

Keeping Track of Casualties in the *Iliad*

Jenny Strauss Clay's *Homer's Trojan Theater* shows convincingly that the poet of the *Iliad* kept track of the spatial positions of his characters as they move back and forth, not always in unison, across the battlefield and beyond. In this paper, I demonstrate that the poet of the *Iliad* kept track not only of whereabouts of his characters, but also of the details of many of the casualties inflicted upon them, even for relatively minor characters, across remarkably long stretches of narrative. In so doing, I aim to contribute to the growing body of scholarship that sheds light on the poet's impressive command of the story he narrates and reveals the deliberate organization and long-range planning that underlie the apparent chaos of Iliadic battle-narratives.

The first part of the paper focuses on the poet's attention to injured characters. It is notable, though perhaps not surprising, that the poet analeptically refers to the injuries sustained by many characters, including both main characters and those of only secondary prominence in the narrative (e.g., Machaon, Eurypylos, Glaukos, Deiphobos, and Helenos). What is more revealing, however, is that the poet in many cases recalls not only the victim, but also the identity of the perpetrator, the type of weapon responsible, the location of the wound, and the circumstances under which the injury was sustained. Thus, when the narrator refers to the injury that Glaukos sustained more than 2,500 lines earlier, he accurately recalls that Glaukos was injured in the hand by Teukros' arrow as he charged over the Achaian wall (*Il.* 16.510–2). Moreover, once characters withdraw from battle after sustaining an injury, they typically do not return to the battlefield or, if they do, do so only after receiving medical attention or after a significant interval in story time. Sarpedon, for example, is carried off the battlefield following an injury to the thigh (*Il.* 5.692–98) and does not reappear in the narrative until *Il.* 12.101, four

days later. Similarly, Teukros' enigmatic late arrival to battlefield on the Great Day of Battle (*Il.* 12.336–7) appears to be related to the shoulder injury that he sustained early on the previous day (*Il.* 8.324–34).

The second part of the paper discusses internal analeptic and proleptic references to the slaughter of individual characters. While it is unsurprising that the narrator makes repeated reference to the deaths of major characters (e.g., Sarpedon, Patroklos, Hektor), it is more remarkable that he also refers to the deaths of many minor characters, hundreds or even thousands of lines before or after the primary narration of their slaughter. The deaths of Adrestos and Amphios, for example, are anticipated more than 5,000 lines earlier, in the Catalogue of the Trojans and their allies (*Il.* 2.830–4). Similarly, the death of Askalaphos is recalled nearly 1,000 lines after its initial narration (*Il.* 13.518–20; 15.111–2), that of Hyperenor is recalled in detail more than 1,500 lines later (*Il.* 14.516–9; 17.24–28), and that of Asteropaios is referenced more than 1,500 lines later as well (*Il.* 21.180–83; 23.560). Though the poet presumably did not have perfect recall of all 243 of the characters who die over the course of the story, his recollection of the deaths of major and minor characters alike is an indication of his command over his material and a reminder that details of the story that are easily forgotten by audiences were not so ephemeral in the mind of the poet.

In the final part of the paper, I build on the remarkable findings of Jonathan Fenno, who has observed that the total kill-counts of the poem's most prominent warriors are all divisible by three (Fenno 2007, 2013, 2014, 2015). Here I point out that this striking pattern is made all the more remarkable by the way these kills are distributed. That is, they are not typically narrated in groups of three or in multiples thereof; rather, they are spread unevenly over hundreds or

thousands of lines and interrupted by the narration of kills made by others. Despite the piecemeal narration of these warriors' kills, the poet nevertheless appears to have kept count of each one.

Bibliography

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