

## Female Protagonists in *Troy: Fall of a City* (2018)

In eight hourly episodes, the recent BBC/Netflix series *Troy: Fall of a City* (2018) recast the events of the Trojan War from its prehistory to the sack of the city, offering modern audiences a retelling of the famous epic cycle, inspired by “Homer and the Greek myths,” as claimed in the opening credits. This is the first organized panel at a major conference that aims to assess and analyze the series and its female protagonists in light of classical reception studies by looking closely at the plot not as deviation or close imitation of classical sources but as an effective visual medium intended to speak to a twenty-first century global audience and address contemporary social issues.

Paper #1 (“Pussy Politics: Women and Power in *Troy: Fall of a City* (2018)”) looks at the political implications of the series’ racially diverse casting decisions. As the paper demonstrates, the narrative choices of the series’ creators not only highlight some of the strategies women in disenfranchised positions in antiquity drew upon to affect the world around them, but also demonstrate the influence of more modern notions of female power and autonomy. Yet at the same time, the series seems to offer a glimpse of female empowerment only to snatch it away again.

In paper #2 (“I Choose You”: Aphrodite and Paris in *Troy: Fall of a City* (2018)”), the author studies the role of Aphrodite and the gods in general in the series. From the opening dramatization of the Judgment of Paris scene as the foundational myth of the Trojan War, to the closing sequence of the charred city in ruins, the onscreen presence of Aphrodite, as this paper demonstrates, and her intimate engagement with her favorite Paris drives the main plot and serves as a compelling structural framework for the entire series. It is particularly intriguing that Aphrodite serves as a link and introduction for a possible second season through her final appearance to the two survivors Helen and Aeneas.

Paper #3 (“The Odyssean Helen as Anti-Hero in *Troy: Fall of a City* (2018)”) examines the presentation of Helen in the series and in particular how this new version of Helen borrows from Helen’s appearance in Homer’s *Odyssey* 4 rather than the *Iliad*. While the plot does not borrow from the *Iliad* when it comes to Helen, however, her Odyssean portrayal is used to illustrate the Spartan queen’s Iliadi past. Ultimately the reliance upon the Odyssean Helen supports her presentation as an anti-hero.

In paper # 4, the author examines the prominent role of Chryseis in the series, a heretofore marginalized figure on the big or small screen. This paper reads Chryseis’ inclusion against the *Iliad*, Agamemnon’s sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia, and Achilles’ treatment of Briseis to illustrate how a prominent Chryseis now highlights Agamemnon’s abusive, violent, or disrespectful behavior toward women, the gods, and fellow Greeks, especially Achilles.