perspective. Since the archaeological activities in Troy stimulated the Ottoman interest in Troy and Homer, Chapter 4 briefly reviews literary interest in Homer in the Ottoman Empire and provides a cursory description of the reception of Homer at this time. For the reception of Homer from the late Antiquity to the present, see: Clarke, *Homer's Readers*; and Young, *The Printed Homer*. On Homer himself, see: Graziosi, *Inventing Homer*.

57 Eldem, 'Ottoman Archaeology in the Late-Nineteenth Century.'

As Donald Quataert notes in *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, discussing key developments in the later Ottoman period, the Empire played a vital role in European and global history and 'it continues to affect the peoples of the Middle East, the Balkans and Central and Western Europe to the present day.'<sup>58</sup> However, despite its crucial role, the Ottoman Empire is usually left out of most European cultural histories: in some it gets a passing mention, elsewhere it is ignored entirely. The narrative of the rise of Western academic archaeology has largely been written from 'one perspective only, and by silencing local voices.' Excluding local actors and neglecting Ottoman documents and history resulted in 'a biased presentation.' The revealing recent study *Scramble for the Past* upsets the conventional wisdom of archaeology by underlining interaction between East and West and inserting the Ottomans as 'major players of the game.'<sup>59</sup>

In the present study, Schliemann's famous archaeological activities are viewed in the context of the history and development of the late Ottoman Empire. This research aims to reveal the Ottoman perspective and position in the history of the archaeology of Troy and to show interactions between the Ottomans and Western archaeologists, politicians and diplomats and the cultural and political frameworks in which they operated. It brings together the Ottoman and European experiences and traditions connected with Homer and Troy. The time frame of this study also brings West and East together: it begins in 1870, when Schliemann started his first excavations on Ottoman soil, and ends with a modern-day battle between East and West in the Troad, the Battle of Gallipoli in 1915, when Troy acquired a whole new dimension and became part of the heroic story of the Turks.

In addition to inspiring the European imagination, Homeric heritage also inspired Turkish cultural traditions. An examination of the Ottoman-Turkish appropriation of Homeric heritage provides an insight into the interpretation and the claims of ownership and offers a better understanding of the interplay between the awareness and presentation of cultural heritage and contemporary political and social developments.

Deciphering Ottoman-Turkish manuscripts is a huge challenge. For this research, I had the pleasure of examining a number of Ottoman articles and administrative, political and diplomatic documents. I translated parts of these texts from the Ottoman language into English to be included in this book. These translations are highlighted and framed in the main text of this research.

58 Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire*, cover text.

59 Bahrani, Çelik and Eldem, *Scramble for the Past*, 28-33.

Transliteration from Ottoman Turkish to modern Turkish is also a complex venture. On the advice of my highly professional Ottoman teacher and member of the staff of the Ottoman State Archives, Mustafa Küçük, I decided to stay as close as possible to the Ottoman spelling. This had consequences for the names of Ottoman sultans, officials and authors, such as Mehmed (Mehmet in modern Turkish), Izzeddin (Izzettin) and Galib (Galip). Yet, since modern Turkish deviates strongly from Ottoman Turkish, consistency on this matter was not possible. Following the example of the editors of *Scramble for the Past*, in some words and expressions I preferred modern Turkish, for instance: *bey* (*beğ* in Ottoman Turkish). The word *pasha*, on the other hand, has entered the English language. Therefore, I decided not to use the Turkish spelling (*paşa*).

The Ottomans used more than one calendar throughout the period of this study: the Islamic calendar based on a lunar year starting with the migration of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 AD, *Hicri*, and the Roman calendar, *Rumi*, based on a solar year, corresponding with the Julian calendar, yet starting in 622 AD. In this survey, I have first noted the dates of the Ottoman documents in Ottoman calendars (*Hicri*: shortened and *Rumi*: completely), followed by the Western date between brackets.

Chapter 1 of this research concentrates on the discovery of Troy. Chapter 2 shifts to the Ottoman perspective on the developments in Troy and deals with the intellectual climate of the late Ottoman Empire. Chapter 3 discusses the Ottoman involvement in the archaeology of Troy during the early 1880s and continual clashes between Ottoman authorities and Schliemann. Chapter 4 deals with the interest in Homer, Homeric epics and Troy in Ottoman Turkish literature. The final chapter discusses Ottoman interest in the excavations in Troy between 1885 and 1915 and the changing attitudes towards Troy and Homer during the First World War with the Battle of Gallipoli as the culminating point.

Although more research is needed for a thorough understanding of the Ottoman perspective, I hope this study will offer some insight into Ottoman Turkish attitudes towards and perceptions of Troy and Homeric heritage and the interaction with Western archaeological claims.

**Figure 4** Homer Monument in Izmir, by Turkish sculptor Professor Ferit Özşen, erected in 2002



Source: Kelder, Uslu and Şerifoğlu, *Troy: City, Homer and Turkey*

**Figure 5** Wooden horse built for the 2004 Hollywood movie *Troy* in Çanakkale



Photo: Günay Uslu, 6 November 2012



**Figure 6** Sultan Mehmed II (c. 1480), portrait painted in 1943 by A. Süheyl Ünver (1898-1986)



Source: Kelder, Uslu and Şerifoğlu, *Troy: City, Homer and Turkey*

Figure 7 Sophia Schliemann wearing items from Priam's Treasure, c. 1874



Source: Kelder, Uslu and Şerifoğlu, *Troy: City, Homer and Turkey*