

# The New Criterion

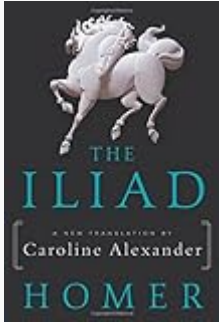
Books May 2016

## A classic restored

by George Grimbilas

A review of *The Iliad: A New Translation by Caroline Alexander* by Homer

### BOOKS IN THIS ARTICLE



*Homer*

*The Iliad: A New Translation by Caroline Alexander*

Ecco, 608 pages, \$39.99

Of the myriad appeals tendered for why one should read Homer, the most compelling is consistently overlooked. Certainly the dramatic narratives of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* might provide justification alone. The wanderings of Odysseus, his archetypal personal struggles mirroring our own struggles with people, nature, and events, and his subsequent resurrection from obscurity to kingship are original and unmatched. The same holds for the *Iliad*, the magisterial narrative of the ruinous divine anger of Achilles who entreats his mother, the goddess Thetis, to bring death to his fellow Greeks for their disrespect and loses his best friend Patroclus as an unintended consequence. Other justifications are ready at hand. The Homeric epics form the bedrock of the literature of Western civilization, supplying material for the Athenian tragedians, Rome's Virgil, and our own Milton, Pope, Tennyson, and Joyce....

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**George Grimbilas** is a Senior Portfolio Manager at Lazard Asset Management.

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