

The case of Agamemnon's mobbing: insights on mobbing from homer's *The Iliad*

Abstract

This research aims to provide insights on mobbing from Homer's epic poem *The Iliad*. It is argued that, while the term "mobbing" has emerged in the modern times first adopted and adapted in 1984 by Heinz Leymann for workplace abuse, the existence of mobbing predates its coinage. According to this research, one of the earliest depictions of mobbing is from Homer's *The Iliad* that is speculated to be composed around 8th century BC. The nature of mobbing, the effects of mobbing (both personal and social) and the implied solution to mobbing in Homer's *The Iliad* shall be analysed. Additionally for the purposes of this research the terms "mobber" and "mobbee" are proposed to denote the one doing the mobbing and the one being subjected to mobbing respectively. While the word "mobber" is already unofficially used to denote people who do mobbing, there is still not a word for the victim of mobbing. So this research has propositions about two terms. Firstly to officialise the word "mobber". Secondly to add the word "mobbee" to denote the victim of mobbing.

Keywords: Mobbing, abuse, homer, Iliad, mobber, mobbee, agamemnon, achilles, forensi

Volume 14 Issue 2 - 2026

Doruk Iper

Independent, Turkey

Correspondence: Doruk Iper, English Language and Literature, Independent, Turkey, Tel +90 05344479555

Received: June 5, 2026 | **Published:** June 19, 2026

Introduction

It is a truth universally acknowledged, but officially unannounced that, there is a pandemic of mobbing around the world. While "mobbing" is a relatively modern term that has emerged in the modern times,¹ its existence predates its coinage. On this subject, one of the earliest depictions of "mobbing" can be found in Homer's *The Iliad*; done by Agamemnon to Achilles. The issue of mobbing, that can be found in *The Iliad* is a prime example of how great literature is universal and timeless in its offering of wisdom; since a work composed around 8th century BC can give insight to modern readers. In this article, the issue of mobbing, its effects and consequences shall be discussed through an analysis of Homer's *The Iliad*. Hopefully through this analysis of Homer's *The Iliad*, the destructive effects and heavy consequences of mobbing will become more understandable and relatable.

Terminology and definition of mobbing

The term "mobbing" was first adopted and adapted by Heinz Leymann in 1984 to describe workplace abuse that can be observed through time and frequency.¹ According to Leymann¹ mobbing is defined as follows:

"The scientific definition meant by the term "mobbing" thus refers to a social interaction through which one individual (seldom more) is attacked by one or more (seldom more than four) individuals almost on a daily basis and for periods of many months, bringing the person into an almost helpless position with potentially high risk of expulsion."¹

Leymann was cautious about distinguishing "mobbing" from "conflict". For Heinz Leymann "mobbing" differed from "conflict" in terms of abuse, not by the category or the method of the abuse in workplace, but by the frequency and duration of the abuse. For the workplace abuse to be considered mobbing, according to Leymann, the abuse had to occur frequently (statistical definition: at least once a week), and the abuse had to occur over a long time (statistical definition: at least for six months of duration).¹ While the original definition of mobbing included a strict time and frequency limit a

more recent research regarding mobbing, reinterpreted mobbing without the time and frequency restraints.² In George Steffgen's research mobbing is defined as:

"Our use of the term workplace mobbing will refer to the following situation: An employee experiences workplace mobbing, when (s) he is being subjected to a series of negative and/or hostile acts or other behaviors that are experienced as annoying and/or oppressive at the workplace."²

Therefore there are different interpretations of the concept of mobbing both including and discluding time and frequency constraints. This is an important detail for this article, because in the case of Agamemnon's mobbing two approaches emerge for analysis. One of the approaches would be to follow the original definition including the time constraint without the frequency constraint.¹ In this case, beyond the instance of mobbing in Book 1, two other important instances in *The Iliad* have to be considered. Firstly Achilles' referral to Agamemnon's avarice with regard to war rewards in Book 1.³ Secondly Agamemnon's long lasting habit of underpaying the rewards of Achilles' and his band's conquests for years (possibly for nine years).³ The other approach to analyse this case would be by following the more recent definition without time and frequency limits. In which case, starting from Book 1, the mobbing behaviour can be observed. To connect, referring to these two different definitions of mobbing establishes the foundation that makes the analysis of Agamemnon's mobbing in *The Iliad* possible.

¹For the frequency constraint, even though it is evident from *The Iliad* that Agamemnon has had a long habit of underpaying and under-rewarding Achilles for his services through years, it is not possible to determine the frequency with which Agamemnon had abused Achilles (whether at least once a week or not). Because other than occasional allusions, events before and after the Rage of Achilles are not within the scope of *The Iliad*.³ Although it is not possible to exactly determine the frequency of Agamemnon's abuse it can still be understood that, regardless of the frequency, Agamemnon's abuse had a lasting impact on Achilles; especially when the continuous agitation on Achilles' honour is concerned. So when looked at from Leymann's definition, the case of "mobbing" will be analysed without the frequency constraint.

Additionally for the purposes of this research the terms “mobber” and “mobbee” are proposed to denote the one doing the mobbing and the one being subjected to mobbing respectively. While the word “mobber” is already unofficially used to denote people who do mobbing, there is still not a word for the victim of mobbing. So this research has propositions about two terms. Firstly to officialise the word “mobber”. Secondly to add the word “mobbee” to denote the victim of mobbing.

The case and analysis of mobbing in *The Iliad*

The issue of mobbing in *The Iliad* emerges at the earlier portions of the work, specifically at Book 1. The story begins with Chryses' request from the Grecian host to return his daughter to himself.³ While the Greeks in general assent to the return of Chryseis to Chryses, Agamemnon objects; not to mention with considerable disrespect to Chryses and Apollo.³ Chryses being furious at Agamemnon's decree, curses the Greek forces. Apollo on Chryses' prayers sends a plague upon them. Achilles inspired by Juno (Hera) calls Greeks to council in order to discuss on the subject of plague and what course of action should be taken.³ Achilles suggests in the council that either the Greek forces should retreat or someone with a mystic inclination should reveal the cause behind Apollo's anger.³ To this request Calchas responds and reveals the cause of Apollo's curse which is the denial of Chryses' request of returning Chryseis.³ Right after Calchas the Oracle informs the Greeks on the reason behind the current plague upon them, Agamemnon reacts with immediate displeasure:

‘Augur accursed! Denouncing mischief still,
Prophet of plagues, for ever boding ill!
Still must that tongue some wounding message bring,
And still thy priestly pride provoke thy king?
For this are Phœbus' oracles explored,
To teach the Greeks to murmur at their lord?’³

This reaction from Agamemnon was nothing unforeseeable for Calchas, as he had asked for immunity and protection from Achilles, before revealing the reason behind the plague, should he as the messenger would be abused because of revealing the truth.³ However, Agamemnon's early words, fierce as they are, only foreshadow the mobbing he is going to commit by denying the rightful prize of Achilles' labour (in this setting and context the woman Briseis); resulting in Achilles' demotivation to fight for Greece in the Trojan War until reconciliation.

Ultimately Agamemnon yields to Calchas' revelation and decides to return Chryseis to her father Chryses but with a very heavy cost to his lords. Agamemnon demands that his “prize of war” has to be compensated by the Grecian forces:

‘Yet, if the gods demand her, let her sail;
Our cares are only for the public weal:
Let me be deem'd the hateful cause of all,
And suffer, rather than my people fall.
The prize, the beautiful prize, I will resign,
So dearly valued, and so justly mine.
But since for common good I yield the fair,
My private loss let grateful Greece repair;

Nor unrewarded let your prince complain,
That he alone has fought and bled in vain.’³

Here it is first seen that Agamemnon is bending the rules based on arbitrary whim which is a well-known characteristic of mobbing. To Agamemnon's presumption Achilles promptly reacts: “‘Insatiate king (Achilles thus replies), /Fond of the power, but fonder of the prize! / wouldn't the Greeks their lawful prey should yield, / the due reward of many a well-fought field?’”³ Even though Achilles asserts the fact that the “prizes” by the soldiers are justly won through their toil, Agamemnon refuses to relent and exacerbates the situation further by saying:

‘At thy demand shall I restore the maid?
First let the just equivalent be paid;
Such as a king might ask; and let it be
A treasure worthy her, and worthy me.
Or grant me this, or with a monarch's claim
This hand shall seize some other captive dame.
The mighty Ajax shall his prize resign;
Ulysses' spoils, or even thy own, be mine.
The man who suffers, loudly may complain;
And rage he may, but he shall rage in vain.’³

At this point Agamemnon not only demands compulsory recompensation from his lords but also he fervently attempts to legitimise his entitlement to the “prizes” of other Grecian lords. The mobber is effectively attempting to legalise and legitimise his abuse, in this case by appealing to his status as the king of the Grecian host. Achilles furious at Agamemnon's intentions, reacts to Agamemnon's injustice most notably in the following lines:

Is this the pay our blood and toils deserve;
Disgraced and injured by the man we serve?
And darest thou threat to snatch my prize away,
Due to the deeds of many a dreadful day?
A prize as small, O tyrant! match'd with thine,
As thy own actions if compared to mine.
Thine in each conquest is the wealthy prey,
Though mine the sweat and danger of the day.
Some trivial present to my ships I bear:
Or barren praises pay the wounds of war.’³

This outburst reveals that Agamemnon's abuse has a long history. Apparently until that point in every conquest Agamemnon had been underpaying Achilles. So as suggested before, the mentioning of this fact allows the case of mobbing in *The Iliad* to be looked at from Leymann's definition in terms of time; if one specifically wishes to do so. Agamemnon's history of mobbing prior to the events of Book 1 shall be elaborated further on later, specifically when Book 9 is being discussed. Upon Achilles' reply Agamemnon is only further consumed by pride. At this point, it can be said that, beyond recompensation his argument with Achilles keeps getting more and more personal. So Achilles being Agamemnon's target, Agamemnon heavily declares that he will:

'Even in thy tent I'll seize the blooming prize,
Thy loved Briseis with the radiant eyes.
Hence shalt thou prove my might, and curse the hour
Thou stood'st a rival of imperial power;
And hence, to all our hosts it shall be known,
That kings are subject to the gods alone.'³

Here Agamemnon is obviously in a struggle of superiority against Achilles. Perhaps the most important line in this segment which reveals his mentality is "That kings are subject to gods alone". This mentality is very important because it reveals that often rigid hierarchical structures are preferred conditions for mobbers to operate, since Agamemnon's title as the kingⁱⁱ in military allows him to mob anyone he desires with impunity; even Achilles. Agamemnon does not think that he has responsibilities towards his subjects, he thinks he only has responsibilities to beings that are in a superior station than him.

On Agamemnon saying this, had it not been for goddess Athena (Pallas/Minerva), Achilles would have killed him.³ Here it is also seen that even the promise of abuse can be infuriating let alone the execution of it. Athena stops Achilles because the gods supporting the Greeks do not want the dissolution of the central authority of the Greek forces which is what would happen if Achilles had killed Agamemnon. Athena says to Achilles on this matter: "Let great Achilles, to the gods resigned,/ To reason yield the empire o'er his mind./ By awful Juno this command is given;/ The king and you are both the care of heaven".³ Athena promises Achilles a better eventual resolution to Agamemnon's mobbing in the future but, effectively Achilles' means of avenging himself from his abuser becomes beyond his personal power due to gods' decree; even though he himself is a demigod. So even though Achilles is promised a better future outcome where Agamemnon will become repentant for his misdemeanour and beg him for reconciliation,³ he is in the short run doomed to experience mobbing. This portion of the story reveals an important insight to mobbing which is, the victim of the mobbing himself (although he might be a demigod) might sometimes be powerless to stop mobbing for various reasons (apparent or otherwise). Therefore when power dynamics are looked at that are involved in mobbing, the analyses of cases have to go beyond surface level and consideration should always be made that there might be reasons for the victim's inability to stop mobbing that are not immediately apparent.

Furthermore, later even though Nestor attempts to reconcile them by rebuking, and then lecturing them on unity by saying "Let both unite with well-consenting mind, / So shall authority with strength be join'd" (Homer, 1909, 1.370 - 371), it does not work. While Nestor's effort for conflict resolution is commendable, for trying to preserve unity among Greeks against the Trojan forces along with possibly resolving the escalating enmity between Achilles and Agamemnon; still Agamemnon (the mobber) remains unrelenting and Achilles (the mobbee) remains adamant in his attitude. Agamemnon accuses Achilles of being subversive and lawless.³ Achilles in response reveals that he is not exacting immediate vengeance on Agamemnon because gods have commanded him not to:

'Should I submit to each unjust decree:—
Command thy vassals, but command not me.
Seize on Briseis, whom the Grecians doom'd
My prize of war, yet tamely see resumed;
And seize secure; no more Achilles draws
His conquering sword in any woman's cause.
The gods command me to forgive the past:
But let this first invasion be the last:
For now, thy blood, when next thou darest invade,
Shall stream in vengeance on my reeking blade.'³

Before the argument between them is terminated, Achilles ends the dialogue by saying that if there would be any further infringement against him he would exact vengeance although, presently, he is complying with Agamemnon's unjust decree. Right after "the stern debate"ⁱⁱⁱ ends, Agamemnon does something very characteristic of mobbing behaviour, he enlists others to go and take Briseis from Achilles; which is organizing others in a community to target the victim. Agamemnon commands Talthibius and Eurybates thus: "Haste to the fierce Achilles' tent (he cries), / Thence bear Briseis as our royal prize: / Submit he must; or if they will not part, / Ourself in arms shall tear her from his heart".³ The heralds are described as "unwilling" when they approach to Achilles to execute Agamemnon's orders and Achilles understanding the situation does not resent them. Achilles says to the heralds with no personal vendetta towards them: "I know your message; by constraint you came; / Not you, but your imperious lord I blame."³

Thus is Briseis taken away from Achilles and the offence is committed. Perhaps the most important insights to mobbing we get from the story of *The Iliad* is from the following portion. What has to be analysed carefully at this point is the reception of mobbing by Achilles. On the aftermath of receiving the offence Achilles literally cries about the mobbing he has suffered:

Patroclus now the unwilling beauty brought;
She, in soft sorrows, and in pensive thought,
Pass'd silent, as the heralds held her hand,
And oft look'd back, slow-moving o'er the strand.
Not so his loss the fierce Achilles bore;
But sad, retiring to the sounding shore,
O'er the wild margin of the deep he hung,
That kindred deep from whence his mother sprung:
There bathed in tears of anger and disdain,
Thus loud lamented to the stormy main:³

So two very important analyses have to be made on the effects of mobbing from Achilles' tale. First of all one might become a victim of mobbing no matter how powerful or resilient one is, indeed, even if he were a demigod. Secondly it can be seen that when subjected to mobbing even a demigod cries! Regarding mobbing, therefore it can be understood that, common suggestions (however well-intentioned

ⁱⁱIn Alexander Pope's translation the terminology of "king" is not delicately nuanced to convey the meaning. Agamemnon, as opposed to other Greek rulers and lords, is distinguished by a kind of kingship rank that is beyond kings; as it is said in *The Iliad* "the king of men".³ So under this title he would rule over any other title including kings and princes of other Greek nations. So when another character among the Grecian forces is referred as a king, in the poem it has to be noted that he is not the equal of Agamemnon hierarchically.

ⁱⁱⁱAllusion to the argument between Achilles and Agamemnon from Pope's translation of *The Iliad*.

they may be) like “toughen up”, “do not care about it”, “you are just sensitive”, “keep a stiff upper lip” etc. often do not offer simple solutions. Achilles' reaction to mobbing, should also be regarded as a testament to the severity of mobbing. If it is ever expected, from a victim of mobbing to bear the mobbing, then he is effectively loaded under a task that would make a demigod cry! The awareness of the fact that mobbing can cause a demigod to cry alone can be very cathartic^{iv} for the hypothetical victim of mobbing.

The Homeric retaliation to mobbing in *The Iliad*, as it will be related, is very severe. After Briseis is taken away, Achilles prays to his goddess mother Thetis and his mother immediately attends. Achilles in this portion asks (and effectively prays), her mother to request from Jove (Zeus) to bring vengeance upon the Greeks.³ Achilles wishes for Greeks to suffer in such manner: “Conjure him [Jove] far to drive the Grecian train./ To hurl them headlong to their fleet and main./ To heap the shores with copious death, and bring/ The Greeks to know the curse of such a king[*curse of Achilles*]”.³ Furthermore he wishes Agamemnon to experience great regret: “Let Agamemnon lift his haughty head/ O'er all his wide dominion of the dead, /And mourn in blood that e'er he durst disgrace /The boldest warrior of the Grecian race”.³ Thetis, after 12 days' time, asks Jove to avenge Achilles by “humbling Greece” and causing Troy to rise.³ Jove, although reluctant at first, ultimately accepts Thetis' request. The strategy that is presented in this portion of the story against mobbing is a divine one. Ironically, Agamemnon had said before that “kings are subject to gods alone”. Additionally Agamemnon also ironically had said that “And Jove himself shall guard a monarch's right”.³ But the gods whom Agamemnon (the mobber) mentions actually favour Achilles (the mobbee) more than him. It is seen here that Achilles is able to use the very foundations Agamemnon uses to support his claims against Achilles that is, his closeness to gods. In Homer's world, the solution to mobbing apparently is for the mobbee to curse the mobber; at least that is what Achilles does. At this point, it has to be mentioned that one of the most well-known epic suffering in world literature comes from mobbing. It is Achilles' wrath that is stemming from Agamemnon's mobbing that brought “woes unnumbered”^v upon Greeks. Additionally it should be remarked that the hypothetical perpetrator should think carefully, remembering Agamemnon, that even the “the king of men” could not escape retaliation from divine figures for his mobbing.

Having related to the case of mobbing in Achilles' story, and reflected on the personal sufferings of Achilles, going forward, the effects of mobbing in *The Iliad* shall be analysed on the social level. Immediately after the end of Book 1 in the beginning of the Book 2 on Thetis' earlier request Jove sends a deluding dream to Agamemnon to make him mobilize Greek units against Troy.³ In this dream, conquest of Troy is promised to the Greeks but unbeknownst to Agamemnon it is a false dream intending to facilitate the vengeance of Achilles.³ Upon receiving this dream, Agamemnon announces that Greek forces should act and conquer Troy.³ Upon hearing the revelatory dream Nestor supports immediate action.³ However the Greek forces as opposed to their expectations suffer a great loss which Agamemnon laments heavily.³ After defeat Agamemnon, admits that if Achilles were among his ranks, the conquest of Troy would be imminent.³ At this point, it can be seen that because Achilles was deterred from war due to Agamemnon's mobbing, military advantages the Greeks

^{iv}Originally coming from Aristotle's Poetics, catharsis means “purgation” referring to the emotional release through feelings of pity and fear evoked by the performance of Tragedy.⁴ In Aristotle's work catharsis is associated with Tragedy and the audience of Tragedy, but it can be triggered through other forms of literature too; on which premise is Bibliotherapy established.⁵

^vSee the invocation of Homer from Alexander Pope's translation of *The Iliad*.

could have secured against the Trojans are lost. Equally importantly (actually more importantly), because Achilles was absent, many Greek soldiers have died; all due to an instance of mobbing. Therefore it can be said about mobbing that, mobbing is a kind of evil that starts on the personal level but eventually expands to the social level. In this case, mobbing resulted with loss of the lives of many Greek soldiers, all of which possibly could have been averted had Agamemnon not mobbed Achilles. It is important to compare the case of Achilles and reflect on the fact that, how many beneficial results, on various different fields in real life (whether military, medicine, technology, academia etc.) are being lost to mobbing that could advance society or even save lives. Anyone who wishes to see a long catalogue of the suffering imposed upon the Greeks stemming from Achilles' absence, can simply read from Book 2 to Book 18^{vi} of *The Iliad*.

After constant struggles of the Greeks, Agamemnon comes to a point of regret that is greater than his originally expressed regret in Book 2. Because of the defeat against Hector the Greeks suffered in Book 8 Agamemnon shares his thoughts on retreat with the Grecian forces.³ Nestor in the council reminds Agamemnon of his previous error of offending Achilles in spite of his counsel:

When from Pelides' [Achilles'] tent you forced the maid,
I first opposed, and faithful, durst dissuade;
But bold of soul, when headlong fury fired,
You wronged the man, by men and gods admired:
Now seek some means his fatal wrath to end,
With prayers to move him, or with gifts to bend.”³

Agamemnon having been reminded of his earlier error expresses his regret and his intention to make amends saying: “Fain would my heart, which err'd through frantic rage, /The wrathful chief and angry gods assuage. /If gifts immense his mighty soul can bow, /Hear, all ye Greeks, and witness what I vow”.³ He regrets it so deeply that he intends to bestow upon Achilles a long catalogue of gifts just to reconcile with him. Some of the arguably more notable gifts in the catalogue include: profuse amounts of gold, many women from a diverse range of nations (both before and after the conquest of Troy), return of Briseis to Achilles, accepting Achilles as a son beside Orestes in his kingdom Argos, offering one of his daughters in marriage to Achilles (whichever Achilles chooses) and rulership over seven profound cities.³ The mentioning of all the items in the catalogue is not necessary to assert that Agamemnon is in such deep regret that, he is willing to make amends beyond mere recompensation; he is willing to offer all the other things in the catalogue besides giving Briseis (untouched) back to Achilles. At this point it is ironic indeed that, Agamemnon once mobbed Achilles for less than what he [Agamemnon] is willing to offer for recompensation now. Therefore from Agamemnon's case we can understand that mobbing can not only hurt the mobbee but also eventually can hurt the mobber and bring the mobber to a dire state of desperation.

Agamemnon in hopes of reconciling with Achilles, by Nestor's counsel, sends an embassy composed of Phoenix Ulysses, Ajax, Hodus and Eurybates.³ It suffices to say that the embassy for Achilles fails to convince him to return. Furthermore Achilles says that he would only fight against Trojans should their forces approach to his camp.³ Achilles responds to appeals to honour and promises of gifts

^{vi}In Book 18 Achilles appears before Trojans, even though he does not have an armour, to deter them from attempting to acquire the body of Patroclus. In Book 19 Achilles reconciles with Agamemnon. In Book 20 Achilles returns to the Trojan War. So his reappearance against the Trojans happens in Book 18.

from Agamemnon, related by the embassy, with indifference. This shows that when one is demotivated from their work by mobbing, they might be discouraged from their work to such an extent that even attempts at amendments can fail. Additionally it is important to note that during Achilles' speech with Ulysses he reveals the crucial detail that Agamemnon had been unfair about the prizes of Achilles and his forces after their conquests long before the events of Book 1.³ To remind, *The Iliad* is about the ninth year of the Trojan War, so while we cannot exactly verify for how long Agamemnon has been committing this abuse against Achilles and his troops, it can be extrapolated that it is within the realms of nine years. This crucial information both mentioned more indirectly in the earlier debate in the story³ and later more directly³ allows the interpretation with linking the case of Agamemnon's mobbing to the original criteria of mobbing as defined by Leymann in terms of time since Agamemnon's abuse extends beyond six months. Therefore it can be said that as claimed before, Agamemnon's mobbing can be looked at from the lens of both the original definition of Heinz Leymann without the frequency constraint and the more recent definition used in George Steffgen's et al.,² research. To summarize, the mobbing of Agamemnon, as argued before, can be looked at from a short term perspective where the events of Book 1 remain in focus or with adding the further revelations of Book 9 it can be considered in a long term perspective. So due to being afflicted thus from Agamemnon's mobbing, Achilles in the story does not face Trojans on his own will until Book 18. Achilles rejoins the war after Patroclus is slain by Hector, in order to avenge him.³

While the whole case of the mobbing event and the aftermath have been related, there is a crucial behaviour of Agamemnon that has to be analysed before this case is concluded. Agamemnon in the reconciliation episode of the Iliad claims that he was influenced by Ate to abuse Achilles.³ Later Achilles says that it was "Jove's will" that he and Agamemnon quarrelled.³ In both of these claims, it has to be understood that there is no textual evidence supporting these divine influences. It has to be clearly noted that no such account of Ate's involvement in Book 1 of the Iliad is ever mentioned by the bard of the epic. This is very important because the bard in his narrative relates to divine interferences and influences if they occur. Likewise in Book 1 when Agamemnon mobbed Achilles there was no influence of Jove in that event. So it can be extrapolated from this fact that Agamemnon in fact is lying about being influenced by a divine entity (Ate); he is merely displacing the blame to someone/something else. This attitude is also quite connectable to the character of a mobber. In this reconciliation scene one possible and prominent interpretation is that while Achilles is extending kindness, Agamemnon is trying to

avoid responsibility for his earlier actions by displacing the blame on a divine entity to avoid public scrutiny.³⁻⁵

Conclusion

To conclude, "mobbing" as a kind of abuse has been understood and depicted by Homer around 8th century BC before it was first defined in 1984 AD by Heinz Leymann¹. Unfortunately, it can be said that, the necessary recognition of the issue of mobbing in history has been late. Because the recognition of mobbing has been late, consequently innovation for precautions against mobbing has been late too. From Homer's *The Iliad*, it can be understood that, mobbing is a kind of evil that can make a demigod (Achilles) cry, can cause countless people to die and quite possibly can cause the mobber to be cursed. Mobbing, in Homer's *The Iliad* is the root cause of the epic suffering in the work. It is safe to moralise from *The Iliad* that, mobbing in real life is a prominent danger for society. Mobbing discourages qualified workers, hinders progress and endangers the entire society (possibly even with the lives or the life-quality of people). Unless better methods for preventing mobbing are invented, the current solution from Homer's *The Iliad* remains for mobbee to curse the mobber. Finally to remark, this analysis should be taken as an example of the importance of the study of literature for analysing social problems. Because just as we are doomed to repeat history if we do not learn from it, so are we doomed to relearn what we already know if we do not learn from literature.

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflicts of interest

The author declare that there is no conflict of interest.

References

1. Leymann H. The content and development of mobbing at work. *Eur J Work Organ Psychol.* 1996;5(2):165–184.
2. Steffgen G, Sischka P, Schmidt AF, et al. The Luxembourg workplace mobbing scale: psychometric properties of a short instrument in three different languages. *Eur J Psychol Assess.* 2016;35(2):164–171.
3. Homer. *The Iliad*. Pope A, trans. Cassell and Company, LTD; 1909.
4. Aristotle. *Poetics*. Butcher SH, trans. Project Gutenberg; 2008.
5. Shrodes C. Bibliotherapy. *Read Teach.* 1955;9(1):24–29.