Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

A extract from the Chronicle & sample of the Wallbook from

The What on Earth? Wallbook Timeline of Big History

Written by

Christopher Lloyd

Illustrated by

Andy Forshaw

Published by

What on Earth Publishing Ltd

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Archaeologist finds remains of ancient Troy

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

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 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.


SEA
SKY
LAND
HUMANITY
ASIA
MIDDLE EAST
and North Africa
EUROPE
AMERICAS
Sea Peoples
Mycenaeans
Egypt
Phoenicians found Carthage
Egypt
Bactria
Parthia
Egypt
Arabia
Rome
Aztecs
Mayans
Incas
Maghreb
Egypt
Persia
Natural disasters and human conflict combine to cause chaos around the Mediterranean as Bronze Age weapons give way to iron
Israel comes under attack during Middle East conflicts
Alexander the Great, the Macedonian king, spends 13 years building an epic empire that stretches all the way from Greece to India
The Roman Empire at its height under the Emperor Hadrian in 130 CE
Pre-Columbian civilizations in Central and South America include the Mayans, Incas and Aztecs
How the five pillars of Islam spread like a whirlwind, connecting the world of China with modern-day Spain
Jewish scripture describes manna from heaven falling as food for the Israelites
Jewish scriptures tell how, with God's help, Moses divided the Red Sea
Greek mathematician Thales successfully predicts a solar eclipse
Phoenicians farm sea snails, which they crush to make a valuable purple dye
Romans copy Phoenician boat designs and build a massive fleet
Constantine believes he sees a Holy Cross in the sky
Oysters are cultivated in the bay of Naples, humanity's first attempt to domesticate sea life
Lead smelting causes levels of toxins in the air over Europe to increase
Volcanic haze
Polynesian explorers settle on the islands of Hawaii, bringing plants and livestock from Asia
Water buffalo are domesticated in China
Rice becomes the main staple crop in China
The olive trade makes Greek people rich
Rubber is cultivated and processed from the sap of vines by the Olmecs of Central America
Silver mines are dug out near Athens
An earthquake destroys the Colossus of Rhodes
Cherries are introduced to Rome from Syria
Mount Vesuvius erupts, burying Pompeii
Drought forces Asian nomads westwards, ultimately triggering the barbarian invasions of Europe
Super-volcano erupts near Indonesia
Warmer climate increases agricultural output in northern Europe
Hunter-gathering people in North America use spears and stone tools
About 10 million people still live a Stone Age lifestyle
Plague strikes people across Europe. At one point 5,000 people a day die in Constantinople
Zhou Dynasty
Zhou kings claim their ruling mandate comes directly from heaven
The Zhou capital of Hao is sacked by barbarian tribes and relocated to Luoyang, further to the east
Shi Jing – the first of the five classic Chinese texts – describes the lives, hopes and complaints of ordinary people
Bronze weapons and chariots with spoked wheels, usually accommodating a driver and two archers, bring widespread violence
The Chinese calendar prescribes that each year must begin on the first new moon after the winter solstice
Spring and Autumn period
Chinese philosophers travel to noble courts advising rulers on how to live a virtuous life
Laozi, founder of Taoism
Warring States period
Confucius travels to noble courts, teaching people the way of virtue: 'What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others'
The Buddha is enlightened
First Great Wall is begun
India is divided into 16 kingdoms called Mahajanapadas
Qi
CHU
YAN
HAN
ZHOU
WEI
QIN
Seven warring states
Rise of Qin
Annals of Shiji
Qin Shi Huangdi unifies China, suppresses free speech and builds a huge terracotta army
Han Dynasty
Civil servant Du Shi pioneers water-powered blast furnaces. The Chinese use cast iron for making ploughs and weapons
The great burning of Books
Pottery making and rice-growing are well established
First imperial exams
Count Eunuch Cai Lun invents paper-making
Shinto culture thrives on the worship of natural spirits
Japan
Asuka Period sees introduction of Buddhism
New capital is built at Nara
Fujiwara family rise to power
Wei
Shu
Wu
Three Kingdoms
Jin
Northern & Southern
Sui
Tang
China
Emperor Wu marries China but is distracted by his 10,000 concubines
Stirrups are invented
Chinese pagodas symbolize spread of Buddhism into central China
Nestorian monks smuggle silk worms into Constantinople
Grand Canal allows grains and rice grown in the south to feed troops protecting borders in the north
Tibet recognized by China as an independent Buddhist state
Poetry, painting and wood-block printing thrive in a period of relative peace and calm
Chinese prisoners of war reveal secrets of paper-making to Abbasid Muslims
Arabs defeat Chinese at Battle of Talas
India
Zero added to Indian numeral system
Seleucids
Greek king Antiochus IV sacks Jerusalem, but rebel Israelites successfully restore their Holy Temple
Hanukkah commemorates Jewish release from Seleucid attack
Parthians
King Mithridates I conquers Persia
Horses are traded for Chinese crossbows
Siege of Jerusalem
Jewish diaspora
Jewish revolt suppressed. Romans rename Israel 'Palestine' and expel the Jews
Israel
Jewish carpenter's son, Jesus Christ, is crucified as a heretic after refusing to deny he is the Son of God
Sassanids
Sharpur I invades Afghanistan and completes Zoroastrian Avesta
Dynastic struggles
Byzantines
Constantine transfers imperial capital to Constantinople
Justinian I builds a magnificent cathedral, Hagia Sophia. He attempts to reunite the Roman Empire
Silk-making reaches Constantinople
Vandals invade North Africa
Romans take Egypt and Near East
Moses leads the Israelites out of Egypt
Assyrians
Ashurnasirpal – ritualistic horse sacrifice
Unknown raiders invade Egypt, Cyprus and the Near East
Hittite metalsmiths forge the first iron weapons
Hittites
Mursnilis the Hittite conquers Babylon
Hittites sack ancient Babylon
Phoenicians
Phoenician mariners become the most powerful battle ships in the Mediterranean
First alphabet
Mummification reaches its height as rich Egyptians clamour to preserve their bodies and souls in the afterlife
Temples replace pyramids. Royal tombs are secreted underground to evade looters
Akhenaten worships the Sun god Aten. His 'only one God' idea is later adopted by Jews, Christians and Muslims
Akhenaten's daughters
Tutankhamun's tomb is discovered
Akhenaten's successor restores the old religion
Akhenaten's capital is abandoned
Akhenaten's successor moves the capital back to Thebes
Ramesses II
Ramesses II defeats Hittites at Battle of Kadesh
Ramesses II builds a new capital at Pi-Ramesses
Ramesses III defeats Sea Peoples
Persians
Cyrus the Great builds Persian Empire, takes Babylon
Persians invade Egypt
Royal Road
Esarhaddon invades Egypt
Nebuchadnezzar's doomed invasion
Nebuchadnezzar II destroys Jerusalem, enslaving and exiling the Jews to Babylon
Second Jerusalem temple
Carthage gets rich from trade in slaves and animal skins
The Romans destroy Carthage
Assyrians
King Solomon builds the first temple of Jerusalem
The Assyrians sack Samaria taking 27,000 Israelites captive. These are the Lost Tribes of Israel
King Ashurbanipal builds a massive library at the palace of Nineveh
Sargon II conquers Babylon, Israel and Phoenicia
Nineveh is destroyed by Babylonians and Medes
Babylonians
Nebuchadnezzar II builds Hanging Gardens of Babylon
Alexandria is founded with a great library that considers learning
Greeks
The Lighthouse of Alexandria can be seen by ships 50 miles away
Archimedes invents a screw-shaped water-pump
Alexander the Great builds a massive empire stretching from Greece to India. He conquers Egypt, Persia and Anatolia before dying in Babylon at the age of 33 – exactly who or what killed him remains a mystery
Darius I of Persia invades Greece
Battle of Issus
Aristotle considers the nature of life, the universe and everything
Athens is burned to the ground at the Battle of Thermopylae ...
... but the Greeks destroy the Persian fleet at Salamis
Sparta invades Athens, triggering the Peloponnesian Wars
Plato dismisses the idea of Greek democracy in The Republic
Rome gets its first supplies of drinking water from aqueducts
Hannibal, a Carthaginian general, crosses the Alps with an army of elephants. He defeats the Romans at the Battle of Cannae, but lacks equipment to take Rome
Greek city-states of Corinth, Sparta and Athens rise to power
New ships help Greek city-states colonize much of the Mediterranean, but at the cost of deforesting their countryside and eroding the soil
Metal tokens called coins are used to facilitate trade
The Temple of Artemis – the second of the seven wonders of the ancient world – is built at Ephesus
Olympic races identify the most physically fit men. They are used by Sparta as part of a selective human breeding programme
Windmills are used for pumping water and milling grain
Oral stories from ancient Greece are written down
Olive groves planted
Bronze and iron weapons, mounted cavalry, wheeled chariots and growing populations provide the ingredients for a major increase in violence, beginning with the legendary Trojan Wars
Iron Age people, originally from near the River Rhine, fan out across Europe, taking their skills in metallurgy and mining with them
Bell beaker pottery
Celts
Halstatt culture spreads from Austria to Germany and France. Salt mining is a major source of trade and wealth
Celts spread throughout France, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary and Spain and cross the English Channel settling in places such as Glastonbury
Druids worship the Moon in outdoor temples
Rubber balls are used for playing sacrificial sports
Two-metre-high stone heads glorify the Olmec gods
Early Mayans excel in making pots and figurines. They trade jade and obsidian
Tiwanaku is gradually domesticated into maize
Romans
Famine drives Latian people to settle in southern Italy, founding a new culture
According to legend, a she-wolf suckles Romulus and Remus, the mythological founders of Rome
The Romans are ruled by senators in an experimental form of republican government
Octavian Ester Augustus Caesar defeats Mark Antony at the Battle of Actium
Cleopatra, last Pharaoh of Egypt, commits suicide by allowing herself to be bitten by a venomous viper
Julius Caesar is stabbed to death by Brutus on the steps to the Roman Senate
Julius Caesar conquers Gaul at the Battle of Alesia. He then takes his legion across the River Rubicon on to Rome where he is declared 'dictator for life'
The Emperor Nero strums on his lyre as a great fire destroys Rome
Christian martyrs are killed for their beliefs as part of the Roman Empire's mass entertainment programme
The Colosseum entertains Rome's huge 1 million population with gladiators and animals that fight to the death
... they are crucified alongside the Appian Way between Capua and Rome
Pont du Gard aqueduct carries water from Uzès to Nîmes
Rich Romans cook with pots made of lead, not knowing that they may cause premature senility
The Roman Empire is split into two: East and West
Romulus Augustus surrenders the Western imperial crown to the Germanic King Odoacer in Ravenna
Germans invade Italy, driving out Byzantines and Visigoths
Lombards
Venice is founded
Barbarian invasions
Visigoths invade Spain
Roman Emperor Valens is killed by the Visigoths at the Battle of Adrianople
Visigoths and Swedish wars flare
English missionary Winfred chops down Thor's Oak, converting Germanic people to Christianity
Attila the Hun attacks Europe
Barbarian tribes bring butter and trousers to Europe
Attila the Hun is prevented from overrunning western Europe at the Battle of Chalons
Al Andalus
Abd ar-Rahman I establishes a new Umayyad dynasty in Córdoba, and builds the Great Mezquita
Frankish Empire
French king Pepin III grants the Papal land in Italy
Charlemagne unifies France and Germany and is crowned by Pope Leo III as Emperor of the Romans
Charles Martel halts the Muslim conquest of Europe at the Battle of Tours
Cluny founded
Franks
Anglo-Saxons
Clovis I becomes King of Franks and defeats the Visigoths at Battle of Soulle
Old King Cole rules Wessex
St Augustine lands in Kent
King Alfred fends off Viking attacks
Offa unites most of England
Anglo-Saxon chronicles are written in Wessex
Viking raiders in Essex
Britons
Aztecs
The Mayan Long Calendar uses base 18 and base 20 to calculate the passage of time, beginning with the Mayan creation date in 3114 BCE. It predicts that the world will end in 2012 CE
The feathered serpent god Quetzalcoatl becomes the main focus of worship in this religious society, which is home to up to 200,000 people
Sacrificial knives are used to cut out the still beating hearts of prisoners of war as part of regular ritual sacrifices to the gods
Ball courts appear throughout Mayan cities. Rival teams, dressed in elaborate headgear, try to lob a rubber ball through a stone hoop to score. Losers are sometimes sacrificed to the gods
Spear-thrower Owl becomes king of Teotihuacan
Mesoamericans
Incas
The Great Pyramid of Cholula, the largest ever man-made monument, is dedicated to the feathered serpent Quetzalcoatl
Nazca people from Peru make parts on the desert into shapes that they believe can be recognized by their gods
King Taj Chan Ahk builds a stunning three-storey palace at Cancuen. It has 280 rooms, two ball courts, a large marketplace and its own private dock
Ghana Empire
Homer
ILIAD
ODYSSEY
by Homer
Before Common Era (BCE) <
> Common Era (CE)
1 unit = 50 years
1 unit = 50 years
1 unit = 100 years