Laocoön, Episode One

Prīmus ībi ante omnēs, magnā comitante catervā,
Laocoōn ārdēns summā dēcursit ab arce et procul, ‘ō miserī, quae tanta īnsānia, cīvēs?
Crēditis āvectōs hostēs? Aut ālla putātis dōna carēre dolīs Danaōs? Sīc nōtus Ulixēs?
Aut ā hac inclāsi lignō occultantur Achīvī, aut haec in nostros fabricāta est māchina mārōs, īnscētāra domōs ventūraque dēsuper urbi, aut aliquis latet error; equō nē crēdite, Teucrī. Quidquid īd ēst, tīmē Danaōs et dōna ferentēs.’
Sic fātus, validīs ingentēm vīribus hastam in latus inque ferī curvam compāgibus alvum contorsit. Stētit illa tremōns, uterque recussō īnsonuēre cavae gemitumque dederē cavernae. Et, si fāta deum, si mēns nōn laeva fuisset, impulerat ferrō Argolicās foedāre latebrās, Trōiaque nunc stāret. Priamique arx alta manērēs.

TRANSLATION by the English poet John Dryden:

Laocoon, follow’d by a num’rous crowd,
Ran from the fort, and cried, from far, aloud:
‘O wretched countrymen! what fury reigns?
What more than madness has possess’d your brains?
Think you the Grecians from your coasts are gone?
And are Ulysses’ arts no better known?
This hollow fabric either must inclose,
Within its blind recess, our secret foes;
Or ’t is an engine rais’d above the town,
T’ o’erlook the walls, and then to batter down.
Somewhat is sure design’d, by fraud or force:
Trust not their presents, nor admit the horse.’
Thus having said, against the steed he threw
His forceful spear, which, hissing as flew,
Pierc’d thro’ the yielding planks of jointed wood,
And trembling in the hollow belly stood.
The sides, transpierc’d, return a rattling sound,
And groans of Greeks inclos’d come issuing thro’ the wound
And, had not Heav’n the fall of Troy design’d,
Or had not men been fated to be blind,
Enough was said and done t’inspire a better mind.
Then had our lances pierc’d the treach’rous wood,
And Ilian tow’rs and Priam’s empire stood.

The Procession of the Trojan Horse into Troy
cia. 1760
Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo, 1727 - 1804

Trojan horse replica in Turkey

Laocoon group,
1st century B.C.
Vatican Museums,
Rome
By Athenodoros,
Hagesandros, and
Polydoros of Rhodes