[Template:Redirect](/wiki/Template:Redirect" \o "Template:Redirect) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [thumb|350px|Achilles and the](/wiki/File:Achilles_departure_Eretria_Painter_CdM_Paris_851.jpg) [Nereid](/wiki/Nereid) Cymothoe: Attic red-figure [kantharos](/wiki/Kantharos) from [Volci](/wiki/Volci) ([Cabinet des Médailles](/wiki/Cabinet_des_Médailles), Bibliothèque nationale, Paris) [thumb|Head of Achilles depicted on a 4th-century BC coin from](/wiki/File:Achilles-01.jpg) [Kremaste](/wiki/Pelasgia,_Phthiotis), [Phthia](/wiki/Phthia). Reverse: [Thetis](/wiki/Thetis), wearing [chiton](/wiki/Chiton_(costume)) and holding shield of Achilles with his AX monogram. [Template:Greek myth](/wiki/Template:Greek_myth) In [Greek mythology](/wiki/Greek_mythology), **Achilles** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); [Template:Lang-grc](/wiki/Template:Lang-grc), *Akhilleus*, [Template:IPA-el](/wiki/Template:IPA-el)) was a [Greek](/wiki/Greeks) hero of the [Trojan War](/wiki/Trojan_War) and the central character and greatest warrior of [Homer's](/wiki/Homer) [*Iliad*](/wiki/Iliad). His mother was the [nymph](/wiki/Nymph) [Thetis](/wiki/Thetis), and his father, [Peleus](/wiki/Peleus), was the king of the [Myrmidons](/wiki/Myrmidons).

Achilles’ most notable feat during the Trojan War was the slaying of the Trojan hero [Hector](/wiki/Hector) outside the gates of [Troy](/wiki/Troy). Although the death of Achilles is not presented in the *Iliad*, other sources concur that he was killed near the end of the Trojan War by [Paris](/wiki/Paris_(mythology)), who shot him in the heel with an arrow. Later legends (beginning with a poem by [Statius](/wiki/Statius) in the 1st century AD) state that Achilles was invulnerable in all of his body except for his heel. Because of his death from a small wound in the heel, the term [*Achilles' heel*](/wiki/Achilles'_heel) has come to mean a person's point of weakness.

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

Achilles' name can be analyzed as a combination of [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) ([*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl)) "grief" and [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) ([*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl)) "a people, tribe, nation." In other words, Achilles is an embodiment of the grief of the people, grief being a theme raised numerous times in the *Iliad* (frequently by Achilles). Achilles' role as the hero of grief forms an ironic juxtaposition with the conventional view of Achilles as the hero of [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) [*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl) ("glory", usually glory in war).

*Laos* has been construed by [Gregory Nagy](/wiki/Gregory_Nagy),[[1]](#cite_note-1) following Leonard Palmer, to mean "a corps of soldiers", a [muster](/wiki/Muster_(military)). With this derivation, the name would have a double meaning in the poem: when the hero is functioning rightly, his men bring grief to the enemy, but when wrongly, his men get the grief of war. The poem is in part about the misdirection of anger on the part of leadership.

[R. S. P. Beekes](/wiki/Robert_S._P._Beekes) has suggested a [Pre-Greek](/wiki/Pre-Greek) origin of the name.[[2]](#cite_note-2) The name Achilleus was a common and attested name among the Greeks soon after the 7th century BC.[[3]](#cite_note-3) It was also turned into the female form Ἀχιλλεία (*Achilleía*) attested in Attica in the 4th century BC ([IG](/wiki/Inscriptiones_Graecae) II² 1617) and, in the form *Achillia*, on a [stele in Halicarnassus](/wiki/Female_gladiator#Halicarnassus) as the name of a female gladiator fighting an "Amazon".

## Birth[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[thumb|*Thetis Dipping the Infant Achilles into the River Styx* (ca. 1625),](/wiki/File:Peter_Paul_Rubens_181.jpg) [Peter Paul Rubens](/wiki/Peter_Paul_Rubens)

Achilles was the son of the [Nereid](/wiki/Nereid) [Thetis](/wiki/Thetis) and [Peleus](/wiki/Peleus), the king of the [Myrmidons](/wiki/Myrmidons). [Zeus](/wiki/Zeus) and [Poseidon](/wiki/Poseidon) had been rivals for the hand of Thetis until [Prometheus](/wiki/Prometheus), the fore-thinker, warned Zeus of a prophecy that Thetis would bear a son greater than his father. For this reason, the two gods withdrew their pursuit, and had her wed Peleus.[[4]](#cite_note-4) There is a tale which offers an alternative version of these events: in [*Argonautica*](/wiki/Argonautica) (iv.760) Zeus' sister and wife [Hera](/wiki/Hera) alludes to Thetis' chaste resistance to the advances of Zeus, that Thetis was so loyal to Hera's marriage bond that she coolly rejected him. Thetis, although a daughter of the sea-god [Nereus](/wiki/Nereus), was also brought up by Hera, further explaining her resistance to the advances of Zeus.

[thumb|left|*The Education of Achilles* (ca. 1772), by](/wiki/File:The_Education_of_Achilles,_by_James_Barry.jpg) [James Barry](/wiki/James_Barry_(painter))

According to the [*Achilleid*](/wiki/Achilleid), written by [Statius](/wiki/Statius) in the 1st century AD, and to no surviving previous sources, when Achilles was born Thetis tried to make him immortal, by dipping him in the river [Styx](/wiki/Styx). However, he was left vulnerable at the part of the body by which she held him, his heel[[5]](#cite_note-5) (see [Achilles heel](/wiki/Achilles_heel), [Achilles' tendon](/wiki/Achilles'_tendon)). It is not clear if this version of events was known earlier. In another version of this story, Thetis anointed the boy in [ambrosia](/wiki/Ambrosia) and put him on top of a fire, to burn away the mortal parts of his body. She was interrupted by Peleus and abandoned both father and son in a rage.[[6]](#cite_note-6) However, none of the sources before Statius makes any reference to this general invulnerability. To the contrary, in the *Iliad* Homer mentions Achilles being wounded: in Book 21 the [Paeonian](/wiki/Paeonian) hero [Asteropaeus](/wiki/Asteropaeus), son of Pelagon, challenged Achilles by the river Scamander. He cast two spears at once, one grazed Achilles' elbow, "drawing a spurt of blood".

Also, in the fragmentary poems of the [Epic Cycle](/wiki/Epic_Cycle) in which we can find description of the hero's death, [*Cypria*](/wiki/Cypria) (unknown author), [*Aithiopis*](/wiki/Aithiopis) by [Arctinus of Miletus](/wiki/Arctinus_of_Miletus), [*Little Iliad*](/wiki/Little_Iliad) by Lesche of Mytilene, [*Iliou persis*](/wiki/Iliou_persis) by [Arctinus of Miletus](/wiki/Arctinus_of_Miletus), there is no trace of any reference to his general invulnerability or his famous weakness (heel); in the later vase paintings presenting Achilles' death, the arrow (or in many cases, arrows) hit his body.

Peleus entrusted Achilles to [Chiron](/wiki/Chiron) the [Centaur](/wiki/Centaur), on Mt. [Pelion](/wiki/Pelion), to be reared.[[7]](#cite_note-7)

## Achilles in the Trojan War[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[thumb|*The Rage of Achilles*, by](/wiki/File:The_Rage_of_Achilles_by_Giovanni_Battista_Tiepolo.jpeg) [Giovanni Battista Tiepolo](/wiki/Giovanni_Battista_Tiepolo)

The first two lines of the *Iliad* read:

[Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang)

[Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang)

Sing, Goddess, of the rage of Peleus' son Achilles,

the accursed rage that brought great suffering to the [Achaeans](/wiki/Achaeans_(Homer)).

Achilles' consuming rage is at times wavering, but at other times he cannot be cooled.

Thetis foretold that her son's fate was either to gain glory and die young, or to live a long but uneventful life in obscurity. Achilles chose the former, and decided to take part in the Trojan war.[[8]](#cite_note-8) According to the *Iliad*, Achilles arrived at Troy with 50 ships, each carrying 50 [Myrmidons](/wiki/Myrmidons) (Book 2). He appointed five leaders (each leader commanding 500 Myrmidons): Menesthius, Eudorus, Peisander, Phoenix and Alcimedon (Book 16).

### Telephus[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

When the Greeks left for the Trojan War, they accidentally stopped in [Mysia](/wiki/Mysia), ruled by King [Telephus](/wiki/Telephus). In the resulting battle, Achilles gave Telephus a wound that would not heal; Telephus consulted an oracle, who stated that "he that wounded shall heal". Guided by the oracle, he arrived at [Argos](/wiki/Argos), where Achilles healed him in order that he might become their guide for the voyage to Troy.[[9]](#cite_note-9) According to other reports in [Euripides'](/wiki/Euripides) lost play about Telephus, he went to [Aulis](/wiki/Aulis_(ancient_Greece)) pretending to be a beggar and asked Achilles to heal his wound. Achilles refused, claiming to have no medical knowledge. Alternatively, Telephus held [Orestes](/wiki/Orestes_(mythology)) for ransom, the ransom being Achilles' aid in healing the wound. [Odysseus](/wiki/Odysseus) reasoned that the spear had inflicted the wound; therefore, the spear must be able to heal it. Pieces of the spear were scraped off onto the wound and Telephus was healed.[[9]](#cite_note-9)

### Troilus[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

According to the [*Cypria*](/wiki/Cypria) (the part of the Epic Cycle that tells the events of the Trojan War before Achilles' Wrath), when the [Achaeans](/wiki/Achaeans_(Homer)) desired to return home, they were restrained by Achilles, who afterwards attacked the cattle of [Aeneas](/wiki/Aeneas), sacked neighboring cities and killed [Troilus](/wiki/Troilus).[[10]](#cite_note-10) In [Dares Phrygius'](/wiki/Dares_Phrygius) *Account of the Destruction of Troy*,[[11]](#cite_note-11) the Latin summary through which the story of Achilles was transmitted to medieval Europe, [Troilus](/wiki/Troilus) was a young Trojan prince, the youngest of King [Priam's](/wiki/Priam) (or sometimes [Apollo](/wiki/Apollo)) and [Hecuba's](/wiki/Hecuba) five legitimate sons. Despite his youth, he was one of the main Trojan war leaders. Prophecies linked Troilus' fate to that of Troy and so he was ambushed in an attempt to capture him. Yet Achilles, struck by the beauty of both Troilus and his sister [Polyxena](/wiki/Polyxena), and overcome with lust, directed his sexual attentions on the youth – who, refusing to yield, instead found himself decapitated upon an altar-omphalos of Apollo. Later versions of the story suggested Troilus was accidentally killed by Achilles in an over-ardent lovers' embrace. In this version of the myth, Achilles' death therefore came in retribution for this sacrilege.[[12]](#cite_note-12) Ancient writers treated Troilus as the epitome of a dead child mourned by his parents. Had Troilus lived to adulthood, the [First Vatican Mythographer](/wiki/First_Vatican_Mythographer) claimed, Troy would have been invincible.

### Achilles in the ''Iliad''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Achilles sacrificing to](/wiki/File:AmbrosianIliadPict47Achilles.jpg) [Zeus](/wiki/Zeus), from the [Ambrosian Iliad](/wiki/Ambrosian_Iliad), a 5th-century illuminated manuscript

Homer's *Iliad* is the most famous narrative of Achilles' deeds in the Trojan War. Achilles' wrath is the central theme of the poem. The Homeric epic only covers a few weeks of the war, and does not narrate Achilles' death. It begins with Achilles' withdrawal from battle after he is dishonored by [Agamemnon](/wiki/Agamemnon), the commander of the [Achaean](/wiki/Achaeans_(Homer)) forces. Agamemnon had taken a woman named [Chryseis](/wiki/Chryseis) as his slave. Her father [Chryses](/wiki/Chryses), a priest of [Apollo](/wiki/Apollo), begs Agamemnon to return her to him. Agamemnon refuses and Apollo sends a plague amongst the Greeks. The prophet [Calchas](/wiki/Calchas) correctly determines the source of the troubles but will not speak unless Achilles vows to protect him. Achilles does so and Calchas declares Chryseis must be returned to her father. Agamemnon consents, but then commands that Achilles' battle prize [Briseis](/wiki/Briseis) be brought to him to replace Chryseis. Angry at the dishonor of having his plunder and glory taken away (and as he says later, because he loved Briseis),[[13]](#cite_note-13) with the urging of his mother Thetis, Achilles refuses to fight or lead his troops alongside the other Greek forces. At this same time, burning with rage over Agamemnon's theft, Achilles prays to Thetis to convince Zeus to help the Trojans gain ground in the war, so that he may regain his honor.

As the battle turns against the Greeks, thanks to the influence of Zeus, [Nestor](/wiki/Nestor_(mythology)) declares that the Trojans are winning because Agamemnon has angered Achilles, and urges the king to appease the warrior. Agamemnon agrees and sends [Odysseus](/wiki/Odysseus) and two other chieftains, [Ajax](/wiki/Ajax_(mythology)) and [Phoenix](/wiki/Phoenix_(son_of_Amyntor)), to Achilles with the offer of the return of Briseis and other gifts. Achilles rejects all Agamemnon offers him, and simply urges the Greeks to sail home as he was planning to do.

The Trojans, led by [Hector](/wiki/Hector), subsequently push the Greek army back toward the beaches and assault the Greek ships. With the Greek forces on the verge of absolute destruction, [Patroclus](/wiki/Patroclus) leads the [Myrmidons](/wiki/Myrmidons) into battle wearing Achilles' armor, though Achilles remains at his camp. Patroclus succeeds in pushing the Trojans back from the beaches, but is killed by Hector before he can lead a proper assault on the city of Troy.

[thumb|left|300px|Triumphant Achilles dragging Hector's lifeless body in front of the Gates of](/wiki/File:Triumph_of_Achilles_in_Corfu_Achilleion.jpg) [Troy](/wiki/Troy) (from a [panoramic](/wiki/Panoramic) [fresco](/wiki/Fresco) on the upper level of the main hall of the [Achilleion](/wiki/Achilleion_(Corfu))).

After receiving the news of the death of Patroclus from [Antilochus](/wiki/Antilochus), the son of Nestor, Achilles grieves over his beloved companion's death. His mother Thetis comes to comfort the distraught Achilles. She persuades [Hephaestus](/wiki/Hephaestus) to make new armor for him, in place of the armor that Patroclus had been wearing which was taken by Hector. The new armor includes the [Shield of Achilles](/wiki/Shield_of_Achilles), described in great detail in the poem.

Enraged over the death of Patroclus, Achilles ends his refusal to fight and takes the field killing many men in his rage but always seeking out Hector. Achilles even engages in battle with the river god [Scamander](/wiki/Scamander) who becomes angry that Achilles is choking his waters with all the men he has killed. The god tries to drown Achilles but is stopped by [Hera](/wiki/Hera) and Hephaestus. Zeus himself takes note of Achilles' rage and sends the gods to restrain him so that he will not go on to sack Troy itself before the time allotted for its destruction, seeming to show that the unhindered rage of Achilles can defy fate itself. Finally, Achilles finds his prey. Achilles chases Hector around the wall of Troy three times before [Athena](/wiki/Athena), in the form of Hector's favorite and dearest brother, [Deiphobus](/wiki/Deiphobus), persuades Hector to stop running and fight Achilles face to face. After Hector realizes the trick, he knows the battle is inevitable. Wanting to go down fighting, he charges at Achilles with his only weapon, his sword, but misses. Accepting his fate, Hector begs Achilles, not to spare his life, but to treat his body with respect after killing him. Achilles tells Hector it is hopeless to expect that of him, declaring that "my rage, my fury would drive me now to hack your flesh away and eat you raw – such agonies you have caused me".[[14]](#cite_note-14) Achilles then kills Hector and drags his corpse by its heels behind his chariot. After having a dream where Patroclus begs Achilles hold his funeral, Achilles hosts a series of funeral games in his honor.[[15]](#cite_note-15)With the assistance of the god [Hermes](/wiki/Hermes), Hector's father, [Priam](/wiki/Priam), goes to Achilles' tent to plead with Achilles for the return of Hector's body so that he can be buried. Achilles relents and promises a truce for the duration of the funeral. The poem ends with a description of Hector's funeral, with the doom of Troy and Achilles himself still to come.

### Penthesilea[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

Achilles, after his temporary truce with Priam, fought and killed the [Amazonian](/wiki/Amazons) warrior queen [Penthesilea](/wiki/Penthesilea), but later grieved over her death. At first, he was so distracted by her beauty, he did not fight as intensely as usual. Once he realized that his distraction was endangering his life, he refocused and killed her.

### Memnon, and the fall of Achilles[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[thumb|Achilles dying in the gardens of the](/wiki/File:Achilles_thniskon_in_Corfu.jpg) [Achilleion](/wiki/Achilleion_(Corfu)) in [Corfu](/wiki/Corfu)

Following the death of Patroclus, Achilles' closest companion was Nestor's son [Antilochus](/wiki/Antilochus). When [Memnon](/wiki/Memnon_(mythology)), king of [Ethiopia](/wiki/Ethiopia_(mythology)) slew Antilochus, Achilles once more obtained revenge on the battlefield, killing Memnon. The fight between Achilles and Memnon over Antilochus echoes that of Achilles and Hector over Patroclus, except that Memnon (unlike Hector) was also the son of a goddess.

Many Homeric scholars argued that episode inspired many details in the *Iliad****s description of the death of Patroclus and Achilles' reaction to it. The episode then formed the basis of the*** [***cyclic epic***](/wiki/Epic_Cycle)[***Aethiopis***](/wiki/Aethiopis)***, which was composed after the Iliad, possibly in the 7th century B.C. The Aethiopis is now lost, except for scattered fragments quoted by later authors.***

[Template:Anchor](/wiki/Template:Anchor) The death of Achilles, as predicted by [Hector](/wiki/Hector) with his dying breath, was brought about by [Paris](/wiki/Paris_(mythology)) with an arrow (to the heel according to Statius). In some versions, the god [Apollo](/wiki/Apollo) guided Paris' arrow. Some retellings also state that Achilles was scaling the gates of Troy and was hit with a poisoned arrow.

[thumb|Ajax carries off the body of Achilles:](/wiki/File:Aias_body_Akhilleus_Staatliche_Antikensammlungen_1884.jpg) [Attic](/wiki/Attica) black-figure [*lekythos*](/wiki/Lekythos), ca. 510 BC, from Sicily ([Staatliche Antikensammlungen](/wiki/Staatliche_Antikensammlungen), Munich) All of these versions deny Paris any sort of valor, owing to the common conception that Paris was a coward and not the man his brother Hector was, and Achilles remained undefeated on the battlefield. His bones were mingled with those of [Patroclus](/wiki/Patroclus), and funeral games were held. He was represented in the *Aethiopis* as living after his death in the island of [Leuke](/wiki/Leuke) at the mouth of the river [Danube](/wiki/Danube).

Another version of Achilles' death is that he fell deeply in love with one of the Trojan princesses, [Polyxena](/wiki/Polyxena). Achilles asks Priam for Polyxena's hand in marriage. Priam is willing because it would mean the end of the war and an alliance with the world's greatest warrior. But while Priam is overseeing the private marriage of Polyxena and Achilles, Paris, who would have to give up Helen if Achilles married his sister, hides in the bushes and shoots Achilles with a divine arrow, killing him.

In the Odyssey, Agamemnon informs Achilles of his burial mound while they are receiving the dead suitors in Hades. He claims they built a massive burial mound on the beach of Ilion that could be seen by anyone approaching from the Ocean.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Achilles was cremated and his ashes buried in the same urn as those of Patroclus.[[17]](#cite_note-17) Paris was later killed by [Philoctetes](/wiki/Philoctetes) using the enormous bow of [Heracles](/wiki/Heracles).

### Fate of Achilles' armor[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

Achilles' armor was the object of a feud between [Odysseus](/wiki/Odysseus) and [Telamonian Ajax](/wiki/Ajax_(mythology)) (Ajax the greater). They competed for it by giving speeches on why they were the bravest after Achilles to their Trojan prisoners, who after considering both men came to a consensus in favor of Odysseus. Furious, Ajax cursed Odysseus, which earned the ire of Athena. Athena temporarily made Ajax so mad with grief and anguish that he began killing sheep, thinking them his comrades. After a while, when Athena lifted his madness and Ajax realized that he had actually been killing sheep, Ajax was left so ashamed that he committed suicide. Odysseus eventually gave the armor to [Neoptolemus](/wiki/Neoptolemus), the son of Achilles.

A relic claimed to be Achilles' bronze-headed spear was for centuries preserved in the temple of Athena on the acropolis of [Phaselis](/wiki/Phaselis), Lycia, a port on the Pamphylian Gulf. The city was visited in 333 BC by [Alexander the Great](/wiki/Alexander_the_Great), who envisioned himself as the new Achilles and carried the *Iliad* with him, but his court biographers do not mention the spear.[[18]](#cite_note-18) However, it was shown in the time of [Pausanias](/wiki/Pausanias_(geographer)) in the 2nd century AD.[[19]](#cite_note-19) [thumb|left|upright=.75|Achilles and Ajax playing the board game *Petteia*. (Black-figure Attic](/wiki/File:Achilles_Ajax_dice_Louvre_MNB911.jpg) [lekythos](/wiki/Lekythos), *ca.* 500 BC)

### Achilles, Ajax and a game of ''petteia''[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

Numerous paintings on pottery have suggested a tale not mentioned in the literary traditions. At some point in the war, Achilles and [Ajax](/wiki/Ajax_(mythology)) were playing a [board game](/wiki/Board_game) (*petteia*).[[20]](#cite_note-20)[[21]](#cite_note-21) They were absorbed in the game and oblivious to the surrounding battle.[[22]](#cite_note-22) The Trojans attacked and reached the heroes, who were saved only by an intervention of Athena.[[23]](#cite_note-23)

## Achilles and Patroclus[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

The exact nature of Achilles' relationship with Patroclus has been a subject of dispute in both the classical period and modern times. In the *Iliad*, it appears to be the model of a deep and loyal friendship. [Homer](/wiki/Homer) does not suggest that Achilles and his close friend Patroclus were lovers.[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[25]](#cite_note-25) Despite there being no direct evidence in the text of the Iliad that Achilles and Patroclus were lovers, this theory was expressed by some later authors.[[25]](#cite_note-25) Commentators from [classical antiquity](/wiki/Classical_antiquity) to the present have often interpreted the relationship through the lens of their own cultures. In 5th-century BC Athens, the intense bond was often viewed in light of the [Greek custom of *paiderasteia*](/wiki/Pederasty_in_ancient_Greece). In Plato's *Symposium*, the participants in a dialogue about love assume that Achilles and Patroclus were a couple; Phaedrus argues that Achilles was the younger and more beautiful one so he was the beloved and Patroclus was the lover.[[26]](#cite_note-26) But ancient Greek had no words to distinguish [heterosexual](/wiki/Heterosexual) and homosexual,[[27]](#cite_note-27) and it was assumed that a man could both desire handsome young men and have sex with women.

## Worship of Achilles in antiquity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[thumb|right|Achilles and Briseis](/wiki/File:Wenceslas_Hollar_-_Briseis_and_Achilles.jpg) [thumb|right|Penthesilea brought her Amazon warriors to help the Trojans defend their city but was killed in combat by Achilles. Here, Achilles looms above her as she sinks to the ground.](/wiki/File:Achilles_killing_the_Amazon_Queen_Penthesilea.jpg) There was an archaic [heroic cult](/wiki/Heroic_cult) of Achilles on the [White Island, *Leuce*](/wiki/Snake_Island_(Black_Sea)), in the [Black Sea](/wiki/Black_Sea) off the modern coasts of [Romania](/wiki/Romania) and [Ukraine](/wiki/Ukraine), with a temple and an [oracle](/wiki/Oracle) which survived into the Roman period.[[28]](#cite_note-28) In the lost epic [*Aithiopis*](/wiki/Aithiopis), a continuation of the *Iliad* attributed to [Arktinus of Miletos](/wiki/Arctinus), Achilles’ mother Thetis returned to mourn him and removed his ashes from the pyre and took them to Leuce at the mouths of the Danube. There the Achaeans raised a [tumulus](/wiki/Tumulus) for him and celebrated funeral games.

[Pliny's](/wiki/Pliny_the_Elder) [*Natural History*](/wiki/Natural_History_(Pliny))[[29]](#cite_note-29) mentions a tumulus that is no longer evident (*Insula Akchillis tumulo eius viri clara*), on the island consecrated to him, located at a distance of fifty Roman miles from [Peuce](/wiki/Peuce) by the [Danube Delta](/wiki/Danube_Delta), and the temple there. [Pausanias](/wiki/Pausanias_(geographer)) has been told that the island is "covered with forests and full of animals, some wild, some tame. In this island there is also Achilles’ temple and his statue".[[30]](#cite_note-30) Ruins of a square temple 30 meters to a side, possibly that dedicated to Achilles, were discovered by Captain Kritzikly in 1823, but there has been no modern archeological work done on the island.

[Pomponius Mela](/wiki/Pomponius_Mela) tells that Achilles is buried in the island named Achillea, between Boristhene and Ister.[[31]](#cite_note-31) The Greek geographer Dionysius Periegetus of Bithynia, who lived at the time of Domitian, writes that the island was called *Leuce* "because the wild animals which live there are white. It is said that there, in Leuce island, reside the souls of Achilles and other heroes, and that they wander through the uninhabited valleys of this island; this is how Jove rewarded the men who had distinguished themselves through their virtues, because through virtue they had acquired everlasting honor".[[32]](#cite_note-32) The [*Periplus of the Euxine Sea*](/wiki/Periplus_Ponti_Euxini) gives the following details: "It is said that the goddess Thetis raised this island from the sea, for her son Achilles, who dwells there. Here is his temple and his statue, an archaic work. This island is not inhabited, and goats graze on it, not many, which the people who happen to arrive here with their ships, sacrifice to Achilles. In this temple are also deposited a great many holy gifts, craters, rings and precious stones, offered to Achilles in gratitude. One can still read inscriptions in Greek and Latin, in which Achilles is praised and celebrated. Some of these are worded in Patroclus’ honor, because those who wish to be favored by Achilles, honor Patroclus at the same time. There are also in this island countless numbers of sea birds, which look after Achilles’ temple. Every morning they fly out to sea, wet their wings with water, and return quickly to the temple and sprinkle it. And after they finish the sprinkling, they clean the hearth of the temple with their wings. Other people say still more, that some of the men who reach this island, come here intentionally. They bring animals in their ships, destined to be sacrificed. Some of these animals they slaughter, others they set free on the island, in Achilles’ honor. But there are others, who are forced to come to this island by sea storms. As they have no sacrificial animals, but wish to get them from the god of the island himself, they consult Achilles’ oracle. They ask permission to slaughter the victims chosen from among the animals that graze freely on the island, and to deposit in exchange the price which they consider fair. But in case the oracle denies them permission, because there is an oracle here, they add something to the price offered, and if the oracle refuses again, they add something more, until at last, the oracle agrees that the price is sufficient. And then the victim doesn’t run away any more, but waits willingly to be caught. So, there is a great quantity of silver there, consecrated to the hero, as price for the sacrificial victims. To some of the people who come to this island, Achilles appears in dreams, to others he would appear even during their navigation, if they were not too far away, and would instruct them as to which part of the island they would better anchor their ships". (quoted in Densuşianu)

The heroic cult of Achilles on Leuce island was widespread in antiquity, not only along the sea lanes of the [Pontic Sea](/wiki/Black_Sea) but also in maritime cities whose economic interests were tightly connected to the riches of the Black Sea.

Achilles from Leuce island was venerated as *Pontarches* the lord and master of the Pontic Sea, the protector of sailors and navigation. Sailors went out of their way to offer sacrifice. To Achilles of Leuce were dedicated a number of important commercial port cities of the Greek waters: Achilleion in Messenia ([Stephanus Byzantinus](/wiki/Stephanus_Byzantinus)), Achilleios in Laconia ([Pausanias](/wiki/Pausanias_(geographer)), III.25,4) [Nicolae Densuşianu](/wiki/Nicolae_Densuşianu) (Densuşianu 1913) even though he recognized Achilles in the name of [Aquileia](/wiki/Aquileia) and in the north arm of the Danube delta, the arm of Chilia ("Achileii"), though his conclusion, that Leuce had sovereign rights over Pontos, evokes modern rather than archaic sea-law."

Leuce had also a reputation as a place of healing. Pausanias (III.19,13) reports that the [Delphic Pythia](/wiki/Delphi) sent a lord of Croton to be cured of a chest wound. [Ammianus Marcellinus](/wiki/Ammianus_Marcellinus) (XXII.8) attributes the healing to waters (*aquae*) on the island.

### Worship of Achilles in modern times: The Achilleion in Corfu[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

In the region of Gastouri (Γαστούρι) to the south of the city of [Corfu](/wiki/Corfu) Greece, Empress of Austria [Elisabeth of Bavaria](/wiki/Elisabeth_of_Bavaria) also known as Sissi built in 1890 a summer palace with Achilles as its central theme and it is a monument to [platonic](/wiki/Platonism) [romanticism](/wiki/Romanticism). The palace, naturally, was named after Achilles: [*Achilleion*](/wiki/Achilleion_(Corfu)) (Αχίλλειον). This elegant structure abounds with paintings and statues of Achilles both in the main hall and in the lavish gardens depicting the heroic and tragic scenes of the [Trojan war](/wiki/Trojan_war).

## Other stories[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[thumb|left|Achilles as guardian of the palace in the gardens of the](/wiki/File:Achilles_in_Corfu.jpg) [Achilleion](/wiki/Achilleion_(Corfu)) in Corfu. He gazes northward toward the city. The inscription in Greek reads: ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ i.e. Achilles [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Some post-Homeric sources claim that in order to keep Achilles safe from the war, Thetis (or, in some versions, Peleus) hides the young man at the court of [Lycomedes](/wiki/Lycomedes), king of [Skyros](/wiki/Skyros). There, Achilles is disguised as a girl and lives among Lycomedes' daughters, perhaps under the name "Pyrrha" (the red-haired girl). With Lycomedes' daughter [Deidamia](/wiki/Deidamia_(mythology)), whom in the account of Statius he rapes, Achilles there fathers a son, [Neoptolemus](/wiki/Neoptolemus) (also called Pyrrhus, after his father's possible alias). According to this story, Odysseus learns from the prophet [Calchas](/wiki/Calchas) that the Achaeans would be unable to capture Troy without Achilles' aid. Odysseus goes to Skyros in the guise of a peddler selling women's clothes and jewelry and places a shield and spear among his goods. When Achilles instantly takes up the spear, Odysseus sees through his disguise and convinces him to join the Greek campaign. In another version of the story, Odysseus arranges for a trumpet alarm to be sounded while he was with Lycomedes' women; while the women flee in panic, Achilles prepares to defend the court, thus giving his identity away.[[33]](#cite_note-33) In book 11 of Homer's [*Odyssey*](/wiki/Odyssey), Odysseus sails to the underworld and converses with the shades. One of these is Achilles, who when greeted as "blessed in life, blessed in death", responds that he would rather be a slave to the worst of masters than be king of all the dead. But Achilles then asks Odysseus of his son's exploits in the Trojan war, and when Odysseus tells of Neoptolemus' heroic actions, Achilles is filled with satisfaction. This leaves the reader with an ambiguous understanding of how Achilles felt about the heroic life. Achilles was worshipped as a sea-god in many of the [Greek colonies](/wiki/Greek_colonies) on the Black Sea, the location of the mythical "White Island" which he was said to inhabit after his death, together with many other heroes.

The kings of the [Epirus](/wiki/Despotate_of_Epirus) claimed to be descended from Achilles through his son, Neoptolemus. [Alexander the Great](/wiki/Alexander_the_Great), son of the Epirote princess [Olympias](/wiki/Olympias), could therefore also claim this descent, and in many ways strove to be like his great ancestor. He is said to have visited the tomb of Achilles at [Achilleion](/wiki/Achilleion_(Troad)#Tomb_of_Achilles) while passing Troy.[[34]](#cite_note-34) In AD 216 the Roman Emperor [Caracalla](/wiki/Caracalla), while on his way to war against [Parthia](/wiki/Parthia), emulated Alexander by holding games around Achilles' tumulus.[[35]](#cite_note-35) Achilles fought and killed the [Amazon](/wiki/Amazons) [Helene](/wiki/Helene_(Amazon)). Some also said he married [Medea](/wiki/Medea), and that after both their deaths they were united in the Elysian Fields of Hades – as Hera promised Thetis in [Apollonius'](/wiki/Apollonius_of_Rhodes) [*Argonautica*](/wiki/Argonautica). In some versions of the myth, Achilles has a relationship with his captive [Briseis](/wiki/Briseis).

## Achilles in Greek tragedy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

The [Greek tragedian](/wiki/Tragedy) [Aeschylus](/wiki/Aeschylus) wrote a trilogy of plays about Achilles, given the title *Achilleis* by modern scholars. The tragedies relate the deeds of Achilles during the Trojan War, including his defeat of [Hector](/wiki/Hector) and eventual death when an arrow shot by [Paris](/wiki/Paris_(mythology)) and guided by [Apollo](/wiki/Apollo) punctures his heel. Extant fragments of the *Achilleis* and other Aeschylean fragments have been assembled to produce a workable modern play. The first part of the *Achilleis* trilogy, *The Myrmidons*, focused on the relationship between Achilles and chorus, who represent the Achaean army and try to convince Achilles to give up his quarrel with Agamemnon; only a few lines survive today.[[36]](#cite_note-36) In Plato's *Symposium*, Phaedrus points out that Aeschylus portrayed Achilles as the lover and Patroclus as the beloved; Phaedrus argues that this is incorrect because Achilles, being the younger and more beautiful of the two, was the beloved, who loved his lover so much that he chose to die to revenge him.[[37]](#cite_note-37) The tragedian [Sophocles](/wiki/Sophocles) also wrote *The Lovers of Achilles*, a play with Achilles as the main character. Only a few fragments survive.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Towards the end of the 5th century BC, a more negative view of Achilles emerges in Greek drama; Euripides refers to Achilles in a bitter or ironic tone in [*Hecuba*](/wiki/Hecuba_(play)), [*Electra*](/wiki/Electra_(Euripides)), and [*Iphigenia in Aulis*](/wiki/Iphigenia_in_Aulis).[[39]](#cite_note-39)

## Achilles in Greek philosophy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

The philosopher [Zeno of Elea](/wiki/Zeno_of_Elea) centered one of [his paradoxes](/wiki/Zeno's_paradoxes) on an imaginary footrace between "[swift-footed](/wiki/Epithets_in_Homer#Individuals)" [Achilles and a tortoise](/wiki/Zeno's_paradoxes#Achilles_and_the_tortoise), by which he attempted to show that Achilles could not catch up to a tortoise with a head start, and therefore that motion and change were impossible. As a student of the monist Parmenides and a member of the Eleatic school, Zeno believed time and motion to be illusions.

## Achilles in Roman and medieval literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

The Romans, who traditionally traced their lineage to Troy, took a highly negative view of Achilles.[[39]](#cite_note-39) [Virgil](/wiki/Virgil) refers to Achilles as a savage and a merciless butcher of men,[[40]](#cite_note-40) while [Horace](/wiki/Horace) portrays Achilles ruthlessly slaying women and children.[[41]](#cite_note-41) Other writers, such as [Catullus](/wiki/Catullus), [Propertius](/wiki/Propertius), and [Ovid](/wiki/Ovid), represent a second strand of disparagement, with an emphasis on Achilles' erotic career. This strand continues in Latin accounts of the Trojan War by writers such as [Dictys Cretensis](/wiki/Dictys_Cretensis) and [Dares Phrygius](/wiki/Dares_Phrygius) and in [Benoît de Sainte-Maure's](/wiki/Benoît_de_Sainte-Maure) [*Roman de Troie*](/wiki/Roman_de_Troie) and [Guido delle Colonne's](/wiki/Guido_delle_Colonne) [*Historia destructionis Troiae*](/wiki/Historia_destructionis_Troiae), which remained the most widely read and retold versions of the [Matter of Troy](/wiki/Matter_of_Troy) until the 17th century.

Achilles was described by the Byzantine chronicler [Leo the Deacon](/wiki/Leo_the_Deacon), not as [Hellene](/wiki/Hellenes), but as [Scythian](/wiki/Scythians), while according to the Byzantine author [John Malalas](/wiki/John_Malalas), his army was made up of a tribe previously known as Myrmidons and later as [Bulgars](/wiki/Bulgars).[[42]](#cite_note-42)[[43]](#cite_note-43)

## Popular culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[thumb|*The Wrath of Achilles*, by](/wiki/File:Leon_Benouville_The_Wrath_of_Achilles.jpg) [François-Léon Benouville](/wiki/François-Léon_Benouville) (1821–1859) ([Musée Fabre](/wiki/Musée_Fabre)).

* Achilles is portrayed as a former hero who has become lazy and devoted to the love of Patroclus, in [William Shakespeare's](/wiki/William_Shakespeare) [*Troilus and Cressida*](/wiki/Troilus_and_Cressida).
* Achilles appears in Dante's [*Inferno*](/wiki/Inferno_(Dante)). He is seen in [Hell's](/wiki/Hell) Circle of Lust.
* Achilles is the subject of the poem [*Achilleïs*](/wiki/Achilleïs), a fragment by [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe).
* Achilles is a major character in [Madeline Miller's](/wiki/Madeline_Miller) debut novel, [*The Song of Achilles*](/wiki/The_Song_of_Achilles) (2011), which won the 2012 [Orange Prize for Fiction](/wiki/Orange_Prize_for_Fiction). The novel explores the relationship between Patroclus and Achilles from boyhood to the fateful events of the [*Iliad*](/wiki/Iliad).
* Achilles is a central and playable character in [KOEI's](/wiki/Tecmo_Koei) [*Warriors: Legends of Troy*](/wiki/Warriors:_Legends_of_Troy). He is later a special guest character in [*Warriors Orochi 3*](/wiki/Warriors_Orochi_3).
* Achilles is mentioned in Tennyson's "[Ulysses](/wiki/Ulysses_(poem))": "...we shall touch the happy isles and meet there the great Achilles whom we knew."
* Achilles (Akhilles) is killed by a poisoned Kentaur arrow shot by Kassandra in [Marion Zimmer Bradley's](/wiki/Marion_Zimmer_Bradley) novel [*The Firebrand*](/wiki/The_Firebrand) (1987).
* In Disney's [*Hercules*](/wiki/Hercules_(1997_film)), Achilles was mentioned to have been a student of Philoctetes and a reference to his heel being his weakness was made. Later in the film, some people of Thebes mock Philoctetes for his training of Achilles.
  + Achilles appears in [*Hercules*](/wiki/Hercules_(1998_TV_series)) episode "Achilles and the Living Legend," voiced by [Dom Irrera](/wiki/Dom_Irrera). He is shown as a washed-out has-been ever since he was defeated.
* Achilles appears in the light novel [*Fate/Apocrypha*](/wiki/Fate/Apocrypha) as the Rider of Red.
* Achilles is one of various 'narrators' in [Colleen McCullough's](/wiki/Colleen_McCullough) novel [*The Song of Troy*](/wiki/The_Song_of_Troy) (1998).
* Achilles is the main character in [David Malouf's](/wiki/David_Malouf) novel [*Ransom*](/wiki/Ransom_(Malouf_novel)) (2009).
* The [ghost](/wiki/Ghost) of Achilles appears in [Rick Riordan's](/wiki/Rick_Riordan) [*The Last Olympian*](/wiki/The_Last_Olympian) (2009). He warns Percy Jackson about the Curse of Achilles and its side effects.
* Achilles is one of the main characters in [Dan Simmons's](/wiki/Dan_Simmons) novels [*Ilium*](/wiki/Ilium_(novel)) (2003) and [*Olympos*](/wiki/Olympos_(novel)) (2005).
* Achilles' armor appears as downloadable content in the 2013 video game, [*God of War: Ascension*](/wiki/God_of_War:_Ascension).
* In the web series, [*RWBY*](/wiki/RWBY), the character Pyrrha Nikos alludes to Achilles. Like him, she is a very skilled warrior, wielding a javelin called Miló, which can also turn into a rifle and a xiphos, and a shield called Akoúo̱. Her name and gender is a reference to when Achilles was disguised as a girl named "Pyrrha" in Skyros. In the finale of Volume 3, before she is killed by the villain Cinder Fall, Pyrrha is crippled with an arrow at the right heel, alluding to Achilles' death.
* In the video game, [*Halo 5: Guardians*](/wiki/Halo_5:_Guardians), The Achilles Armor and Helmet are the most challenging cosmetic items to obtain. The description for the armor "Only Spartans who have mastered themselves, bound their wrath and passion within a shell of hyper-dense steel fueled by star-fire, are granted access to the Achilles. Lesser warriors will lose themselves in a storm of blood."

The role of Achilles has been played in film by:

* [Piero Lulli](/wiki/Piero_Lulli) in *Ulysses* (1955)
* [Stanley Baker](/wiki/Stanley_Baker) in [*Helen of Troy*](/wiki/Helen_of_Troy_(film)) (1956)
* [Riley Ottenhof](/wiki/Riley_Ottenhof) in *Something about Zeus* (1958)
* [Arturo Dominici](/wiki/Arturo_Dominici) in [*La Guerra di Troia*](/wiki/Guerra_di_Troia) (1962)
* [Gordon Mitchell](/wiki/Gordon_Mitchell) in [*The Fury of Achilles*](/wiki/The_Fury_of_Achilles) (1962)
* [Steve Davislim](/wiki/Steve_Davislim) in [*La Belle Hélène*](/wiki/La_Belle_Hélène_(TV_movie)) (TV, 1996)
* [Richard Trewett](/wiki/Richard_Trewett) in the miniseries [*The Odyssey*](/wiki/The_Odyssey_(TV_miniseries)) (TV, 1997)
* Joe Montana in [*Helen of Troy*](/wiki/Helen_of_Troy_(TV_miniseries)) (TV, 2003)
* [Brad Pitt](/wiki/Brad_Pitt) in [*Troy*](/wiki/Troy_(film)) (2004)

Achilles has frequently been mentioned in music:

* [Achilles](/wiki/Achilles_(band)) is a [hardcore](/wiki/Hardcore_punk) band.
* "Achilles" is an [oratorio](/wiki/Oratorio) by German composer [Max Bruch](/wiki/Max_Bruch) (1885).
* "Achilles, Agony & Ecstasy In Eight Parts", by [Manowar](/wiki/Manowar_(band)) ([*The Triumph of Steel*](/wiki/The_Triumph_of_Steel), 1992).
* "[Achilles Last Stand](/wiki/Achilles_Last_Stand)" is a song by [Led Zeppelin](/wiki/Led_Zeppelin) ([*Presence*](/wiki/Presence_(album)), 1976).
* "Achilles' Revenge" is a song by [Warlord](/wiki/Warlord_(band)).
* "Achilles' Wrath" is a concert piece by [Sean O'Loughlin](/wiki/Sean_O'Loughlin).
* Achilles is referred to in [Bob Dylan's](/wiki/Bob_Dylan) song "Temporary Like Achilles".
* "Cry of Achilles" is the lead track off of [Alter Bridge's](/wiki/Alter_Bridge) fourth album, *Fortress*.

## Namesakes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

* The name of Achilles has been used for at least nine Royal Navy warships since 1744 - both as [HMS *Achilles*](/wiki/HMS_Achilles) and with the French spelling [HMS *Achille*](/wiki/HMS_Achille). A 60-gun ship of that name served at the Battle of Belleisle in 1761 while a 74-gun ship served at the [Battle of Trafalgar](/wiki/Battle_of_Trafalgar). Other battle honours include Walcheren 1809. An armored cruiser of that name served in the Royal Navy during the First World War.
* [HMNZS *Achilles*](/wiki/HMNZS_Achilles_(70)) was a [*Leander*-class cruiser](/wiki/Leander_class_cruiser_(1931)) which served with the [Royal New Zealand Navy](/wiki/Royal_New_Zealand_Navy) in World War II. It became famous for its part in the [Battle of the River Plate](/wiki/Battle_of_the_River_Plate), alongside [Template:HMS](/wiki/Template:HMS) and [Template:HMS](/wiki/Template:HMS). In addition to earning the battle honour 'River Plate', HMNZS Achilles also served at Guadalcanal 1942–43 and Okinawa in 1945. After returning to the [Royal Navy](/wiki/Royal_Navy), the ship was sold to the [Indian Navy](/wiki/Indian_Navy) in 1948 but when she was scrapped parts of the ship were saved and preserved in New Zealand.
* [Capois La Mort](/wiki/François_Capois), a slave who fought in the Haitian Revolution, was nicknamed the Black Achilles because of his heroic performance during the last battle against the French.
* Prince Achileas-Andreas of Greece and Denmark was the grandson of the deposed [Greek](/wiki/Greece) king, [Constantine II](/wiki/Constantine_II_of_the_Hellenes).
* The character Achilles in [Ender's Shadow](/wiki/Ender's_Shadow), by Orson Scott Card, shares his namesake's cunning mind and ruthless attitude.
* In the [*Star Trek universe*](/wiki/Star_Trek_universe), the Achilles Class is an advanced type of Federation battleship brought into service at the outbreak of the [Dominion War](/wiki/Dominion_War), though not seen in any of the canonical *Star Trek* TV series.
* Achilles armor and valor are included in the video games [*Titan Quest*](/wiki/Titan_Quest) and *TQ Immortal Throne*.
* The 2005 video game [*Spartan Total Warrior*](/wiki/Spartan_Total_Warrior) features two campaign missions located in the fictional buried city of Troy, with the story arc for this segment of the game culminating in the discovery of the Tomb of Achilles and the acquisition of the Spear of Achilles.

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:EB1911 poster](/wiki/Template:EB1911_poster) [Template:Commons category](/wiki/Template:Commons_category)

* [Trojan War Resources](http://www.historyguide.org/ancient/troy.html)
* [Gallery of the Ancient Art: Achilles](http://ancientrome.ru/art/artworken/result.htm?alt=Achilles&pnumber=20)
* [Template:Cite Wikisource](/wiki/Template:Cite_Wikisource) Poem by Florence Earle Coates

[Template:Characters in the Iliad](/wiki/Template:Characters_in_the_Iliad)

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