

In this paper I will interpret six passages of the Iliadic battle narrative in which the victims of a particular hero are listed with little or no information as to their identities (sometimes an epithet or patronymic) and no narration of their death beyond their names in the accusative after a shared verb of killing. These passages are: 5.677-78 (7 victims of Odysseus), 8.275-76 (8 victims of Teukros), 11.301-3 (9 victims of Hector), 16.415-17 & 16.694-96 (each nine victims of Patroclus), 21.209-10 (7 victims of Achilles). My main concern is to establish the interpretability of a form, namely the form of a catalogue or a list.

That the form of a catalogue or list is intrinsic to Homer's composition of the battle narrative was established by Charles Beye in his 1958 Harvard dissertation (*The Catalogue as a Device of Composition in the Iliad*). Beye showed how much of this narrative is built through the elaboration of a basic catalogue form. This basic catalogue form is worked up into a narrative through the "elaboration" of its entries: "Elaboration" may include, e.g., speeches from victor or victim or both, or biographical information filling out the victim's identity. This elaboration of a basic catalogue form has been explored further by Krischer (*Formale Konventionen der homerischen Epik*).

In such "bottom-up" analyses of Homeric composition, the unelaborated casualty list is most important as a starting-point from which narrative is built up through various steps. My analysis, on the contrary, is "top-down." I will argue that the casualty lists should not be viewed as undeveloped narrative but as an intentional effect, a sort of experiment in minimalism; in other words, that Homer will sometimes "build down" his battle narrative rather than building it up. I will then consider what this means for the vision of heroic warfare Homer presents to his audience, basing my analysis on two devices with which the casualty lists seem to be closely associated: First, four of our six examples are followed by a typical device by which the poet indicates what *would have* happened, if someone had not intervened (e.g. 16.698ff., "then the Achaeans would have taken Troy if Apollo had not....", cf. 5.697-80, 11.310-11, 21.211-12). Homer uses this device to retard or redirect his narrative through the agency of the divine or human character who notices what is happening and intervenes. Its association with the casualty lists suggests that the slaughter they describe represents a limit beyond which the present line of narrative cannot proceed. Secondly, three of our six examples are introduced by a question posed either to the Muse (8.273, 11.299) or to the victor himself (Patroclus, 16.692). These "faded invocations" (terminology of Minchin, *Homer and the Resources of Memory*) highlight the mnemonic challenge to the poet, but I shall argue that they also reveal a different kind of challenge to narrative progress, having to do with the poet's resort to "pure information" and the non-narrative form of a bare list.