

A hero's arise in gilead

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



The Iliad, written by ancient Greek poet Homer, chronicles the battle and events during the final weeks of The Trojan War, an armed conflict between the Achaeans army and the defenders of Troy. It further recounts the story of the wrath of Achilles, the greatest warrior in the Greek army, against King Agamemnon, who unfairly appropriates Briseis, the lovely maiden belonging to Achilles after relinquishing his own maiden, Chryseis, in order to end the plague sweeping the Greek armies. Infuriated by Agamemnon's demands, the dishonored and humiliated Achilles initially withdraws from the king's army and enlists the service of Zeus, king of all gods, to bring upon the Achaean army a devastating loss. He later reconciles with Agamemnon and joins the Greek army to avenge his friend, Patroclus' death, who was killed by Hector, the mightiest warrior in the Trojan army. As Achilles reenters the war, he experiences aristeia at his finest, most glorious moments during the conflict. He is able to rout the Trojan army, mercilessly slaughtering them one by one, and dragging the mutilated body of Hector after brutally murdering him. It is only through these fearless actions does Achilles achieve everlasting glory, honor and fame, bestowed to him by his community. In Homer's Iliad, Achilles' aristeia supersedes the aristeias of other characters as the warrior is able to display unsurpassed skill and prowess in battle, is motivated to seek the principle of justice for his murdered brother-in-arms Patroclus, and remains persistent in exacting revenge despite the looming prophecy of his imminent death.

Achilles, the mightiest warrior on the battlefield of Troy, achieves unmatched aristeia when he reenters the battlefield in order to avenge Patroclus' death by displaying unparalleled physical strength, military intelligence, courage,

and determination. As Achilles enters the war, he applies offensive strategic skills to split the Trojan forces, mercilessly kills many of the opposition, and throws several corpses into the river Xanthos, clogging its channels. The warrior's courage remains unmatched as he attacks the river, after its gods, angered by the blood in its water send waves and current to destroy the hero. By gaining help from the goddess Hera and the god Hephaestus, Achilles, who has maintained good relations with many of the deities, defeats the river and moves on to capture most of the city of Troy. Achilles proves his greatness once again when the warrior skillfully thrusts his spear into Hector's throat, thereby avenging his beloved friend's death. Achilles' aristeia supersedes the aristeia of other warriors not only because the hero possesses superior mental and physical strength, but also because he is able to accomplish greater feats without the help of an army. In fact, his finest moments in battle even surpasses' his rival, King Agamemnon's aristeia whose moments of glory occur much earlier in the epic. While the king is able to successfully push the Trojans in close proximity to the city gate, achieving his peak as a fighter and a hero, his success remains brief. The Trojan army gains the upper hand by retaliating and wounding many of the Achaean army including the king himself. Even the king, fearful of defeat, admits to his need for Achilles help and acknowledges his strength by exclaiming, " Why look, that man is worth an entire army" (book 9, line 140). By making this statement, Agamemnon realizes that only with the superior battle skills and strength of Achilles can victory be achieved. Agamemnon's aristeia pales in comparison to Achilles glorious moments on the field. While the king's accomplishment on the battlefield are few, short-lived and depend

upon the strength of his army, Achilles is able to actualize his goals by capturing the entire city of Troy, avenging Patroclus' death and bringing an end to the Trojan war.

It is only after Achilles, motivated by the principle of justice and sense of moral obligation to reenter the battlefield in order to avenge Patroclus' death, does the warrior achieve incomparable aristeias. Although Agamemnon has dishonored Achilles, the warrior is able to swallow his pride and seek out justice for his brother in arms who has been killed by Hector, leader of the Trojan army. Achilles' sense of moral obligation to seek retribution for his friend's death is due to the fact that the hero feels guilty for granting Patroclus permission to enter the war. Additionally, the warrior's acceptance of Priam's ransom for Hector's body and his decision to grant the city of Troy the time to conduct his funeral rites, displays great aristeia as he is able to focus away from his own grief in an attempt to understand a father's sorrow for his slain son. The complex hero attains communal honor for both his heroic action on the battlefield by killing Hector and avenging his friend's death and even off the battlefield by displaying a more humane and compassionate side of himself when he stops the desecration of Hector's body in an attempt to reconcile with Priam. Achilles' aristeia, based on the honorable principle of justice supersedes the aristeia of other heroes of the Homeric culture, including that of his beloved friend, Patroclus. As Patroclus enters the Trojan War, he achieves aristae by leading the Achaean attack on the city of Troy and killing some of the enemies, including the son of Zeus. Unfortunately, the fighter, motivated and overcome by pride, extends himself beyond his capabilities, despite being advised by Achilles to only

protect the Achaean ships. Donned in Achilles' armor, Patroclus loses his sense of identity and is unable to understand his own physical limits. His inability to see his own shortcomings coupled with feelings of excessive pride lead to his death. Patroclus' short-lived *aristeia* is far inferior to Achilles, as the fighter with limited self-understanding uses pride to attain glory. Achilles, on the other hand, motivated by the more noble principle of justice avenges Patroclus' death and ultimately undergoes moral rehabilitation as he moves beyond selfish passion into a state of acceptance and compassion.

Achilles' persistence in exacting revenge on the battlefield despite the looming prophecy of his imminent death proves that his *aristeia* once again supersedes his contemporaries. The fearless warrior is willing to accept his future demise in order to attain honor and glory. Aware about his inevitable fate, Achilles reveals his mother's prophecy to Agamemnon's trusted advisors who are attempting to broker a deal with the warrior to reenter the war. As he refuses Agamemnon's offer, Achilles states, "Two fates bear me on to the day of death. If I hold out here and I lay siege to Troy My journey home is gone, but my glory never dies. If I voyage back to the fatherland I love, My pride, my glory dies... True, but the life that's left me will be long, The stroke of death will not come on me quickly" (Book 9, line 499-505). This statement indicates that Achilles understands that he will either die a glorified death as a fighter or live a long life with no glory. When the warrior decides to avenge Patroclus' death with the understanding that reentering the war may lead to his death, he proves that his *aristeia* is superior to other heroes. Other Homeric heroes are not faced by such daunting decisions. When Diomedes, a heroic Achaean fighter, second to Achilles in prowess,

gallantry and courage, experiences his aristeia, he is not faced with a prophecy of death if he achieves victory. The valiant soldier, receiving help from Athena, seeks glory and respect as he kills many Trojans, wounds the goddess Aphrodite and Ares, and pushes the Trojans back to the city limit. Despite his successes, Diomedes knows that his victory will not result in his death, but rather bring him honor and glory in this life. Achilles' decision to fight the Trojans, knowing full well that he will die after his victory proves that his aristeia supersedes other valiant fighters who have not been challenged by an impending death after their own personal victory. It is because of this courageous and fearless decision, can it be confirmed that Achilles is indeed the greatest and mightiest of all warriors.

Hailed as the greatest poet of all time, Greek poet Homer effectively utilizes the theme of aristeia in order to render Achilles the most glorified and honorable Achaean heroes, in his epic poem Iliad. The warriors aristeia supersedes the aristeias of other characters as he proves he has unmatched skills in battle and prowess, is motivated to seek justice for his beloved friend Patroclus, and remains persistent in exacting revenge despite the looming prophecy of his imminent death. Achilles superior aristeia is not only marked by a prolonged, detailed arming scene, in comparison to his contemporaries, but also noted by the fact that he receives immense support from the Gods. It is only with the deities role as protectors, influencers and rescuers can the quintessential Greek hero accomplish superhuman tasks. Achilles' superior physical and mental strength, decision to fight based on the principle of justice and decision to die for what he believes in truly renders him to be a

Greek hero whose finest moments in battle are unsurpassed by any of the other valiant soldiers.