

The text: The "Iliad" is attributed to a poet by the name of Homer. There are two epic poems which scholars believe were orally composed by a bard, named Homer, who was from the island of Chios in the Aegean Sea. We know very little about Homer, there are mythical accounts that he was blind. What is important for the reader to understand is the tradition of oral poetry preceded written compositions, which means that the text that we have was composed as a written poem long after the bard, Homer, orally recited his epic poem to audiences in city-states throughout Greece and the Aegean at competitions in which poets would recite their poems and the audience would deem one poet as better than all the others.

The time period: The first time period occurs at the end of the Bronze Age, in what is called the Mycenaean era, approximately, 1600-1200 BCE. The second time period is the time of the poet, Homer, approx. 800-750 BCE, during a time that is known as the end of the Dark Age, (1100-900 BCE) and the beginning of the Archaic Age, (800-750 BCE)

Why: We read the "Iliad" for its insight into interpersonal relationships between enemies, (the Greeks and the Trojans), for relationships between leaders and their subordinates (Agamemnon and Achilles), for the complexion of male-to-male friendships and alliances, male-to-female relationships and interdependence, and finally, for an examination of "what makes men tick."