

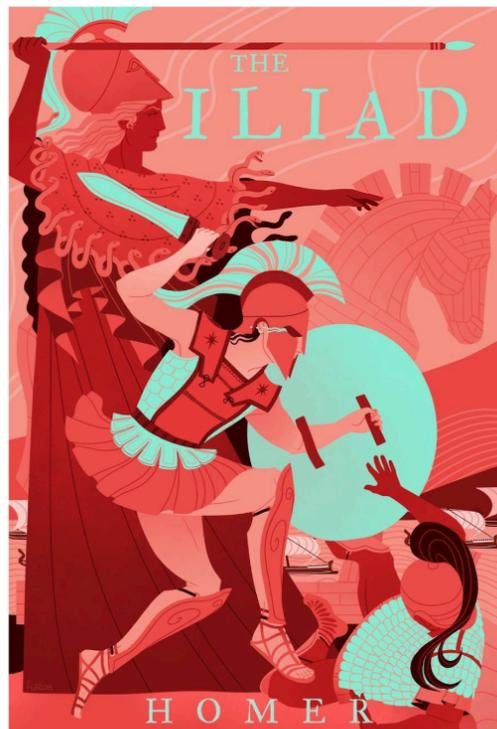
Save Ancient Studies Alliance

Summer 2023 Texts-in-Translation Reading Group

# Defying the Gods, and Forgotten Female Rage: The Epics

"DEFYING THE GODS  
& FORGOTTEN FEMALE RAGE"

*5-week Reading Group  
by Naomi Moralez-Glenn*



*Art by @Flarob*



The 5-week Reading Group will be spent on The Iliad only. Uncovering the themes of heroes versus supernatural deities, along with the rise and fall of a kingdom, (only to birth a

new one), and the representation of women in these epics. We will quickly discuss Homer's oral history, and what that means for the story, was it originally from Homer? Or were these the people who finally put the story to pen and paper (so to speak). Note the trends in these epics, women mostly have no name, are background characters, or seem to have only the ability to love, anger and die, all in the name of heroes. We will discuss fate vs destiny as each hero's journey seems to be written for them by gods and curses alike. The rise and fall of cities and rulers as corruption and wicked hearts seem to destroy these very magnates of kingdoms, and lastly, discussing the unspoken tragedy that befall the women in the Iliad. We will read these epics and use our critical thinking to make hypotheses about how the ancient world viewed women, and what they thought of fates and defying the gods. How these ideas spawned legends and myths based on the destruction of Troy.

- Do the heroes of these epics escape their fates? Or do they cause their fate to happen by trying to defy the gods?
- Where are the voices of the women in these epics, how are they portrayed, and what unspoken rage do you feel when you read between the lines of how the women are treated?
- It's important to understand how civilizations worked, the cultural views on women and how they were treated, which still can be felt to this day.
- In the effort to avoid their fates, the heroes actually end up as the cause their own fates and the result of a destroyed civilization.
- Today's women's rights are being taken away, what rights did women have in ancient times?



#### **Your SASA Educational Ambassadors:**

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2015 - SFSU - BA Anthropology and Archaeology of the Ancient Mediterranean

2019 - KCL (King's College London) - MA Classical Art and Archaeology

2023 - University of the Peloponnese - MSc Cultural Heritage Materials and Technologies

Social media handles (optional)

@archaeo.news.with.naomi (Instagram)

## [Session Recordings Playlist - Youtube \(Private\)](#)

## [Reading Group Folder Link](#)

### Links to the readings for each week

SHARED GOOGLE FOLDER - *The Iliad* - translated by Robert Fagle

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yVTX6lzSEWnIM6L\\_Rk-36ny3AlxVMilt?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yVTX6lzSEWnIM6L_Rk-36ny3AlxVMilt?usp=sharing)

Week 1: *The Iliad* - Books 1-4

Week 2: *The Iliad* - Books 8-10

**Week 3: *The Iliad* - Books 16 & 18**

Week 4: *The Iliad* - Books Books 20, & 22-23

Week 5: *The Iliad* Book 24 + Discussion - *Defying the Gods and Unspoken Female Rage in the Epics*

## **Week 1: June 25**

Homer's "*The Iliad*"

Books 1-4

**Week 1: What are some of the key takeaways from the first 50 pages of the *Iliad*?**

- *The pride of the leaders and their demands to be honored often leading to their own downfall (or will later on)*
- *Favoritism amongst the Gods. Gods favoring the Greeks, vs Gods favoring the Trojans and each with their own petty grievances and debts to one another.*
  - *Who favored who?*
- *The might of the gods and their interference into the lives of the mortals and heroes on the battlefield.*
- *The unspoken rage amongst the women of the *Iliad*, each forced through their own hell as the war rages around them. Each a catalyst within the epic, yet never whole in their own right.*
  - *What happens when Helen tries to defy Aphrodite?*

## **Week 2 - July 9**

Homer's "*The Iliad*"

**Session 2 (July 9): Books 8-10 (47 pages)**

- *Book 8: The Battle of the Tide Turns*
- *Book 9: The Embassy to Achilles*
- *Book 10: Marauding Through the Night*

***For additional backstory on Unspoken Female Rage, will as you can tell is barely mentioned throughout the epic, feel free to read these on Wikipedia.***

- *The Oath of Tyndareus*
- *The Judgement of Paris*
- *The Sacrifice of Iphigenia*

***I will be going over these in more details next session, while these are not explicitly listed in the Iliad, these events are however the assumed knowledge / canon for the audience, and thus the backbone of which the Trojan War and The Iliad rests upon.***

## **Week 3 - August 6**

*Homer's "The Iliad"*

### **Session 3: Books - 16 & 18**

- *Book 16: Patroclus Fights & Dies*
- *Book 18: The Shield of Achilles*

**I will do a brief summary of what led up to this point of the Trojan War - including the chapters that will be skipped. We will go more in depth on Chapters 16 & 18.**

- *This is a battle heavy session, but one question stands out for this session:*
  - ***Can the Heroes defy the Gods and avoid their Fates?***
- *Feel free (if you haven't already) go over the Canon Myths - The pre-lude and backstory of the Trojan War*

- *The Oath of Tyndareus*
- *The Judgement of Paris*
- *The Sacrific of Iphigenia*

## Week 4 - August 13th

Homer's "The Iliad"

### **Session 4: Books 20, 22-23**

- Book 20 - Olympian Gods in Arms
- Book 22 - The Death of Hector
- Book 23 - Funeral Games for Patroclus

Week 4 Theme:

- The interference of the Gods
- the Death of Heroes
- and Defying Destiny

## Week 5 - August 20th

Homer's "The Iliad"

### **Session 5: Book 24**

- *Book 24 - Achilles and Priam*

*Go over the Canon Myths - and how they relate to The Iliad*

- *The Oath of Tynaderous*
- *The Judgement of Paris*
- *The Sacrifice of Iphigenia*

Week 5 Theme:

- *Fate and Destiny: The fate of the women of the epics*
- *Powerlessness: Height of Power to the lowest of status (from Queen to Slave)*
- *Defying the Gods*

*Questions to Consider in the last week of discussion:*

**Major Question: Can Heroes deny their own fate? Can they defy the Gods?**

- Achilles, Hector, the city of Troy and the fortifications of the Greek's camp, are all fated to fall. Can any of their Fates be denied?
- Were any of them able to avoid their Fate? Achilles, Hector, the city of Troy? What about the fates of Helen, Paris, Aeneas, and the others? Could Achilles have avoided his fate? Or was that destined no matter what? What if Patroclus had not died?
- What are the consequences to the heroes or women that try to defy the gods?

**Major Question: What do you think of the Rage of Achilles, and the loss of his prize?**

- This entire epic, Achilles has been brooding over the loss of his prize, his captive slave Briseis, yet in a prose by Homer, it is revealed that he (and Patroclus) had SEVERAL captive slaves, not just one.
- Achilles' complete and total indifference to Briseis being returned to him after all this time...Does this change anything for you?
- How the few perspectives of women that we get - Briseis', who mourns the death of Patroclus, or Hector's wife, Andromache's grief as she witnesses her husband's body dragged behind Achille's chariot.

- What do you think of the interference of the gods? Several were of the goddesses are mothers, and several of the gods had children amongst the war. Zeus himself loses a son, and Poseidon loses a grandson.
- What about Thetis, mother of Achilles, and Aphrodite, mother of Aeneas?
- Were you aware also that Helen is also the daughter of Zeus? Does this change anything for you?

**Major Question: Do you believe the Trojan War was cursed from the start?**

- The Judgement of Paris: What do you think of the goddess's involvement?
- The Oath of Tyndareus: What do you think of Helen's fate? Do you believe she ran off with Paris willingly or was that enforced by Aphrodite and the Judgement of Paris?
- Sacrifice of Iphigenia: What do you think of King Agamemnon? Do you think his greed continuously brought tragedy and curse down upon the Greeks and the Trojan War?
- What do you think about the canon myths, and the women in them, which are the direct catalyst to the Trojan War?

**Major Question: Do you think there is an underlying theme of unspoken or forgotten female rage throughout the epic?**

