

## Common People and Leaders in *Iliad* Book 2: the Invocation of the Muses and the Catalogue of Ships\*

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**SUMMARY:** This paper closely examines and interprets the contribution of the “Catalogue of Ships” to the *Iliad*. It adopts three perspectives: (1) the placement of the Catalogue within *Iliad* 2, including the action that precedes and the Invocation of the Muses, (2) the content and arrangement of content within the twenty-nine entries of the Greek Catalogue, and (3) the use of poetic figuration in the Catalogue. Each perspective yields evidence suggesting a democratic commemoration that privileges the common soldiers and the communities back home as a whole rather than an aristocracy of military leaders.

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE ILIAD RELATES HOW THE ACHAIAN TROOPS WERE persuaded to take the field for what would become the first day of battle in the *Iliad*. As the fighters gather from their encampments and form ranks behind their commanders, the narrator breaks off to call upon the Muses for help, and following this invocation he recounts, at a length of almost 300 verses, the Greek communities that sent troops to Troy, the numbers of ships in their convoys, and the men who led. He then returns to the deployment on Day One of battle and recounts the contingents of the Trojans and their allies. The invocation of the Muses (*Il.* 2.484–93) and the Greek Catalogue have attracted abundant comment, but appreciation and interpretation of their poetic contribution to the *Iliad* is limited at best; there is no thorough analysis or sustained collective dialogue, although the critical literature does achieve one noteworthy highlight in a paragraph of Whitman’s *Homer and the Homeric Tradition* that describes the Catalogue, impressionistically but insightfully, as a “hymn to an army” (Whitman 1958: 262).<sup>1</sup> Discussions

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<sup>1</sup> Whitman’s remarks have had little apparent influence. The most systematic literary discussions of the Catalogue are Bassett 2003: 208–15 and Crossett 1969. Stanley 1993: 21–22 and Rabel 1997: 69–75 also have valuable observations.

of the Catalogue tend to focus upon its usefulness as a source of historical testimony,<sup>2</sup> and this emphasis, whatever its contribution to knowledge of historical Greece, evades and somewhat obscures the poetic significance of the Catalogue within the *Iliad*. Quite a number of scholars have speculated that the Catalogue was lightly adapted from a separate composition,<sup>3</sup> and this orientation affects discussions like those of Beye (1964), Powell (1978), Edwards (1980) and Minchin (2001: 84–87, 95–97), which focus upon the rhetorical qualities of the Catalogue as a specimen of catalogue poetry, rather than as a specific passage in one particular poem, *The Iliad*. Remarks concerning the relationship of the Catalogue to the rest of the *Iliad* often emphasize putative inconsistencies between the Catalogue and the narrative portions of the epic;<sup>4</sup> thus they either argue or imply that the Catalogue need not be considered integral to the *Iliad*.

The present study will observe and interpret the Catalogue from three perspectives: first, its placement within *Iliad* 2, including the action that precedes the Catalogue and the invocation of the Muses by which it is introduced; second, the content and its arrangement within the twenty-nine entries of the Greek Catalogue and the supplementary entry for the “best of men and horses”; third and last, the use of poetic figuration in the Catalogue. From each of these perspectives, it emerges that the common people who are imagined as contributing to the war at Troy, either as participants or by waiting on the “home front,” deserve a certain respect and affection that they seldom receive in the narrative from the Greek leaders at Troy. They may not have received it in other Trojan War poetry either; but they did receive it from the poet of the *Iliad*, perhaps above all in the passage known as the “Catalogue of Ships.”

#### THE ACHAIAN πληθὺς IN THE INVOCATION OF THE MUSES

The Catalogue of Ships culminates a series of scenes that dramatize the indispensability of the Greek *laoi* to the heroes’ ambitions of sacking Troy.<sup>5</sup> Agamemnon’s plan to “test” the troops, the suppression of Thersites, the speeches of Odysseus and Nestor, and the divine intervention of Hera and Athena, all aim at overcoming the troops’ desire to sail home and motivating

<sup>2</sup>For bibliography of works concentrating on history and sources, see Kirk 1984: 169 and Latacz 2003:151–54.

<sup>3</sup>Kirk 1984: 169 clearly expresses the difficulty of supposing that this Catalogue “or anything resembling it” might have been composed for a context other than the *Iliad* itself or a poem of comparably monumental dimensions. There is of course no evidence of such a monumental poem in Greek before the *Iliad*.

<sup>4</sup>For exceptions see the works cited in n1 above.

<sup>5</sup>On the leaders’ machinations to secure the troops’ cooperation, see Seibel 1994.

them to fight. The leaders' dependence upon the troops and need to persuade them occasions a discourse that blurs distinctions of hierarchy between leaders and troops. Agamemnon addresses the troops as his friends (φίλοι, 2.110) and as "heroes" (ἥρωες Δαναοί, 2.110).<sup>6</sup> Nestor tells Agamemnon that by organizing the troops according to peoples and clans, he will find out "which of the leaders and peoples is cowardly (κακός, 2.365) and which is noble (ἔσθλός, 2.366)" (Seibel 1994: 168n33). Nestor's moral evaluation does not map onto a class distinction: a leader can be a coward, and a people can be noble.

This thematic reframing of the presumed hierarchical relationship of leaders to troops is continued and developed in Homer's invocation of the Muses.<sup>7</sup> The meaning of this short passage is often elucidated in terms of the passage that follows, i.e., the Catalogue; but this backwards-reading, if not combined with the normal sequential perspective, obscures the relationship between the invocation and the narrative from which it emerges.

Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι—  
ἡμεῖς γὰρ θεαὶ ἐστέ, πάρεστέ τε, ἵστε τε πάντα,  
ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν, οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν—  
οἳ τινες ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν καὶ κοίρανοι ἦσαν· (2.484–87)

Now tell me, O Muses who inhabit homes on Olympus—  
for you are goddesses, you are at hand, and you know all,  
while we hear only report, and don't know a thing—  
who they were, the Danaans' leaders and commanders.

Although few recent commentators seem aware of it, as the poet begins the invocation, he is asking for an account of the leaders of the mustering on the Trojan plain before Day One of battle (Page 1959: 124; Latacz 2003: 153). This simply goes without saying, and explicitness would be superfluous, since the mustering on Day One has been the subject of the narrative from the start

<sup>6</sup> On the relationship between leader and people in Agamemnon's speech, see Seibel 1994: 32–33 and Haubold 2000: 55–59. Odysseus also calls the troops φίλοι (2.299); on this see Seibel 1994: 32–33 and Scodel 2002: 209–10.

<sup>7</sup> One important Homerist of the last century who did not share the presumption of aristocratic prejudice was S. E. Bassett, who inferred from the similes in the *Iliad* and the scenes on the Shield of Achilles that the poem addressed an audience of commoners, or "at least that their chief interest was not in the life of the nobles" (Bassett 2003: 96–99, 166–72; quoted passage on 166). Mainstream Homeric criticism has long held and continues to hold that the *Iliad* celebrates heroes and by extension the historical class of nobles. But the importance of the common soldiers and/or community in the *Iliad* has become increasingly recognized; see, e.g., Latacz 1977; Scully 1990; Raaflaub 1997: 635–36, 644–45; Haubold 2000; Scodel 2002: 172–82; Hammer 2002: 144–69; and Barker 2004.

of Book 2 straight through line 2.483, which describes the appearance of Agamemnon as the troops gather. The passage that immediately precedes the invocation describes the leaders arranging the troops (ἡγεμόνες διεκόσμεον, 2.476).<sup>8</sup> Of course what the poet eventually does recite is not the mustering on Day One, but a roster of the Greek troops who arrived at Troy almost ten years before the dramatic frame of *Iliad* 2. Therefore, in the course of the invocation, a change of topic occurs. And like the narrative that precedes it, this change of topic places surprising emphasis upon the common soldiers.

The shift of topic begins immediately after the lines quoted above. Instead of launching into a roster of the leaders, the poet in 2.488 abruptly and emphatically announces what he will *not* recite—the names of the common soldiers—and he adds on two full verses of explanation.<sup>9</sup>

πληθὺν δ' οὐκ ἄν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω,  
οὐδ' εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλῶσσαι, δέκα δὲ στόματ' εἶεν,  
φωνὴ δ' ἄρρηκτος, χάλκεον δέ μοι ἦτορ ἐνείη,

As for the many, I won't put them in speech, nor give their names,  
not even if I should have ten tongues, ten mouths,  
a tireless voice, a heart<sup>10</sup> of brass within me—

As Krischer observed (1965: 6), these lines divert the course of the invocation away from the Achaian leaders on Day One. After affirming most emphatically that he will not name the troops (2.488), because doing so would simply be impossible (2.489–90), the poet then surprisingly qualifies the impossibility of the task (εἰ μὴ κτλ., 2.491–92) by suggesting that the Muses might somehow help him after all.<sup>11</sup> The help they could offer, however, would not actually enable the poet to do what he said he couldn't, that is to put the common soldiers into speech (μυθήσομαι) by naming them individually (ὀνομήνω); instead the Muses might put the poet in mind of their total numbers (μνησαίαθ'

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the observation of Beye 1961: 370 concerning Nestor's recommendation at 2.362–63.

<sup>9</sup> The construction of ἄν + the subjunctive in an independent clause expresses a very forceful statement of the future; see Chantraine 1963: 211 (#311). *Iliad* 2.488 should not be translated as a future-less-vivid or present contrary-to-fact apodosis, i.e., as if the verbs were optative. This misunderstanding of ἄν + the subjunctive obscures the forcefulness of the poet's assertion.

<sup>10</sup> I here follow most translators in rendering ἦτορ as "heart." I have reservations, but they are not pertinent to the present discussion. See Heiden 2008: 5–7 for an alternative translation.

<sup>11</sup> "These three verses, which look almost like an afterthought, are at first sight puzzling," Kirk 1984: 167. Cf. Krischer 1965: 1. West 2001 brackets 2.491–92; see note 12 below.

ὅσοι κτλ., 2.492).<sup>12</sup> Then, as a means of accounting for the numbers, the poet settles upon a new topic: the roster of the *fleets* (ἀρχοὺς αὖ νηῶν ἐρέω νῆάς τε προπάσας, 2.493) (Krischer 1965: 6–8). The Catalogue of Ships is therefore introduced as a replacement for a roster of the mustering and it is motivated by the idea of reciting the names of the common soldiers, the *πληθὺς*.

The poet's disclaimer however points the invocation in a very surprising direction. Why should the poet announce so emphatically that he will not recite the names of the common soldiers? Other performances of Trojan War poetry could not have contained recitations of the common soldiers by name. Preceding passages of the *Iliad* itself have named very few non-leaders,<sup>13</sup> while they have frequently referred to the common soldiers *en masse*: in Book 2 the soldiers are compared to bees, flies, birds, leaves, flowers, stalks of wheat, and waves, all things that do not bear proper names. The very use of these similes implies the impossibility of describing the troops as individuals.

The poet could not exclude what was excluded already. His gesture of exclusion therefore has the effect of smuggling the names of the *πληθὺς* into epic poetry—or rather into an imaginary shadow version of it—so that their present exclusion becomes a matter of choice that receives a particular explanation and leads to a certain accommodation.<sup>14</sup> A rhetorical *praeteritio*

<sup>12</sup>In bracketing 2.491–92, West 2001:177–78 complains that the lines disturb the “clear and logical structure” that leads from 2.484 to 493. But the structure is not clear and logical, because the topic changes. The lines that West wishes to omit are needed for the transition. In the passage as transmitted, the reference to those “who went to Troy” (ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθον) provides the only cue for a roster other than that of the muster on Day One of battle (on this see Krischer 1965: 7). If 2.491–92 are omitted, then the poet's turn to the previously unmentioned ships in 2.493 lacks any preparation.

<sup>13</sup>Kalkhas, Patroklos, Thersites, and Agamemnon's heralds Talthybios and Eurybates.

<sup>14</sup>Ford 1992: 72–79 treats the omitted material as if it actually did belong to the tradition. But the content whose omission the poet announces in *Il.* 2.488 is not, as Ford claims, “a full presentation” (73) of the whole oral tradition, but one *specific* thing, the Greek host at Troy. And this specific thing, the common soldiers, is assumed to be different in kind from the subject that the poet has already announced, which is the leaders: leaders and *πληθὺς* were explicitly distinguished at 2.143 and 2.483. Ford compares the invocation in *Iliad* 2 to formally similar passages such as *Od.* 3.103–17, *Od.* 4.240–43, and *Od.* 11.328–31. But these *Odyssey* passages imply a qualitative similarity between the things that the speaker will mention and those to be left out, and this does not apply to the leaders and the common soldiers in *Il.* 2.484–93. The formal similarity between *Il.* 2.488 and the *Odyssey* passages does suggest, however, that in deploying a familiar rhetorical gesture toward topics presumed traditional, *Il.* 2.488 might have contributed to a *pretense* of “traditionality.” See Scodel 2002: 65–70 on the “rhetoric of traditionality” in Homeric poetry.

that gestures ostentatiously toward the unsaid and highlights its omission, the poet's disclaimer carries the remarkable implication that a recitation of the common soldiers by name was both conceivable and desirable, even if unprecedented and impractical. Just as remarkably, the poet's abundant explanation eschews any reliance upon familiar conventions of epic subject matter (which would have needed no explanation anyway): far from implying that the common soldiers did not merit commemoration in epic, because their deeds were unworthy of memory,<sup>15</sup> the poet states that only the sheer *numbers* of the common soldiers prevented him from reciting their names. Thus he insinuated that the performance tradition that preserved the fame of the heroes in epic also left out other names that were worthy of memory, indeed that it left out many such names. And it would continue to leave them out, since not even the poet of the *Iliad* could include them. Yet by evoking the superhuman vocal equipment he would need to tell the names of the common soldiers, and also by implying that the Muses did know their names, the poet converted the silence of tradition from disparagement into praise: the rank-and-file soldiers would remain unmentioned in the *Iliad*, not because they were unremembered or lacked merit, but because they *exceeded* the capacity of epic's mortal performers. In Homer's invocation, it is the performer who falls short of the epic that the common soldiers deserve.

Yet the poet is so attracted to the idea of reciting the names of the troops that despite its impossibility he does not simply forgo it, but contrives a substitute, thus effecting the aforementioned change of topic from the leaders on Day One to the Catalogue of Ships. This change of topic also alters the initial impression of the leaders and their role in the coming roster. Both the old topic and the new feature the Achaian leaders, but in different roles: the leaders of the Achaian muster on Day One of battle (2.487) are reframed as the commanders of the ships that *went to Troy* (2.492–93), and they are to be mentioned in a comprehensive list of ships, through which the poet will *represent* the numbers of the *πληθός*.<sup>16</sup> Since the census emerges as a make-shift substitute for the passed-over topic, i.e., the account of the names of the

<sup>15</sup> As Ford 1992: 86 suggests; also see Nagy 1979: 17.

<sup>16</sup> In 2.493 the adversative significance of *αὐτὸς* lies in the word that immediately follows it: *νηῶν*. This word is the first mention of ships in the invocation, and the first definite indication to the listener that the roster to follow will concern the fleets that arrived at Troy rather than the mustering in the plain in Day One of battle. In 2.493 *αὐτὸς* refers back to 2.487 to modify the topic there, not to restate or reinforce it, *pace* de Jong 2004: 48; Ford 1992:73; West 2001: 178; and Latacz 2003:144. Perceau 2002: 159–60 emphasizes correctly that 2.493 is consequential to 2.492. This accords with Kirk's 1984 translation, "so I shall tell of the ships' commanders and of all the ships together" (168).

πληθύς, the conclusion of the invocation frames the leaders themselves as, for the poet's purposes, *faute de mieux* (Krischer 1965: 5). Thus in conforming to the tradition that reserved the publicity of epic for heroes and denied it to common troops, the poet inverted its significance, deploying the names of the leaders within a figure of *synecdoche* through which the leaders substitute for the common men they lead.

A radical departure from the familiar had already been indicated as the invocation began. Explaining to the Muses why he needed to get the names of the leaders from *them*, the poet acknowledged that he had other sources, stating that "we" (the primary antecedent must be "mortals," but secondarily it could also suggest "we poets") hear only κλέος and know nothing (2.486). This would seem to imply a contrast between the untrustworthy report that circulates among mortals and the trustworthy performance whose source is the Muses alone.<sup>17</sup> But the poet's word for the report that is heard by the ignorant and contrasted with the Muses' recitation—κλέος—is also a word that is sometimes used for traditional poetry.<sup>18</sup> By invoking the aid of the Muses *even to recite the names of the Greek leaders* and contrasting their aid with the available tradition, the poet implied that the tradition, which after all preserved the names of many leaders and made them widely familiar, was not to be trusted: it was the resource of those who "know nothing." The poet's invocation withdraws the spurious prestige of publicity and/or traditional poetry (κλέος) from those who enjoy its praise, and asks the Muses to replace it with a different, trustworthy prestige especially conferred through recitation of the poem they are here asked to inspire, the *Iliad*. The Muses, however, are asked to commemorate by name only those who were leaders at Troy. Anyone else who might have been famous—such as noble families who wished to be known as descended from Trojan War heroes<sup>19</sup>—would not receive the Muses' reaffirmation in the Catalogue (nor, as it turned out, would they receive it anywhere else in the *Iliad*). On the other hand, in line 2.488 the poet immediately proceeds to imply that people who had *never* enjoyed κλέος—the common troops, the πληθύς—were in fact remembered by the Muses and were worthy to have their names included in epic poetry, if only there were performers up to the magnitude of the task.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Pucci 1998: 36–38, 46; Scodel 2002: 72–73. Nagy 1979: 16–17 unaccountably identifies the κλέος that "we hear" with what the Muses tell the poet.

<sup>18</sup> Emphasized by Nagy 1979: 16–17.

<sup>19</sup> Scodel 2002: 72 notes the political sensitivity of the Catalogue for its contemporary audiences. Also cf. Ford 1992: 86.

<sup>20</sup> In contrast, Ford 1992 sees aristocratic bias: "[the poet] chooses to name the chiefs and to ignore the *plethus*. In this, Homeric aesthetics mirrors heroic politics..." (86).

The invocation that began as a request for the names of the Achaian leaders at the muster on Day One ends by announcing a roster of all the Greek troop convoys that went to Troy. The inclusiveness of 2.492 (ὄσοι ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθον) also implies that the roster might not be limited only to Greeks—and of course it isn't, because the Trojans and their allies are also reviewed. The invocation therefore signals that the roster about to follow will commemorate the troops without special regard either for rank or allegiance. In reaching back before the start of hostilities it will also commemorate troops already dead by the time of Day One, and, as it turns out, others alive but absent from the scene. The invocation also signals that the roster will have figurative qualities; it says less than it stands for.

### COMMUNITIES AND LEADERS IN THE SO-CALLED “CATALOGUE OF SHIPS”

As stated earlier, discussions of the relationship between the Catalogue and the rest of the *Iliad* usually emphasize what are perceived as inconsistencies between the two. One general feature that disturbs critics is the Catalogue's indifference to certain social distinctions that the *Iliad* otherwise maintains. Kirk neutrally observes “...there is no difference between the treatment of important...contingents and minor ones”; he also mentions “...the catalogue's intention of recording in detail not merely the kingdoms but also many specific towns, some obviously quite small, that the Achaean troops came from,” a feature he contrasts with “the rest of the *Iliad*'s concern with families and regions...” (1984: 171, 175–76).

It may be stated plainly that the Catalogue, unlike other portions of the *Iliad*, does not focus upon the heroes. Few of the leaders named in the Catalogue are “major heroes”: forty-five Achaian leaders are named, of whom at most twelve could be considered “major” in Trojan War epic, and those twelve would include Lesser Ajax, Tlepolemos, Protesilaos, and Philoktetes.<sup>21</sup> The major heroes receive little fanfare, as the brief and often misunderstood entry for Ajax and the Salaminians illustrates. The Catalogue trains attention upon the troops, not the leaders: in twenty-four of the twenty-nine entries the first word (either a proper name or a pronoun) refers to the troops; in twenty-three entries the concluding line refers either to the troops or to the convoy in which they sailed. The arrangement of entries in the Catalogue is geographic rather than hierarchical,<sup>22</sup> and once the Catalogue begins the poet

<sup>21</sup> Contrast Nagy 1979 who refers to the Catalogue as “recounting the resources of each major Achaean hero” (26).

<sup>22</sup> On the arrangement, see Kirk 1984: 183–86.



gives no indication that he will focus upon the major heroes at all, since he mentions no major hero's contingent until the seventh (Telamonian Ajax and the Salaminians), more than sixty lines into the Catalogue.<sup>23</sup> The positioning of the Boiotians as the first entry has sometimes been deemed a mark of privilege and an indication that the Catalogue may have been composed in a Boiotian genre to flatter a local audience;<sup>24</sup> but the compliment, if such it be, is paid to the Boiotians' ordinariness, since nothing is said about them to make them stand out as better than other contingents. The initial placement of the Boiotians should have disarmed expectations of hierarchy.

The Boiotian entry establishes a pattern in which the leaders' presence in their entry is actually dwarfed by that of the troops and their communities. The entry has seventeen lines. Two are devoted to the names of the five leaders (2.494–95). The five Boiotian leaders (Peneleos, Leitos, Arkesilaos, Prothoenor and Klonios) were not glamorous figures in epic; on the contrary, they were practically unknown, and the two lines they receive in the Catalogue do little to relieve their obscurity. The following fifteen lines concern the Boiotian troops. And even in the two-line clause that names the leaders, the first word denotes the troops (Βοιωτῶν).<sup>25</sup> The entry for the Euboians (the fifth, 2.536–45) similarly devotes only two of its ten lines to the leader Elephenor (2.540–41). The entry begins with four full lines elaborating the Abantes, who receive the epithet “breathing strength” (μένεα πνείνοντες, 2.536). Only in the fifth line is the leader Elephenor mentioned; he receives a heroic epithet and a patronymic, but by the second half of 2.541 the Abantes are back in view, since the poet praises Elephenor as their leader, “the Abantes great in courage” (μεγαθύμων... Ἀβάντων). From there three more lines elaborate the fierceness and battle prowess of these men; the final line enumerates the number of ships in their convoy.

<sup>23</sup> Minchin 2001: 96 suggests that the ordering of entries holds the listeners' interest while they wait for the heroes. But many features of the Catalogue tell against this: (1) the references to the heroes, when they arrive, are very brief and not worth the wait; (2) even after the last hero has been mentioned (Philoktetes), the Catalogue continues for five entries and thirty-one verses more; (3) after the Greek Catalogue is done the poet appends a roster of the Trojans and their allies that runs for sixty-two verses and includes almost no heroes; and (4) the two greatest Trojan names, Hektor and Aineias, are mentioned in the first and fifth lines respectively, so for most of the Trojan roster there can be no suspenseful expectation of hearing their names.

<sup>24</sup> See Kirk 1984: 178–79 for discussion of this and other theories; also Rabel 1997: 71, 74.

<sup>25</sup> Even the names Πηνέλεως and Ἀρκεσίλαος point to the *laos* through their etymologies.

In almost all the entries the greater amount of information concerns the troops.<sup>26</sup> This is just as true of the entries where the leaders were heroes as it is of those led by insignificant figures. The entry for the Mycenaean (the ninth, 2.569–80) presents a hero who is truly dwarfed by his troops: Agamemnon. This entry has twelve lines. The first words announce the topic as the people who held Mycenae (οἱ δὲ Μυκηνᾶς εἶχον..., 2.569). A run of seven lines elaborates these people and the towns and regions they inhabited. The eighth recounts their large number of ships (one hundred) and then, for the first time, mentions their leader, Agamemnon.<sup>27</sup> In the next line the subject is again the people, the λαοί who followed Agamemnon: they were by far the greatest in number *and excellence* (ἄριστοι, 2.577). The poet then returns to Agamemnon to describe how proud he looked in his bronze equipment (2.578–79), and how he stood out among the heroes, because he was the best himself (ἄριστος, 2.580), and because the troops he led were by far the most numerous (πολὺ δὲ πλείστους ἄγε λαοὺς, 2.580) (Haubold 2000: 60–61). The final word of the entry goes to the λαοί. The entry does not present Agamemnon as superior to his troops; on the contrary, it is the troops' superiority that makes Agamemnon stand out.

The supplementary entry for the “best of men and horses” (2.763–79) has an even more remarkable distribution of attention between the heroes and their presumed subordinates. The program for this entry is announced in a second invocation.

τίς τ' ἄρ τῶν ὅχ' ἄριστος ἔην, σύ μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα,  
αὐτῶν ἥδ' ἵππων, οἳ ἄμ' Ἀτρεΐδῃσιν ἔποντο. (2.761–62)

Who then was best of them—tell me, O Muse—  
of the men themselves, and of the horses, who followed the Atreidae?

In this invocation, like the first, the poet surprisingly requests information that would not have been expected either in terms of the immediate context or anything presumably routine in traditional epic performances. Coming after the reference to the Greek leaders in 2.760 (Οὔτοι ἄρ' ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν

<sup>26</sup> Powell 1978 and Edwards 1980 analyze the structural elements of the Catalogue entries. Both focus attention on the ordering of elements within entries; they do not analyze the proportion of verses devoted to each element.

<sup>27</sup> Minchin 2001: 96–97 suggests that the late placement is suspenseful. But it is simply typical of the Catalogue entries, which usually place the leader below or amidst the troops whether he is famous or not. Moreover several of the heroes most important in the narrative, Ajax, Odysseus, and (in the Trojan Catalogue) Hektor and Aeneias, are mentioned in the first line of their entry; these cases display no interest in suspense.

καὶ κοῖρανοι ᾗσαν),<sup>28</sup> the new request for information about “who was the best of *them*” (τῶν, 2.761) inevitably suggests that the poet is seeking information about a distinction that applies only to the leaders (Kirk 1984: 240). This would also conform to the routine expectation that in heroic poetry only a leader *could* be the best. But 2.762 then expands the request and in doing so expands the antecedent of τῶν: the best of *them* is explained as “the leaders themselves (αὐτῶν) and the horses (ἵππων).” It appears that for this poet and his Muses the title “best of the Achaians” could be applied not only to heroes of epic, and not only to peoples (ἄριστοι λαοί, 2.577–78), but even to horses.<sup>29</sup>

The supplementary entry itself consists of eighteen lines. It begins with the best horses (ἵπποι is the first word, 2.763), to whom it devotes the first five lines. These horses belong to the team of Eumelos, who is a figure of no martial significance in the *Iliad* whatsoever—he is never even mentioned again until the horse race at the funeral games in Book 23. But here, after receiving mention in the Catalogue just previously with his Thessalian men (2.714), Eumelos now receives a second notice by virtue of his horses, whose five lines praise not only their speed, size, and divinely-assisted breeding, but also their military prowess (2.767), which apparently exceeded their master’s.

In 2.767 the poet finally turns to the “best of men.” This, surprisingly, is Ajax, but the hero’s moment of glory is kept brief as the poet adds the qualification that Ajax was the best only while Achilles was wrathful and inactive: *Achilles* was the best, when he was fighting. Yet after a mere two lines devoted to the best heroes, the poet reverts to praising *horses*, now praising those of Achilles (2.770). Two more lines (2.771–72) elaborate upon Achilles’ absence. But these lead the poet to Achilles’ troops (λαοί, 2.773), whose idleness the poet elaborates in seven verses. These verses conclude the whole entry. Therefore the eighteen-line entry includes exactly *two* that praise the best of Achaian heroes. Two more lines elaborate upon Achilles, although they do not amplify his worthiness of distinction since they concern his absence from combat, and the poet is explicit that when Achilles is not fighting he is not best. Inasmuch as Achilles is deserving of epic praise, these two verses

<sup>28</sup> One detects an ironic inflection in this line, which quotes the first invocation (2.487) and summarizes the preceding Catalogue as the complete fulfilment of the poet’s original appeal to the Muses. But the Catalogue that the poet has recited is not predominantly a roster of leaders, much less the roster of leaders on Day One. See Krischer 1965: 2–3.

<sup>29</sup> In the next clause, these horses then join the leaders as the antecedent of the nominative pronoun grammatical subject, “who followed the Atreidae,” as if the horses were fully active participants in the expedition, as much as their masters!

deduct from it. Seven verses praise the best horses. And seven more describe the idle troops of Achilles, including their horses (2.775–77).

The Catalogue entries are not uniform in their ordering or relative development of elements, but it would be very hard to make a case that any of the twenty-nine entries emphasizes a leader at the expense of his troops. Five entries (Salamis, Ithaca+environs, Rhodes, Syme, and Kypbos) do position the leader's name first,<sup>30</sup> but even in these cases the troops are hardly overshadowed. In the nineteenth entry (Syme, 2.671–75), the leader Nireus is accorded exceptional rhetorical prominence, and yet in the end the poet takes it all away and implies that the leader's distinction was no more than his followers conferred (and possibly less). Nireus, the poet tells us, was the handsomest man to come to Troy after Achilles. He also was the son of a ruler (2.672).<sup>31</sup> Nireus's name is not only mentioned first in the entry, but it is repeated at the beginning of the first three verses in succession, an anaphoric emphasis without parallel elsewhere in Homer (2.671–73). Yet after devoting four ringing lines to the leader Nireus, the entry concludes with one stating that, his exceptional good looks notwithstanding, Nireus was feeble (*ἀλαπδνός*, 2.675), and the troops who followed him were few (*παῦρος δέ οἱ εἶπετο λαός*, 2.675). The leader's enviable familial inheritance is negated by his feebleness, and since this feebleness is made concrete only in terms of the number of his followers, it is they who emerge as the measure of Nireus's small importance. The entire entry seems designed to deflate the poet's rhetorical amplification of Nireus's name, appearance, and lineage, and contrastingly elevate the nameless troops (especially those Nireus lacked).<sup>32</sup>

The eighteenth entry (Rhodes, 2.653–70) is the longest of the Catalogue (eighteen lines) and one of the few in which the quantity of lines devoted to the leader exceeds those devoted to the troops. But the entry follows a trajectory in which the initial importance of the leader Tlepolemos is replaced by that of his community: the organization of the Rhodian people is introduced early in the entry (third line, 2.655), and emphasized late (2.668, third line from the end), so that but for the reference to Tlepolemos in the first line the Rhodian people frame the entire entry and emerge as its most important topic. Tlepolemos receives more lines than leaders usually do because an elaborate description of his parentage (2.658–60) and an anecdote (2.661–67) expand his presence. One might suspect that this attention simply accords the credit

<sup>30</sup> These entries correspond to Kirk's Type C; see Kirk 1984: 170; Latacz 2003:148.

<sup>31</sup> Kirk 1984: 227 points out that Nireus's mother's name, *Ἀγλαΐη*, was borne by one of the Graces.

<sup>32</sup> On the Nireus entry see Crosset 1969: 243; Stanley 1993: 19; and Haubold 2000: 60n67.

a son of Herakles deserves. But the anecdote describes how Tlepolemos killed one of his own relatives in Ephyra and was run out of town by the other Heraclids, who are not named (ἄλλοι/υἱέες υἱοῖνι τε βίης Ἡρακλεΐδης, 2.665–66). The anecdote reveals that Tlepolemos's leadership in Rhodes was not inherited from his heroic father, but resulted from his expulsion from the clan and his association with people who followed him by choice.

In the Ithacan entry (the fifteenth, 2. 631–37), four of the seven lines refer only to the troops, and a fifth to the ships. The leader Odysseus, however, is mentioned both at the beginning of the list of communities and at the end. This accords with Odysseus's importance as a hero and leader, but it also shows that even a hero such as Odysseus might require special repetition and placement in the entry in order make him prominent among the troops he led (cf. Latacz 2003: 204).

Other than the entry for the contingent from Kyphos (2.748–55), which needs no discussion,<sup>33</sup> one more entry begins with a leader's name. The seventh (2.557–58) has only two lines, and Ajax is the subject of its two main-clause verbs. The Salaminians are not denoted by a noun in any case and are never the subject. Thus while the Salaminian entry is very short, it accords the leader exceptional prominence as a percentage of its total length and in the distribution of described initiative. The brevity of Ajax's entry has been seen as inadequate to his heroic stature; but when Ajax is compared to other heroes in the Catalogue, it appears that he is the one whose prominence is *least diminished* by that of the troops and communities who surround him.<sup>34</sup> However, Ajax's prominence is not completely independent of the troops, since the second line of the entry states that in the mustering (on the Trojan plain, Day One) Ajax deployed his men *where the columns of Athenians were taking their places* (ἴν' Ἀθηναίων ἵσταντο φάλαγγες, 2.558).<sup>35</sup> Thus the

<sup>33</sup> The leader Gouneus is clearly dwarfed by the remainder of his entry.

<sup>34</sup> Many have speculated that a longer entry was ousted; see Latacz 2003:179. Kirk 1984: 208 astutely observes Ajax's perfunctory treatment even outside the Catalogue, when in the *Teikhoskopia* Helen devotes just one line to Ajax and proceeds to describe Idomeneus in four (*Il.* 3.229–33). Kirk does not adduce the supplementary entry for the “best of men and horses”, where Ajax is mentioned as the best of men (2.768), but then immediately qualified in the next line as second to Achilles. The brevity of Ajax's Catalogue entry may reflect a sort of *prosopopoia*, conforming to Ajax's character as a man of deeds not words, and one more admired than celebrated.

<sup>35</sup> The implicit object of στῆσε in 2.558 must be the troops, not the νῆας (2.557), since Ajax deploys them beside the Athenian columns (φάλαγγες, 2.558), and the columns form on the battlefield, far from any ships. Kirk 1984: 207 correctly recognizes that this detail of positioning is similar to 2.526 (Phoceans lined up near Boiotians) and 2.587 (Menelaos's troops apart from Agamemnon's).

final noun in the entry is a reference to troops, indeed to troops as fighters. Moreover, the placement beside the Athenians<sup>36</sup> implies that Ajax's Salaminian troops were adjuncts to the Athenian troops. Since Ajax's two-line entry immediately follows the Athenian entry, and is itself concluded by a reference to the Athenians, it produces the impression of an appendix to the Athenian entry.<sup>37</sup> Thus, while Ajax's entry gives the leader greater prominence than any other entry in the Catalogue, it still conforms to the other Catalogue entries in according significant emphasis to the troops as a body; except that in this case the troops are not those of the leader, but his neighbors (back home) the Athenians.

The Catalogue entries emphasize the troops and/or communities through their specific content as well as the quantities of verses and positioning. We have already noticed some special instances of this (e.g., the entry for the Rhodian contingent); but it occurs in even the most typical Catalogue entries. In the first entry (2.494–510) a run of thirteen verses describes the Boiotian troops. The troops themselves are denoted only by relative pronouns in the nominative case (οἱ, repeated seven times), but each clause functions in its entirety as an elaboration of the pronouns' antecedent: the Boiotians were "those who, etc." A look at the verbs of the Boiotian entry brings the emphasis upon the communities into sharper focus. The Boiotian entry has ten verbs. The seven relative pronouns whose antecedent is Βοιωτῶν govern seven verbs that in turn govern twenty-nine accusative direct objects. The young Boiotians (κοῦροι Βοιωτῶν, 2.510) govern one verb (βαῖνον, 2.510) in the independent clause that concludes the entry. The ships govern one intransitive verb (κίον, 2.509), but since the noun νέες is governed by the possessive genitive τῶν,

<sup>36</sup> In discussing objections to the authenticity of 2.558 on the grounds that it contradicts references to the battlefield elsewhere in the *Iliad*, Kirk 1984: 207 mentions the fact that in the *Teikhoskopia* Helen's description of Ajax comes between Odysseus and Idomeneus, without the Athenians mentioned anywhere. But the ordering of the *Teikhoskopia* is immaterial to the positioning of Odysseus, Ajax, and Idomeneus on the battlefield; Priam explicitly says that he notices Ajax because of his size (3.225–27), and Helen's switch of attention from Ajax to Idomeneus certainly has nothing to do with proximity, since she explicitly says that Idomeneus is "over on the other side" (ἐτέρωθεν, 3.230). Similarly, the order of confrontations in Agamemnon's *epipoleis* tells us nothing about the physical positioning of the troops and leaders in the muster, since the narrator nowhere says that Agamemnon proceeded from one leader to the next in order of proximity, or that he confronted them all without skipping. Thus, the fact that Ajax and Menestheus are not adjacent in the narrative does not contradict the statement in the Catalogue that the Salaminians deployed beside the Athenians.

<sup>37</sup> This impression might have been weakened if the entry were longer; when the poet returns to the Athenians at the end of 2.558, the topic has scarcely changed.

whose antecedent is also the Boiotians, even this clause describes an activity of the Boiotians.<sup>38</sup> Thus nine verbs denote activities of the Boiotian troops. The leaders, on the other hand, govern one verb (ἡρχον, 2.494), which governs one object (Βοιωτῶν). Insofar as the Boiotian entry concerns action, the common men perform virtually all of it.

Except for the activity of sailing indicated in the last two lines,<sup>39</sup> the action the Boiotian troops perform is the same one repeated again and again: the Boiotian men occupied towns or areas (ἐνέμοντο, 3x, twelve objects; εἶχον, 4x, seventeen objects). All twenty-nine objects designate towns and areas, and the names of the towns are modified by nine descriptive epithets and three appositional phrases (which also contain epithets). The number of proper names of towns and regions in the Boiotian entry alone is almost two-thirds that of the names of leaders in the entire Greek Catalogue (forty-five). The Catalogue as a whole includes 152 names of settlements and thirty-five names of geographic sites such as rivers (Latacz 2003: 146), but the single function of all the names is to elaborate the identity of the troops by denoting where they lived before they went to Troy.<sup>40</sup> The individualization of these places by epithets contributes to the vivid evocation of the communities to which the troops belonged before they sailed to Troy.<sup>41</sup>

It may come as a surprise to note that neither the Boiotian entry nor any other directly connects the leaders to the towns their troops came from; the leaders are leaders of the convoys, not leaders of the towns. When towns or areas are mentioned, the grammatical subject is always “the common men,” and the verb is always “inhabited.” Nowhere does the Catalogue ever refer to a leader as ruling a Greek town.<sup>42</sup> Of course the poet knows of rulers; at *Iliad*

<sup>38</sup> Beye 1961: 374–75 points out that in the *Iliad* κίον refers only to movement by animate beings, except in this passage.

<sup>39</sup> On βαῖνον in 2.510 see Beye 1961: 375; it normally refers to movement on foot.

<sup>40</sup> Analyses of typical elements in the Catalogue entries often misconstrue the semantic function of the elements; Beye 1964: 346 summarizes the “facts” in the entries as “the names of towns, the names of leaders, and the number of ships”; similarly Powell 1978: 256. In describing the relevant structural element Edwards 1980: 84 states, “The pronoun οἱ...introduces place-names in the accusative and forms of a number of verbs of roughly similar significance...” This content-neutral terminology obscures the point of the clauses Edwards is describing: they elaborate the troops in terms of their local origins.

<sup>41</sup> See Whitman 1958: 262, a brief but sensitive appreciation of the Catalogue’s poetic tone. Scully 1990: 94 is similarly perceptive, calling the Catalogue “a ringing invocation of the Greek peoples, their cities and lands...” See also the remarks of Taplin 1992: 84.

<sup>42</sup> Pace Page 1959, who states that the Catalogue is “a description...of the vanished world, kingdoms and kings and lists of places...” (120). Minchin 2001 refers to “the singer’s practice of naming the towns held by a particular leader” (96). Some historical



1.252, for example, he refers to Nestor ruling back in Pylos (ἄνασσειν). But although the Catalogue names 152 Greek settlements and forty-five leaders, not one settlement is said to have a ruler, and not one leader is said to be ruler of a town or region.<sup>43</sup>

In the whole Catalogue only the entry for the Rhodians (2.653–70) uses an expression similar to “Nestor ruled.” But in this exceptional passage the subject of ἀνάσσει is Zeus, “who rules both gods and men” (2.669). Zeus’s rule is extra-political, and the specific occasion of the reference in entry eighteen is Zeus’s beneficence to the Rhodian people, whom he made “divinely wealthy” after Tlepolemos led them to Rhodes and gave them a specific political organization of their own (τριχθὰ δὲ ᾤκηθεν καταφυλαδόν, 2.668). Zeus’s direct relationship to the Rhodian people seems to replace and obviate Tlepolemos (who needed replacement, since he was at Troy).

The framing of communities as populations somehow independent of rulers also emerges in the five Catalogue entries that refer to contingents whose regular leaders were absent and who had to be led by substitutes (or who, in the case of the Myrmidons, remain idle). In the entry for the Aitolians (the sixteenth, 2.639–44), the poet explains why the military command was held by Thoas, since the Aitolians were famously ruled by the family of Oeneus and Thoas was not a member. The explanation addresses the expectation that hereditary rulership and military command would coincide. But after stating that “The Aitolians inhabited Pleuron etc.,” the poet explains that the ruling family of Oeneus had died out, and since it (implicitly) had not been replaced by another ruling family, Thoas was appointed to the job of leading the troops. This suggests that, among the Aitolians, the specific task of military leadership had become separated from civic rule and was held by appointment rather than inheritance or dominance.

The entry for Phylake and its environs (2.695–710) states that this contingent came to Troy under the leadership of Protesilaos (2.695–710), but that he was killed at the time of the landing.<sup>44</sup> The poet then explains that the

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scholars have complained that the regions associated with certain leaders are smaller than expected; for discussion, see Kirk 1984: 180–83.

<sup>43</sup> In the sixteenth entry the verb ἀνάσσω (2.643) refers to Thoas’s military command of the Aitolian contingent. In the supplementary entry for the “best of men and horses,” the Myrmidons are called ἄνακτες with respect to their teams of horses (2.777). The passage, which has nothing explicit to do with government, illustrates how the Catalogue’s privileging of non-leaders even extends to its application of the term ἄναξ. On Agamemnon, see note 49 below.

<sup>44</sup> According to the Catalogue Protesilaos was killed by an unnamed Dardanian (Δάρδανος ἀνὴρ, 2.701). The anonymous Dardanian is like the anonymous Greek troops of



troops nevertheless did not lack a leader (2.703). The job of keeping them in order (κόσμησε, 2.704) fell to Podarkes, who would seem to have been well-qualified to assume the post, since he was a full brother to Protesilaos (2.705–6) and a “branch of Ares” (ὄζος Ἄρης, 2.704). But notwithstanding Podarkes’ qualifications, the troops were not satisfied; they kept longing for their former leader (2.703, 709–10). This implies that the troops did not accept a leader passively; they had the idea of choosing one for themselves, even if they lacked the ability to do it.<sup>45</sup>

The twenty-fourth entry describes another contingent that lacked a leader, the archers who sailed with Philoktetes. Philoktetes, of course, had been abandoned on Lemnos, but his men were not leaderless (2.726). Nevertheless, like the men who followed Protesilaos, those who followed Philoktetes were not satisfied with his replacement. In this case the replacement, Medon, was not related to Philoktetes and thus could not have assumed the position through inheritance. Indeed, Medon was not even native to the region of the men he led; he had come there as a fugitive after killing a relative.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, Medon’s mother Rhene appears to have been a slave his father captured in war (2.727–28). It is clear that Medon’s authority must have been derived and conditional.<sup>47</sup>

Finally there are the two entries that refer to the idle Achilles and his troops, the entry for Pelasgian Argos (the twenty-first, 2.681–94) and the supplementary entry recording the best of men and horses (2.763–779). In the former the poet presents the leaderless troops as if in the matter of war the thoughts that counted were theirs: “But they [the Myrmidons, Hellenes, and Achaians] did not have their minds on war” (οὐ πολέμοιο...ἐμνώνοντο, 2.686). The poet then continues on to explain that they were otherwise occupied because they

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the Catalogue, who though worthy of fame do not receive it. It would have been easy enough, indeed formulaic, for the poet to name the Trojan who killed Protesilaos. According to the *Kypria* it was Hektor; on this, see Finkelberg 2002: 152.

<sup>45</sup> West 2001:181 deletes 2.703; others have deleted 2.708–9 as a repetition of 2.703. All three lines are authentic; 2.703 introduces the topic of the seven-line run from 2.703–9, which is why these troops longed for a leader even though they had one. By the middle of 2.708 the reason has been given; then in the rest of 2.708 and all of 2.709 the original point is recapitulated, in typical fashion.

<sup>46</sup> Kirk 1984: 234, citing *Il.* 13.694–97 and 15.333–36.

<sup>47</sup> The mythology of Philoktetes thematizes the replacement of kinship by merit as a source of authority, since Philoktetes owed his authority to his possession of the bow that Herakles gave him, despite the fact that he was neither Herakles’ son nor related to him in any way. Philoktetes received the bow because he agreed to light Herakles’ pyre when Herakles’ son Hyllos refused to do it.

lacked a leader—*anyone to lead them* (ὅς τις σφιν...ἡγήσαιο, 2.687); leadership is conceptualized as an office of indefinite occupancy, which in this case goes unfilled, rather than a certain person's privilege. In the supplementary entry for the "best of men and horses" Achilles' troops, like those who served under substitute leaders, are described as actively missing their leader (ἀρχὸν ἀρηΐφιλον ποθέοντες, 2.778). These troops do not just follow when led and become inert when unled. A certain initiative for leadership seems to reside with them. Moreover, it is not perfectly clear whether the leader they long for is the same particular leader they came with, Achilles, or just someone who can fill the position of leader. In 2.778 one naturally assumes that the indefiniteness of ἀρχὸν ἀρηΐφιλον implies the Myrmidons' particular leader, Achilles; but it could mean "a leader who was friend of Ares," and this (secondary) interpretation is attractive, because when Achilles' men do take the field again, it will be under a different leader, Patroklos, who is never named in the Catalogue at all, like the troops to whom he belongs.

The Catalogue's strict avoidance of rulers in the Trojan War period is thrown into further relief by its occasional references to rulers of an earlier period. The Catalogue mentions Erekhtheus (sixth entry, 2.546–61) as someone who (by clear implication) ruled in Athens once, but at the time of the Catalogue he is the object of annual offerings by the young men of the Athenian community (κοῦροι Ἀθηναίων, 2.550–51). Menestheus leads the Athenian troops, but he does not rule Athens. Euryalos (2.566), Nireus (2.672), and Pheidippos and Antiphos (2.679) are referred to as sons of kings or rulers, but they are not called rulers themselves.<sup>48</sup> The poet says that Sikyon is the place where Adrestos was the first king (πρῶτ' ἐμβασίλευεν, 2.572), but this, like the reference to Erekhtheus in Athens, has an antiquarian ring, for nothing is said about a king in Sikyon at the time of the expedition. The leader of the troops from Sikyon is Agamemnon, but he is not called the king of Sikyon. (Nor does the Catalogue state that Agamemnon was king of any other particular place.)<sup>49</sup> Kos is described as "the city of Eurypylos" (2.677), but this refers to an earlier generation, not that of the expedition (Kirk 1984: 228). Oikhalia is called the "city of Eurytos" (2.730), but, once again, this ruler of Oikhalia lived in the generation of Herakles, not that of the expedition to

<sup>48</sup> Even as a leader of the Argive contingent Euryalos, along with Sthenelos, is explicitly subordinate to Diomedes (2.567; the poet is silent about Diomedes ruling in Argos).

<sup>49</sup> Although Agamemnon is adorned with the epithet κρείων (2.576), the line in which it appears has to do with Agamemnon's fleet, not his throne; κρείων Ἀγαπήνωρ at 2.609 is similar. Agamemnon is called ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν in 2.612, but the passage concerns his supply of ships to the Arkadians; it does not imply that he ruled Arkadia.

Troy; the Catalogue refers to the Oikhalian troops at Troy as “those who held Oikhalia” (οἳ τ’ ἔχον Οἰχάλῃην, 2.730).<sup>50</sup>

## LYRIC FEATURES IN THE CATALOGUE

We have seen that the invocation of the Muses frames the Catalogue as a part-for-whole substitute for (a) a name-by-name roster of all the Greeks who mustered on Day One of battle, and (b) for all the men who went to Troy to fight. The Catalogue itself develops these figures.<sup>51</sup> The muster on Day One is kept within the horizon of attention throughout the Catalogue.<sup>52</sup> At the end of the third entry the poet switches from the Phokean ships (2.524) to the deployment of the Phokeans on the Trojan plain, where they take position beside the Boiotians, the topic of the first entry. The end of the sixth entry praises the Athenians’ leader Menestheus as outstanding at marshalling horses and shield-bearing troops (2.554); his only equal was Nestor (2.555), who of course had recommended the muster earlier in *Iliad* 2 (2.362–68). The seventh, ninth, and tenth entries also gesture toward the muster.<sup>53</sup> It then slips from immediate view, only to reappear in the twenty-first entry. Since the Pelasgian Argives took orders from Achilles, of course they did not muster with the other Greeks on Day One. In mentioning their idleness the poet effects an unannounced switch from the time frame of the sailing to Day One of battle:

τῶν αὖ πεντήκοντα νεῶν ἦν ἀρχὸς Ἀχιλλεύς.  
ἀλλ’ οἳ γ’ οὐ πολέμοιο δυσσχέος ἐμνώοντο·

<sup>50</sup> An exception that proves the rule is the town of Lyrnessos: it did have a ruler, Euenos (Εὐηνοῖο...ἄνακτος, 2.693). But the people of Lyrnessos are not among those who contributed troops to the Greek expedition; Lyrnessos is mentioned in the Catalogue as a place that Achilles sacked.

<sup>51</sup> Crossett 1969 “The catalogue of ships is really the war in miniature, its whole history...” (44). Perceau 2002: 168–70 also sees a kind of part-for-whole figuration in the Catalogue, emphasizing the impression of geographical comprehensiveness it conveys, and its use of a variety of epithets to convey a sense of vital particularity to towns, regions, and persons. She also emphasizes the Catalogue’s references to the women of the home communities.

<sup>52</sup> See Bassett 2003: 209 and Crossett 1969: 244 for relevant observations.

<sup>53</sup> The seventh entry states that Ajax deployed his Salaminian troops alongside the Athenians (2.558). The ninth entry (Mycenaeans) refers to Agamemnon arming himself at the muster (2.578; compare the wording of 2.579 and 2.483). The tenth (Lakedaimonians) mentions the arming of the Lakedaimonians apart from Agamemnon’s troops, and Menelaos’s presence among his men (2.587–88).

Achilles was captain of their fifty ships.  
But they weren't thinking about painful war. (2.685–86)

This demonstrates the poet's assumption that the audience has constantly kept the mustering within the horizon of attention. A similar effect is found in the supplementary entry for the "best of men and horses."<sup>54</sup> The eight lines that conclude this entry all depict the idleness of the Myrmidons on Day One. Immediately after describing the Myrmidons the poet turns back to the muster itself, as the Achaians begin to march: οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἵσαν, "and they proceeded" (2.780). The fact that the poet could refer to the marching Achaians by the demonstrative pronoun alone shows that he assumed the audience had them as much in mind as the idle Myrmidons, who were explicitly mentioned in the previous line but cannot be the antecedent of the pronoun.

The Catalogue's combined evocation of the sailing and the muster is also enhanced by more subtle figurations. Beye (1961) observed that in the convoy elements the verbs involve a certain catachresis, in that they are much more appropriate to the motions of troops on land than ships on water. The verb ἔπομαι, governed by νῆες as subject, appears in fourteen of the twenty-nine convoy elements. Elsewhere in Homer ἔπομαι almost always denotes the conscious movement of animate objects; and in the Catalogue itself ἔπομαι occurs four times with the subject λαοί or the equivalent (2.542, 577–78, 675, and 749). Beye also noted that the verb στιχάομαι, which occurs four times in the Catalogue governed by νέες as subject, normally applies to infantry maneuvers; it means "march in ranks." Outside of the Catalogue, moreover, Homer usually employed different verbs to denote the movement of ships, verbs such as φέρω, ἔρχομαι, and περάω.<sup>55</sup> These points together indicate that the verbs in the convoy elements were chosen especially for the passage

<sup>54</sup> In between, the twenty-second entry refers to the men from Phylake marshalling under Podarkes, Protesilaos's replacement (2.704, 2.708–9). The twenty-fourth entry refers to the marshalling of Medon (2.727), as well as the suffering of Philoktetes on Lemnos at the time (2.721–24). The conclusion of the Catalogue of Greek contingents refers back to the fourth line of the invocation, when the poet asked the Muses for the names of the leaders at the muster (οὗτοι ἄρ' ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν καὶ κοίρανοι ἦσαν, 2.760; cf. 2.487). In the supplementary entry devoted to the "best of men and horses," the part about the best of men is explicitly set at the time of the muster on Day One, since it ranks Ajax as "best of men" only because Achilles was out of action at that time (2.778–79), Crossett 1969: 244.

<sup>55</sup> Beye 1961: 375. περάω is used once in the Catalogue (2.613), but it denotes the purpose of the ships that Agamemnon gave the Arkadians, not the ships' movement to Troy.

and impart a sense of “marching” that accords with the figurative combination of sailing and mustering throughout the Catalogue.<sup>56</sup>

The Catalogue has twenty-nine convoy elements, one for each entry. In eleven convoy elements the word for “ships” lacks an epithet. Of the eighteen that use an epithet, lines ending in the hemistich μέλαιναι νῆες ἔποντο (henceforth *c-μέλαιναι*) account for twelve, and lines ending in γλαφυραὶ νέες ἐστιχώοντο (henceforth *c-γλαφυραὶ*) account for another four.<sup>57</sup> *C-μέλαιναι* occurs twelve times in a span of 276 lines, an average of once every twenty-three lines, far more frequently than any other hemistich in a span of comparable length in Homeric poetry.<sup>58</sup> Elsewhere in Homer *c-μέλαιναι* and *c-γλαφυραὶ* do not occur frequently; in fact, they do not occur at all. Outside of the Catalogue, occurrences of νῆς in the nominative case either use other epithets or none.<sup>59</sup> The fact that in *c-μέλαιναι* and *c-γλαφυραὶ* the noun-epithet combinations are not positioned at the end of the line, like most noun-epithet combinations in Homer, but in the middle, to accommodate the verb at the end, suggests that *c-μέλαιναι* and *c-γλαφυραὶ* may even have been invented (through adaptation of existing oblique-case formulas) especially for use in the Catalogue. This possibility is supported by the fact that the verbal elements in *c-μέλαιναι* and *c-γλαφυραὶ* are not suited to sailing vessels generally, but are well-suited to the Catalogue’s peculiar figural connection between the sailing to Troy and the muster on Day One.

The frequent repetition of *c-μέλαιναι* and *c-γλαφυραὶ* coincides with their occurrence in a single particular position in the entries. Of the twenty-nine entries, fifteen have the convoy element in the last line. (The last line of an entry shall henceforth be referred to as position-L.) All of these fifteen convoy elements have an epithet, and fourteen are either *c-μέλαιναι* or *c-γλαφυραὶ*. These fourteen account for all four occurrences of *c-γλαφυραὶ* and ten of the twelve occurrences of *c-μέλαιναι*. There is therefore a nearly complete

<sup>56</sup> Beye 1961 went so far as to suggest that in the Catalogue the word νῆς does not denote a sailing vessel at all, but a unit of mustering, something like the Athenian naucrary. A sense like this might be relevant to the Catalogue as a metaphorical undertone, but it could not replace the idea of “sailing vessel,” because the νῆες were introduced with reference to the men who “went to Troy” (ὕπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθον, 2.492). The voyage required sailing vessels that were real and not just metaphorical.

<sup>57</sup> In one convoy element, the ships are described as swift (νῆες ἔποντο θοαί, 2.619), and in one as “with painted cheeks” (μυλοπάρηοι, 2.637).

<sup>58</sup> κορυθαίολος Ἴκτωρ occurs six times in a span of 257 verses from 6.263–6.520. Even this repetition is associated with considerably more variety of wording and meaning than the repetitions of μέλαιναι νῆες ἔποντο in the Catalogue.

<sup>59</sup> One passage (*Od.* 4.356) uses γλαφυρὴ νῆς.

congruence between the occurrences of the convoy element in position-L and the occurrences of *c-μέλαιναί* and *c-γλαφυραί*. This congruence represents a theme that may be described as [*c-μέλαιναί* or *c-γλαφυραί* + position-L].

The perception of thematic recurrence might have been even greater than the statistical frequency would indicate. The poet made an artful distribution of the convoy elements that evokes an impression of regular repetition even while avoiding monotony. He establishes the theme [*c-μέλαιναί* or *c-γλαφυραί* + position-L] in the Catalogue's early entries.<sup>60</sup> He then uses some variation in the middle,<sup>61</sup> but never enough to allow the theme to grow faint or to establish a rival for the audience's attention.<sup>62</sup> The poet then piles the most repetitions on at the end.<sup>63</sup> When the last of the twenty-nine entries had been recited, the distribution might well have produced a retrospective illusion of pervasive repetition.

The rhythmic repetition of convoy elements in the Catalogue entries resembles a poetic technique more typical of lyric strophes than narrative hexameters.<sup>64</sup> In fact a number of features align the Catalogue with lyric poetry. Like strophes the entries combine a limited repertoire of formal

<sup>60</sup> The poet introduces the theme [*c-μέλαιναί* or *c-γλαφυραί* + position-L] through a gradual *accelerando*. The first entry avoids both *c-μέλαιναί* and *c-γλαφυραί* and keeps the convoy element out of position-L. The second entry presents the theme for the first time, but in its less frequent form, with *c-γλαφυραί* in position-L (2.516). The poet then uses *c-μέλαιναί* in three successive entries, third from the end in the third entry, second from the end in the fourth entry, and then finally in position-L in the fifth entry. In the sixth the poet again uses *c-μέλαιναί* in position-L. The pattern is established.

<sup>61</sup> In the seventh through thirteenth entries the theme occurs only twice (in the eighth and eleventh). The fourteenth through seventeenth entries reassert the theme and establish it even more strongly. All use a convoy element in position-L, and three use *c-μέλαιναί* (fourteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth). In the fifteenth the poet uses a convoy element with the epithet *μυλοπάροισι*, which occurs only here in the Catalogue. Then the eighteenth through twenty-fourth entries use the [*c-μέλαιναί* or *c-γλαφυραί* + position-L] theme only in the twentieth and twenty-second entries.

<sup>62</sup> Although non-position-L convoy elements characterize more than half the entries in the Catalogue, they never come in a sequence of more than two (entries 3+4, 9+10, 12+13, 18+19, 23+24). Among the convoy elements with epithets, only *c-μέλαιναί* and *c-γλαφυραί* occur more than once.

<sup>63</sup> In the last five entries, four use the theme, the greatest frequency of recurrence in any section of the Catalogue. It is also the greatest frequency of occurrence of the theme relative to verses, since the twenty-fifth through twenty-ninth entries are, on average, the shortest of any section in the Catalogue. Only in the twenty-fifth through twenty-seventh do three entries in succession use the theme. The theme concludes the twenty-ninth entry, and thus it concludes the entire Catalogue.

<sup>64</sup> Compare the remarks of Whitman 1958: 262.

elements in regular sequences that strongly mark beginnings and ends. The trajectory of entries is not temporal or causal but (roughly) geographic.<sup>65</sup> Within a given entry, however, the geographic sequence is loose, and patterns of sound, rhythm, and descriptive ornament achieve a high degree of prominence relative to other features. The content itself is developed in a lyric manner through brief allusions and abrupt transitions across frames of reference. The Catalogue also has a rhythmic performance dimension comparable to the dance, in that every entry evokes the activity of rowing which, as we have seen, is expressed in a manner that suggests marching. In fact the articulation of the contingents into communities of men and their leaders resembles the articulation of lyric performers into choirs and leaders. Even the language of the entries might contribute to this suggestion; compare the Catalogue's frequent use of ἦρχε/ἦρχον (e.g. 2.494, Βοιωτῶν... Πηνέλεως καὶ Λήϊτος ἦρχον κτλ.) with the same verb in descriptions of lamentation, such as the funeral of Patroklos (οἱ δ' ὤμωξαν ἀολλέες, ἦρχε δ' Ἀχιλλεύς, 23.12; cf. 23.17).<sup>66</sup>

Refrains are a characteristic feature of formal lyric laments, and the rhythmic repetition of the convoy elements in the Catalogue resembles a refrain and gives the whole Catalogue a certain threnodic quality.<sup>67</sup> This quality would also have been reinforced by the epithets used for the ships in the refrain elements. Homeric poetry has twenty-three different epithets for ships (Parry

<sup>65</sup> The generally clockwise route from Boiotia southeast toward the Peloponnesos and then northwest back toward Boiotia and Thessaly is interrupted after the sixteenth entry by the switch to Crete (2.645–52) and other east Aegean islands (2.653–80). The route then switches back to southern Thessaly (2.681–94) and continues generally northward from there.

<sup>66</sup> Similarly at Hektor's funeral singers lead the threnoi (θήνων ἑξάρχους, 24.721) to a response by women in groups, and the individual mourners Andromakhe, Hekabe, and Helen also lead the group (τήσιν δ' Ἀνδρομάχη... ἦρχε γόοιο, 24.723, cf. 24.747, 761). At the conclusion of the description, Helen's lament is followed by an outcry of the whole people (ἐπὶ δ' ἔστανε δῆμος ἀπείρων, 24.776).

<sup>67</sup> This quality is also pertinent to the invocation of the Muses (*Il.* 2.484–93), for the poet's profession of inability to name the troops, so incongruous in epic, resembles a familiar trope of lamentation, the lamenter's profession of inability to say what is appropriate; on this see Alexiou 1974:161–65. Moreover, in the fifth-century, cities often commemorated citizens who died in battle during a given year by inscribing all their names together on a single stele; on this, see Garland 1985:90–93. If this practice continued an earlier tradition of reciting the names of the honored dead aloud, then the poet's disclaimer of a recitation of the common soldiers by name might have gestured toward the genre of civic funeral, as if the poet were eliciting (or responding to) an expectation that the common soldiers of heroic epic be commemorated as citizen-soldiers would be.



1971: 28), but in the Catalogue the poet stresses repeatedly that the ships are black and hollow. In Homer epithets denoting “black” are not limited in sense to the appearance of darkness. They are strongly associated with loss of consciousness and loss of life; for example, “black death” (μέλανος θανάτοιο, *Il.* 2.834, 11.332, 16.687), “death’s black cloud” (θανάτου μέλαν νέφος, *Il.* 16.350), “black doom” (κῆρα μέλαιναν, *Il.* 2.859, 3.360, etc.), “black pains” (μελαινέων ὀδυνάων, *Il.* 4.117, 4.191, 15.394) and the “black cloud of pain” (ἄχεος νεφέλη...μέλαινα, *Il.* 17.591, 18.22). Blood is also black (μέλαν αἷμα, *Il.* 4.149, 7.262, etc.). Even the “black earth,” which in the *Odyssey* often conveys the earth’s fertility, in the *Iliad* is either soaked in blood (ῥέε δ’ αἷματι γαῖα μέλαινα, *Il.* 15.715, 20.494) or denotes the site of burial (ἔχεν κάτα γαῖα μέλαινα, *Il.* 2.699; γαῖα μέλαινα...χάνοι, 17.416–17). The veil that Thetis wears when mourning (in advance) for Achilles is black, so black that “no garment is blacker” (τοῦ δ’ οὐ τι μελάντερον ἔπλετο ἔσθος, 24.94). A survey of other words for “dark” in Homer would reveal the same associations.<sup>68</sup> It follows that, in a refrain-like passage, where the epithet “black” has been uniquely emphasized out of a number of possible alternatives, the phrase “black ships” implies “ships of death.”<sup>69</sup>

The specter of death hangs over the whole Catalogue of Ships, because many of those who sailed to Troy would die before reaching home, and at the time of the muster of Day One many were dead already. This had been mentioned in *Iliad* 1 in the description of the plague, and earlier in Book 2 in speeches to the troops by Agamemnon (πολὺν ὥλεσα λαόν, 2.115) and Odysseus (2.301–2), and Hera’s complaint to Athena (πολλοὶ Ἀχαιῶν/ἐν Τροίῃ ἀπόλοντο κτλ., 2.161–62). The five similes that precede the Catalogue, while they evoke the enormous numbers of the Achaian host, also compare them to notoriously short-lived leaves and flowers in spring (2.468) and short-lived flies (2.469), as well as non-predatory birds (2.459–68) and goats and cattle, which were slaughtered for food and sacrifice (Crossett 1969: 242; Leinieks 1986: 17–19). Moreover Odysseus compared the clamor of the Greek troops

<sup>68</sup> As for γλαφυρός, when not applied to sailing vessels it usually indicates a cave or other cavity in the earth. Not surprisingly, the *Iliad* refers to a grave as hollow (but only once, κοίλην κάπετον, *Il.* 24.797).

<sup>69</sup> In the Trojan Catalogue, where there are no ships, two of the entries evoke the coming doom of the leaders, stating that omens did not forestall their deaths. One concludes the entry with the phrase κῆρες γὰρ ἄγον μέλανος θανάτοιο (2.834), and the second refers to the κῆρα μέλαιναν (2.859). In the former case the “doom of black death” serves the same function that the ships do, that of bringing the warrior to Troy. This is an additional indication that the “black ships” that convey the Greek soldiers are associated with their deaths. Also note the motif of death as a journey to an undersea harbor; see Alexiou 1974: 190.



to return home to the responsive lamentations of widows (ὥς...χῆραί... γυναικες/ ἀλλήλοισιν ὀδύρονται, 2.289–90). Therefore the Catalogue arrives in a thematic context that has already stressed the massive casualties of the common soldiers and the ritual performance that would normally have sanctified those deaths. The threnodic undertone of the Catalogue suggests a lament for the common soldiers, those epic warriors who suffered as the heroes did but did not receive like commemoration. This omission, the poet of the *Iliad* implies, was not to be accepted without regret. Unable to recite the name of each dead soldier as the mourners would do at real funerals, Homer named and evoked the communities where they lived. In each case these were also the homelands where the soldiers' funerals would have been performed and their bodies laid to rest, had they ever been able to return.<sup>70</sup>

Like traditional epic the *Iliad* restricted its distribution of κλέος mainly to heroes, but both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* reiterated in explicit and moving terms the notion that a burial in one's homeland was something every mortal deserved.<sup>71</sup> No epic character could be less a hero than Odysseus's hapless oarsman Elpenor, and no death less heroic than his; yet the *Odyssey* narrates how the shade of unburied Elpenor appealed to Odysseus for burial and mourning, threatening that if Odysseus didn't comply the gods might be angry on the dead man's behalf (*Od.* 11.73).<sup>72</sup> In fact Odysseus was confronted by countless shades of the unburied and unnamed dead (*Od.* 11.36–41). In the *Iliad*, the great funeral is that of Patroklos, who is not mentioned in the Catalogue of Ships. The silence was hardly accidental; Patroklos was not a leader.<sup>73</sup> The lavish commemoration of Patroklos honors a man of the Achaian

<sup>70</sup> The epithets in the Catalogue predominantly denote features of the landscape or cultivated territory rather than constructed urban environments. They therefore emphasize the earth from which the troops sprang and to which they would normally return after death. On the theme of "burial in the nurturing earth" in Greek epitaphs, see Alexiou 1974: 9. For an analytical table of the epithets, see Kirk 1984: 174; the tables and discussion in Scully 1990: 129–36 usefully facilitate comparison to occurrences elsewhere in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

<sup>71</sup> E.g. *Iliad* 16.457, where Hera explains to Zeus why she would have no objection if Zeus were to enable Sarpedon to be buried in his homeland: τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θανόντων.

<sup>72</sup> Elpenor, like those who rowed to Troy, was part of a crew of oarsmen, and he specifically demanded that his grave commemorate him as such (*Od.* 11.77–78). Of course Elpenor died far from home, and his gravesite could not be in his homeland.

<sup>73</sup> As Bassett 2003 pointed out (212) Antilokhos and Teukros are also unmentioned in the Catalogue, although they are important characters in the *Iliad*. The Catalogue is also silent about Kalkhas, who was not a leader, although it was he who guided (ἡγήσατ', *Il.* 1.71) the whole Greek fleet to Troy. The Trojan roster does not mention Paris. The categories of important characters and leaders are not entirely congruent.

people rather than one of their lords. A considerable number of common soldiers receive similar tribute in the short “epitaphs” that deploy themes of lamentation to elaborate upon the deaths of minor warriors.<sup>74</sup> Of course, not all the soldiers could receive such attention. At the conclusion of the first day of battle—the battle for which the marshalling is narrated in *Iliad* 2, with the Catalogue serving as augmentation—a truce is arranged so that the dead can be cremated. Nestor says that the bones of the dead are to be brought back to each man’s homeland (7.334–35). But when the dead are collected for burning it is hard to tell them apart (7.424; this applies to the Greek and Trojan dead alike: ὥς δ’ αὐτως ἐτέρωθεν... Ἀχαιοὶ κτλ., 7.430). The Greek pyre becomes the site of a single τύμβος in which the remains are heaped together (ἔνα... ἄκριτον, 7.336–37, 7.435–36). The unidentified and unnamed dead collected after the first day of battle correspond to the πληθὺς whom the poet wished to commemorate by name but could not as the same battle began. The Catalogue, however, in listing all the contingents that contributed troops, briefly depicting their lands, and suggesting a lament, furnished the *laoi* with a kind of collective σῆμα that returned each soldier to the ground of his birth.<sup>75</sup> This constitutes a special affective and thematic contribution of the Catalogue of Ships to the poetry of the *Iliad*.

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<sup>74</sup> On the “epitaphs,” see Griffin 1980: 103–43. Beye 1964 compares the Catalogue to lists of the slain in Iliadic battle scenes.

<sup>75</sup> The designed sequence of themes in the *Iliad* also suggests that the marshalling and Catalogue in Book 2 are recalled in the truce in Book 7 and the funeral in Book 23. Structural connection between *Iliad* 2 and *Iliad* 23 has been observed and interpreted by Whitman 1958: 262–63; Schein 1984: 32; Richardson 1993: 7–8; and Stanley 1993: 225. For connections among Books 2, 7, and 23, see Heiden 2000: 37, 39, 48–49, and 51.

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