

Classical Mythology

LLCU 316.010/080



Class 23

The Age of Heroes

The Trojan Cycle

Readings for Thursday

Classical Mythology
pages 475-518

Final In-class Writing Assignment: Tuesday, May 16th

Options:

1. What was your favorite myth/legend (or part of it) and why?
2. What myth/legend would you have liked to have heard more about and why?

*Reminder: these assignments will be returned to you at the final exam (if you'd like to keep them)

Roadmap for Remainder of Term

- Today: Trojan War
- Thursday: Odysseus and his Voyage
- Next Tuesday: Later history of myth; final exam overview; last in-class writing assignment

The Trojan Cycle

Trojan Cycle



Aegean World at the time of the Trojan War

Trojan Cycle: **Helen** of Sparta Daughter of Leda and Zeus (in form of swan)



Trojan Cycle

Paris (Priam and Hecuba of Troy):

- Prophesized to be the destruction of Troy
- Exposed by Priam and nursed by a bear
- Shepherd raised Paris
- As a young man returned to Troy to claim his royal seat



Trojan Cycle

The Judgement of Paris:

- .Gods attend wedding banquet for Peleus and Thetis
- .Eris (Strife) – gave apple ‘to the fairest’
- .Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite claim it
- .Contest to be settled by Paris

Trojan Cycle



Trojan Cycle

The Judgment of Paris:

Hera: Paris to be king of Asia

Athena: Paris to be a great warrior

Aphrodite: Paris to have the most beautiful woman alive (Helen)

Trojan Cycle

The Judgment of Paris:

Hera: Paris to be king of Asia –
Power

Athena: Paris to be a great warrior –
Fame/Honour

Aphrodite: Paris to have the most beautiful
woman alive (Helen) –
Carnal Pleasures

Trojan Cycle

What do we want from life?



The Trojan Saga

“The Rape of Helen”



The Trojan Saga

“The Rape of Helen”

- .Menelaus asked all the kings of Greece to swear an oath to assist if anything should happen to his wife, the lovely Helen
- .Bound by this pact, the kings agreed to help recover Helen from Troy
- .Mission justified because Paris had broken the custom of *xenia* visiting Sparta

The Trojan Saga

“Is this the face that launched a thousand ships?”
-Christopher Marlow



The Trojan Saga

The Greek Contingent

- **Agamemnon** (Argos - *de facto* leader)
- **Menelaus** (Sparta – husband of Helen)

- Diomedes (Argos)
- **Odysseus** (Ithaca)

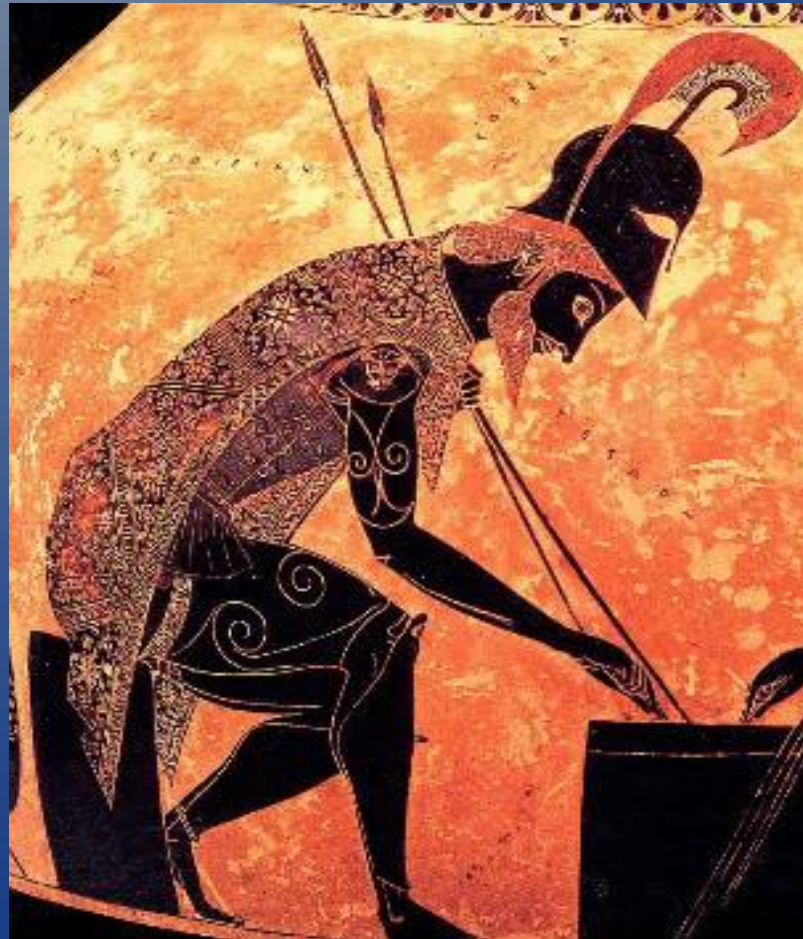
Warriors

- Ajax (Telamonian)
- **Patroclus**

The Trojan Saga

The Greek Contingent

Achilles (son of Peleus and Thetis)



The Trojan Saga

The Trojan Characters

- Priam and wife Hecuba (king and queen)

- Paris

- Hector and Andromache

- also Aeneas (son of Anchises and Aphrodite)
and Sarpedon (son of Zeus)

The Trojan Saga

The *Iliad*

- .Set in the 10th year of the war
- .Covers only 40 days and ends before fall of Troy
- .Traditional date of fall *ca.* 1150 BCE
- .Poem put down in writing, *ca.* 750 BCE

The Trojan Saga

Homeric *Aretê* (Excellence)

- .Every hero and leader in the poem only feels self-worth because people acknowledge his accomplishments
- .Conversely, a hero who no longer accomplishes anything can't be excellent
- .If his excellence is questioned, so is his position in society – a leader who doesn't display *aretê* won't be a leader for much longer

The Trojan Saga

The *Iliad*

“Sing, O goddess, the anger of Achilles son of Peleus, that brought countless ills upon the Achaeans [Greeks]. Many a brave soul did it send hurrying down to Hades, and many a hero did it yield a prey to dogs and vultures, for so were the counsels of Zeus fulfilled from the day on which the son of Atreus [Agamemnon], king of men, and great Achilles, first fell out with one another.”

The Trojan Saga

The *Iliad*

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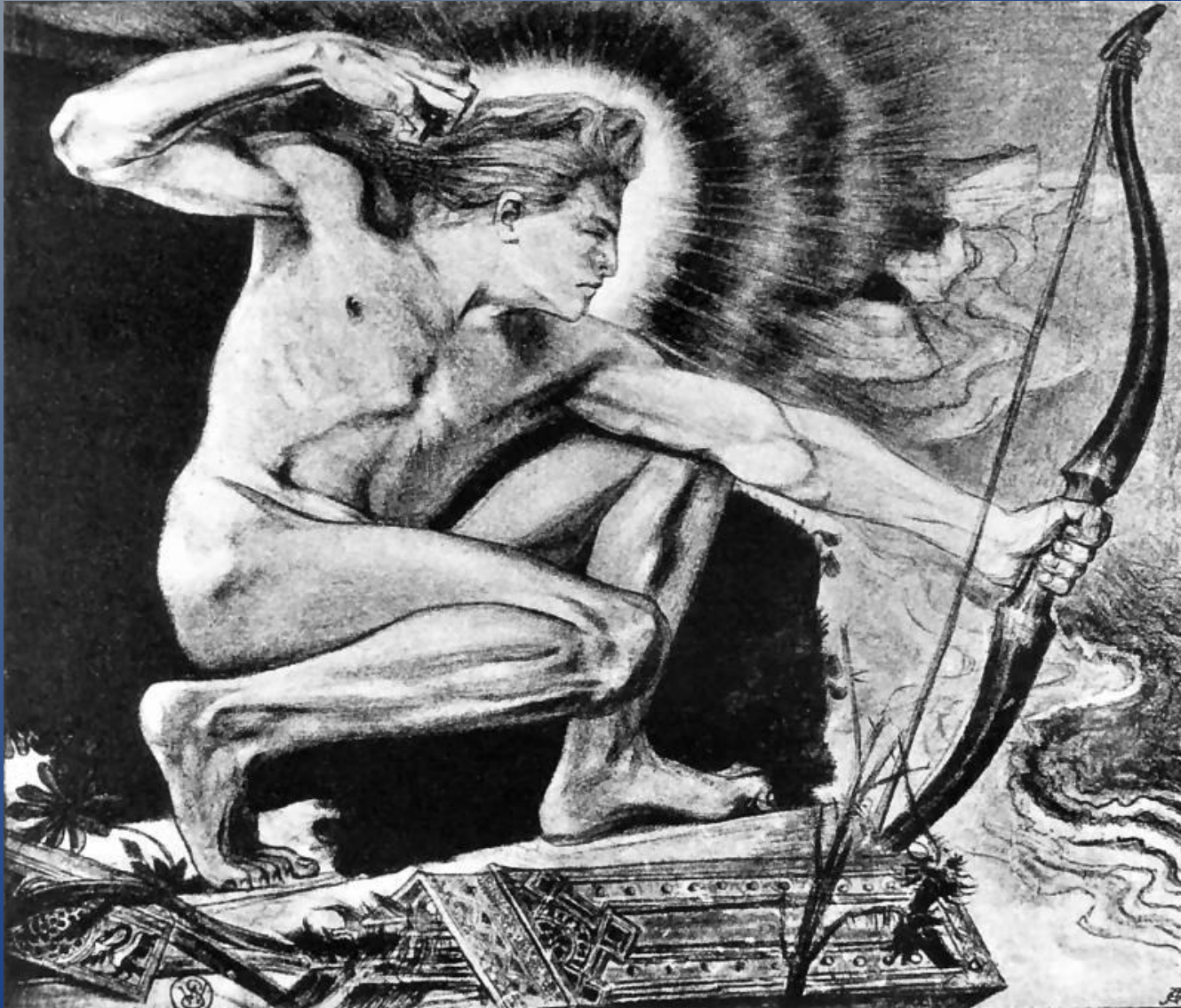
The Trojan Saga

The *Iliad*: The Beginning

- .Achilles' anger becomes the catalyst for the downfall of Troy
- .Agamemnon refuses to return the Trojan seer of Apollo's (Chryses') daughter Chryseis back to him is his *atê* (error leading to ruin)
- .Chryses calls a curse on Agamemnon

The Trojan Saga

The *Iliad*: Apollo and the Plague



The Trojan Saga

The *Iliad*

- Agamemnon forced by the plague to return Chryseis
- In order to save face as leader, Agamemnon demands Briseis from Achilles (his war slave)
 - Agamemnon doesn't want to lose face
- Achilles reluctantly agrees, but removes himself from the war

The Trojan Saga

The *Iliad*



The Trojan Saga

The *Iliad*

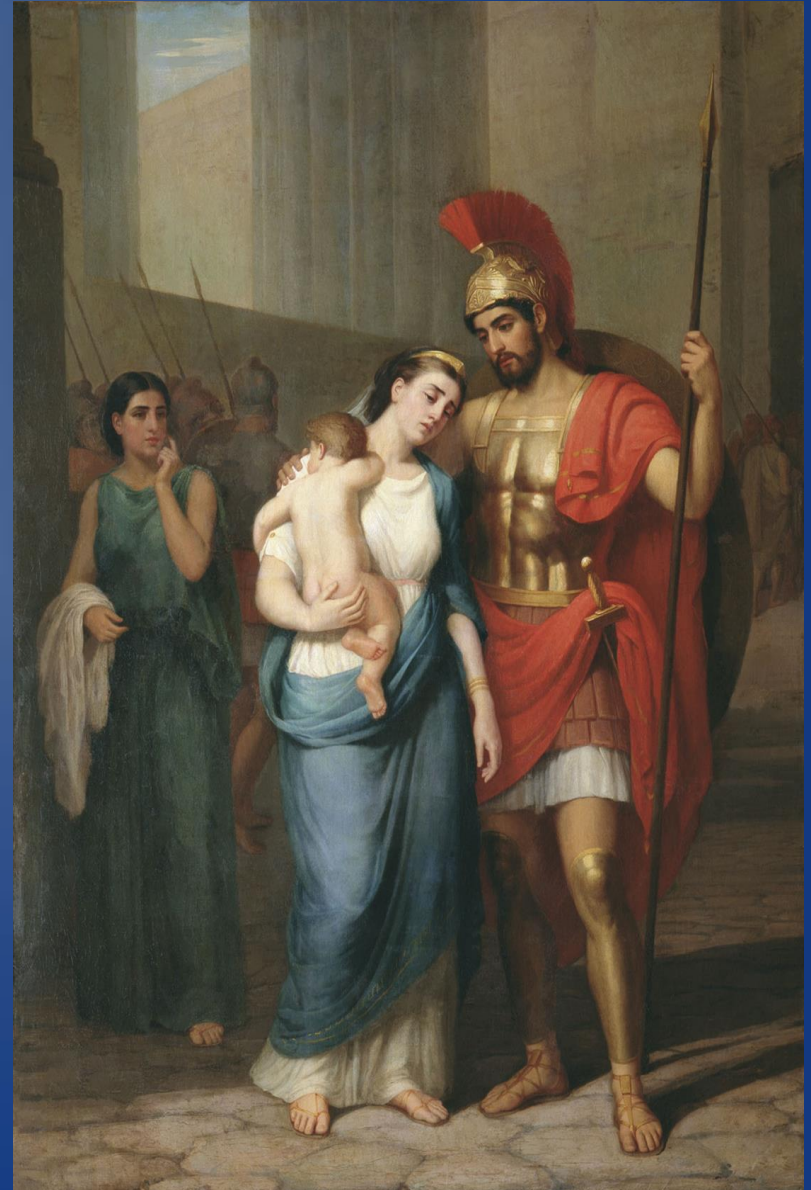
Lines divided:

- .Gods chose sides
- .Zeus (on the side of his son Sarpedon)
- .Aphrodite, Apollo, Artemis, Ares (Trojans)
- .Hera, Athena, Hermes, Hephaestus, Poseidon (Greeks)
- .Achilles sulking
- .Agamemnon smug

Meanwhile in Troy...

Hector, Andromache, and Astyanax (Bk 6)

- Hector's last moments with his family
- Explores the ramifications of war
- Evidence of ancient masculine virtues (toxic masculinity?)



Hector and Andromache

- .Hector chooses honour over the protection of his family
- .He knows he will die, and suspects that Troy will fall
- .Andromache will live out her life as a Greek prisoner
- .Hope for his son, Astyanax (the future generation)

The Embassy to Achilles (appeal to return)

.Odysseus, Phoenix, and Ajax (Bk 9)



The Embassy to Achilles

.Achilles on the senselessness of war

.'It was no pleasure for me always to fight against the enemy relentlessly...The one who does nothing and the one who does much finds a similar end in death.'

.'Why must the Greeks fight the Trojans?...Was it not on account of Helen? Are the sons of Atreus [Menelaus and Agamemnon] the only ones who loves their wives? To be sure, any responsible man loves and cares for his own, just as I loved Briseis from the depths of my heart, even though she was won by my spear.'

The War Books (11-16)

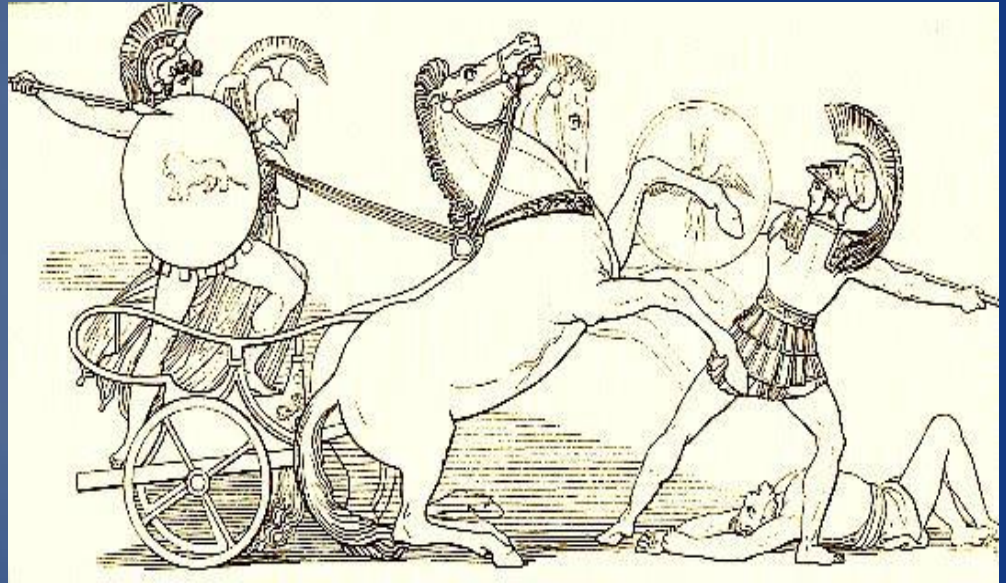
Massive bloodshed on both sides



Book 16:

Patroclus' *aristeia* (moment of excellence) and death by Hector

- Patroclus needs to fight to prove his excellence
- Achilles reluctantly lets him go, but gives him his own armor for protection
- Patroclus is unstoppable, until Hector sees him (and mistakes him for Achilles)



Book 16: Patroclus' *aristeia* and death

- After Hector kills Patroclus, there is a fight for his body
- Hector takes Achilles' armor as a war prize (his *ate*)
- Proudly carries the armor into battle



Achilles' Grief



MENELAUS SUPPORTING THE BODY OF PATROCLUS «» (150-125 BC)
ROMAN COPY OF GREEK ORIGINAL «» LOGGIA DEI LANZI, FLORENCE

Ron Reznick

Achilles' *aristeia*: The Death of Lycaon

“Achilles struck Lycaon in the belly near the navel: and all his guts gushed on the ground, and darkness covered over his eyes as he gasped in death...Now that he had taken the life from him he left the man there, lying where he was on the sand, with the dark water lapping him. And eels and fish were his busy attendants, tearing and nibbling at the fat around his kidneys.”

Achilles: ‘Now lie there among the fishes. They will lick the blood from your wound and give you now loving burial.’

Achilles' Return to the Greek Community

- .Returns to battle

- .All Trojans routed and flee to inside the walls of the city, except for Hector



The Death of Hector

Hector:

‘I will not run from you any more – I shall kill or be killed. But first let us swear here before our gods...I swear that I will inflict no outrage on you, if Zeus grants me the endurance and I take your life: but after I have stripped you of your famous armour, Achilles, I will give your body back to the Greeks – and you do the same.’

The Death of Hector

Achilles:

‘There are not treaties of trust between lions and men; wolves and lambs share no unity of heart, but are fixed in hatred of each other for all time – so there will be no friendship for you and me, there will be no oaths between us, before one or the other gives his glut of blood to Ares.’

The Death of Hector



The Death of Hector

Hector's last words (prophecy):

‘Yes, I can tell it – I know you well, and I had no chance of swaying you: your heart is like iron in your breast. But take care now, or I may bring the gods’ anger upon you, on that day when for all your bravery Paris and Apollo will destroy you at the Skaian Gates.’

The Death of Hector:

- Achilles drags Hector's body around Troy for three days



Priam's Ransom of Hector

- Goes to Achilles' tent to claim Hector's body



Priam at Achilles' Tent

Priam

‘Think of your father, godlike Achilles, an old man like I am, at the cruel edge of old age...and there is no one to protect him from harm. But he at least can hear that you are alive, and feel joy in his heart...But I am yet more pitiable than he. I have endured to do what no mortal man on earth has done: I have brought to my lips the hands of the man who killed my child.’

The Conclusion of the *Iliad*

‘When early-born Dawn appeared with her rosy fingers, then the people collected around the pyre of famous Hector...And then his brothers and companions gathered the white bones mourning, and heavy tears fell from their cheeks...When they had piled the funeral mound they went back. And then they gathered again in due order and held a glorious feast in the house of Priam, the god ordained king.

Such was the burial they gave to Hector, tamer of horses.’

Who is the hero in the *Iliad*?